

PART FOUR

I

Trade and Settlement, 1898-1906

(a) 1898-1901

In 1899, before the French Government decided to take action to increase the number of its subjects in the New Hebrides, the British population numbered 141, compared with a French population of 159 and 31 other Europeans.¹ This represented an increase of 25 British residents since 1897, eight of whom were adults not attached to Christian missions. By contrast, in this period the French population had grown by only seven.

1 Australian Station: New Hebrides 1899, appendices 2 & 3, in Admiralty to C.O., 20 April 1900, C.O. 225/59. A report from a French naval officer to his Government in 1899 estimated that the British population was only 111 and the French 178. This estimate included no names, and, since Farquhar named all of his residents, his report was probably more accurate. He may have underestimated the French population, but not according to Walter Tanner, Burns, Philp's New Hebrides manager, and Ferdinand Chevillard, the leading French planter at Vila, who suggested that the British population was 126 and the French 160. See Lieutenant Docteur to Minister for the Navy, 10 October 1899, Des Granges Papers; and H.A. Robertson, Erromanga, the Martyr Isle, London, 1902, p.430.

The French Government's decision in 1900 to promote the interests of its nationals in the group, however, produced a dramatic change in the comparative numbers of British and French residents and marked the beginning of the process whereby the European population of the New Hebrides became predominantly French. In June 1901 British naval officers reported that in the previous year a large influx of French settlers had boosted their number to 293 while the British population had remained virtually static.¹

Most of these new French settlers were introduced into the group by the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides which provided them each with from 25 to 50 hectares of land, three native labourers, agricultural equipment, and a loan of 5,000 francs (c.£200). This great effort had the effect of driving the S.F.N.H. to the verge of bankruptcy, and it was forced in 1901 to stop running its steamer between Nouméa and Vila. But this gap was quickly filled by the New Caledonian merchant André Ballande, who was extending his business to the New Hebrides.²

1 Commander R.N. Tupper to Sir G.T. O'Brien, 4 June 1901, in O'Brien to J. Chamberlain, 19 June 1901, C.O. 225/61.

2 W. Le Couteur to E. Barton, 26 November 1901, C.A.O., A35, bundle 1, no. 23.

In contrast to the rapid growth of French settlement in the group, the number of British residents had increased by only 18 since 1899 to make a total of 159 in June 1901.¹ And the fact that this increase represented only missionaries, their dependents, and the children of other settlers emphasised the lack of progress of British settlement. This stagnation was chiefly due to an increasing shortage of labour. Commander R. Tupper reported in June 1901:

The present position is, that owing to the great difficulty experienced by the French in recruiting labour, to the rapidly increasing number of French settlers, and to the desire of the French to see the British planter 'go under', the supply of Labour for the British planter through the French has ceased, and the British planter finds it harder and harder to keep things going.²

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- 1 Australian Station: New Hebrides 1901, enclosure 2 in Admiralty to C.O., 23 May 1901, C.O. 225/64. Another report of British settlement in the New Hebrides compiled in November 1901 by Wilson Le Couteur for the Australian Government stated that the British population was only 146, but he did not include the Banks and Torres Islands nor the Freeman family on Aneityum, the head of which was German, but who was married to an English woman and who considered himself British. Taking these discrepancies into account, Le Couteur's report basically confirms the naval census. See Le Couteur to Barton, 26 November 1901, C.A.O., A35, bundle 1, no. 23.
 - 2 Tupper to Admiral L.A. Beaumont, 4 June 1901, in Admiralty to C.O., 2 September 1901, C.O. 225/61.

Wilson Le Couteur confirmed this opinion later that year when he toured the New Hebrides on behalf of the Australian Government.¹ The problem was highlighted by the Roche brothers, who were still working the plantation at Undine Bay which they had begun in 1889. They wrote to Le Couteur:

...we would like to impress upon you the very critical position in which we are placed by the want of plantation labour to carry on our clearing and planting operations. [Our] neighbours Messrs Glissan and Wardlaw are...suffering from the same disabilities, but to speak for ourselves...we are compelled to declare that unless we are placed on the same footing for recruiting labour as the French, we for one will have to seriously consider the expediency of abandoning our eleven years toil and hardships in an unhealthy country....²

There were a few settlers who relied upon local labour, notably Lang on Malekula and Roxburgh on Epi; but both of these planters, unlike their colleagues, had good relations with local missionaries who were willing to help them acquire labourers.

Of the British settlers in the New Hebrides in 1901, 75 were missionaries and their dependents and

1 Le Couteur to Barton, 26 November 1901, C.A.O., A35, bundle 1, no. 23.

2 A. & R. Roche to Le Couteur, 7 September 1901, enclosure ibid., no. 24.

only 49 were adult males who were not attached to a Christian mission. Sixteen of these men were bona fide planters working 11 plantations on Tanna, Efate, Epi and Malekula. The rest were mainly copra traders and employees of the two British trading companies, Burns, Philp and Company and Kerr Brothers.¹

Burns, Philp and Company was the major trading firm and the only one running an Australia-New Hebrides shipping service. During 1901 its ships carried goods valued at £16,116 to Sydney - a small decrease in value upon those carried to Australia in 1897.² With goods exported from Australia to the New Hebrides, the company's total trade, according to its own estimate, was worth slightly less than its trade with the British Solomon Islands and much less than its commerce with either the Gilbert and Ellice Islands or British New Guinea.³

1 Australian Station: New Hebrides 1901, in Admiralty to C.O., 23 May 1901, C.O. 225/64. Le Couteur to Barton, C.A.O., A3, bundle 1, no. 23.

2 See Appendix B (iii) (a).

3 Burns, Philp's total trade with these groups in 1901 was: New Hebrides, £40,725; Solomon Islands, £43,506; Gilbert and Ellice Islands, £80,150; British New Guinea, £109,781. W.H. Lucas to Sir W.J. Lyne, 31 January 1902, C.A.O., A1108, I. Burns, Philp's estimates of its imports to Australia are slightly different from Australian customs figures, but since there are no such figures for exports to individual Pacific islands Burns, Philp's statement was used for this comparison.

That of these four major Pacific trading areas the New Hebrides ranked last in importance reflected not only the French competition Burns, Philp faced in the group but also the fact that the company, unlike the Australasian New Hebrides Company, placed no special emphasis upon the New Hebrides. The A.N.H. Company had maintained an inter-island service in the group, but Burns, Philp, which ran no such services in other islands, withdrew it and substituted for it a bi-monthly visit to most trading and all Presbyterian mission stations by a Sydney to New Hebrides vessel. The New Hebrides service was still superior to Burns, Philp's services in the Solomons or Gilberts; but this superiority can be accounted for by the subsidy the company received from the Presbyterian Mission and the fact that its subsidies from the New South Wales and Victorian Governments were intended primarily for the New Hebrides service. The less frequent visits to the group after 1897 had the effect of ruining the banana trade between the New Hebrides and Australia, the value of which declined from £9,659 in 1897 to £722 in 1901. This, however, was partly compensated for by increases in the value of copra and maize exported from the New Hebrides to Australia in this period.¹

1 See Appendices B (ii) (b) and B (iii) (b).

(b) The Australian Settlement Scheme 1901-1906

The rapid increase of the French population in the New Hebrides and its preponderance in 1901 impressed the newly formed Australian Government with the need to do something to promote British settlement, as Atlee Hunt, the Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of External Affairs, told Burns, Philp and Company in November 1901.¹ The following month Hunt explained to Sir James Burns, the company's general manager, that the Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, had no fixed idea of how an extension of British settlement could be achieved, but that he was apprehensive that a continued increase in French influence could lead to the repetition of the case of Samoa and the withdrawal by Britain of her claims to the group.² Burns thereupon offered to hand over to the Commonwealth Government the large areas of land which his company had acquired from the Australasian New Hebrides Company for the purposes of settlement.³

It has been said that Burns was primarily motivated by patriotic ideals in thus offering to give

1 Sir J. Burns to Hunt, 28 November 1901, C.A.O., A1108, II.

2 Hunt to Burns, 3 December 1901, ibid.

3 Burns to Hunt, 4 December 1901, ibid.

away some 50,000 acres of land.¹ Idealism was not, however, a characteristic of the early history of his company² nor of its previous actions in the New Hebrides, and Burns himself suggested a more prominent motive when he told Hunt that if French interests overwhelmed those of British subjects his company could be driven out of the trade of the group.³ His offer to place British settlers in the islands, who were to be tied exclusively to Burns, Philp for goods bought or sold, was a good way to increase his company's trade. Furthermore, by offering the land to the Government, Burns probably hoped to further commit it to the maintenance of British interests in the group by giving it a vested interest there.

However the agreement which was signed by Burns, Philp and the Government in March 1902 did not precisely reflect the intentions of the former, for, despite the widely held belief that the Commonwealth

1 R.W. Robson, 'Australia and the New Hebrides: The Story of a Forgotten Gift of Land', Pacific Islands Monthly, 8 (January 1938), p.26.

2 See G.C. Bolton, 'The Rise of Burns, Philp and Company, 1873-1893' in Alan Birch & David S. MacMillan (eds.), Wealth and Progress, Sydney, 1967, pp.111-127.

3 Burns to Hunt, 4 December 1902, C.A.O., All08, II.

thereby became a landholder in the New Hebrides,¹ the agreement stated:

That whereas the Contractors [Burns, Philp and Company] are possessed of certain lands and properties in the New Hebrides Islands, taken over by them from the Australasian New Hebrides Company, ...the Contractors agree and declare that they, their successors and assignees, will stand possessed of all such lands and properties in trust to lease them to such persons...and on such terms and conditions as the Minister of External Affairs of the Commonwealth may from time to time approve, and at the expiration or sooner determination of this Agreement, or when required by the Minister, upon trust to execute such conveyance, assignment, or assurance of all their right, title, and interest in and to such lands and properties to such person or persons and in such manner as the said Minister may direct.²

The wording of this agreement has left room for argument, but it has been the opinion of Australian governments that, as P.M. Glynn, the Attorney General in 1909 put it, the agreement does not give the Government any rights of ownership of the land, 'but merely enables the

1 See for example Robson, 'Australia and the New Hebrides', pp.26-7; Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.228; and Helen M. Davies, 'The Administrative Career of Atlee Hunt, 1901-1910', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1968, pp.75-6.

2 C.P.P., 1901-2, II, p.1096. Italics added.

Commonwealth to exercise a certain right of control over their disposition.'¹

The Government and Burns, Philp agreed to offer to British subjects who had at least £200 capital leases of from 50 to 500 acres for three years at 1s. per 50 acres per annum, which they could convert into 99 year leases at 1d. per acre if they made improvements to their land within three years, after which time settlers could also apply for additional blocks. Burns, Philp were to carry the settlers and their families to the New Hebrides free of charge and were to manage the administration of the scheme. The settlers had to agree to do all their buying or selling through that company.² This scheme, when advertised early in March 1902, did not meet with universal approbation in Australia. The Sydney Daily Telegraph, under the misapprehension that the Commonwealth Government had acquired the land to be settled, condemned expenditure of public money outside Australia,³ and the Sydney Morning Herald published an article by J.G. Macdonald, a planter recently returned from the New Hebrides, which damned the scheme with faint praise. The soil in the

1 Minute by P.M. Glynn, 21 December 1909, C.A.O., A1108, VI.

2 Hunt to Burns, Philp and Company, 6 March 1902, ibid., II.

3 Daily Telegraph, 5 March 1902.

group was certainly productive, wrote Macdonald, but a settler would have to wait from eight to ten years before coconut trees he planted would produce, and, since there was no other good way of making money, he would need a capital of at least £1,000 to survive.¹

Despite such scepticism, there were a large number of enquiries - 500 in the first two and a half months² - and though many of these did not meet the minimum capital requirement and others proceeded no further when conditions in the group were explained to them, 38 applicants were accepted by the end of May 1902.³ Of this number, 17 left for the New Hebrides on 31 May 1902, accompanied by the famous Australian poet, A.B. Paterson, who, on this occasion, was acting as a reporter for the Sydney Morning Herald. Most of the emigrants came from New South Wales, but there were also Queenslanders and Victorians among them. The primary motive for their joining the scheme was the prevailing drought in eastern Australia. Paterson wrote:

Nearly every one of them, on being asked why they left Australia told the same tale. They have been driven out by failure of seasons.... One man said that on his farm

1 S.M.H., 19 March 1902, p.5.

2 Lucas to Hunt, 26 May 1902, C.A.O., A1108, II.

3 H.G. Black to Hunt, 25 May 1901, ibid.

in the Camden district of New South Wales they had only 3 inches of rain in nine months.... Another was a Queensland Government employee, and was forced to shift for himself when that colony [sic]... stood up to face the deficit and began to reduce its Government departments.¹

Other occupations of intending settlers before they left Australia were grazier, stock and station agent, timber cutter, gardener, and farmer. Paterson mentioned only one who had had previous experience of tropical agriculture, and a lot of them barely met the necessary financial qualifications.²

On their way to their destination, this vanguard of Australia's attempt to increase British influence in the New Hebrides was shown over a number of French plantations near Vila, and its members were impressed by what they saw.³ At their rendezvous, which was the site of the A.N.H. Company's abortive attempt to colonise the group - the south coast of Santo - the newcomers would have fared badly at first but for the kindness of the Rev. Dr J. Annand, who provided them with temporary housing in the students' quarters of the Presbyterian native teachers' training institute on Tangoa Island, a

1 S.M.H., 1 July 1902, p.5.

2 S.M.H., 24 July 1902, p.3; 25 July 1902, p.8.

3 Ibid.

few hundred yards from the Santo mainland.¹ Burns, Philp had leased them land and given them a free passage, and the manager of the company's Islands Department accompanied them, but they were set down in the midst of uncleared jungle with no other assistance² in contrast to French S.F.N.H. settlers who on arrival were given agricultural equipment, native labourers and a financial loan.

The colonists named their settlement Annandale, a fitting recognition of Dr Annand's generosity. The Presbyterian Mission in the New Hebrides had recommended missionaries 'to give the settlers such help as they can consistently with their duties as Missionaries.'³ This attitude was encouraged by the Foreign Missions Committee of the Victorian Presbyterian Church which had expressed its willingness 'to do all that is possible to further Australian colonization of the New Hebrides'.⁴

1 New Hebrides Magazine, September 1902, p.4. Commander F. Addington to Admiral L. Beaumont, 22 October 1902, Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1902, in Admiralty to C.O., 16 March 1903, C.O. 225/66.

2 Captain F.C.M. Noel to Beaumont, 10 August 1902, ibid.

3 N.H.M., 27 June 1902.

4 Rev. A. Hardie to Barton, 23 December 1901, C.A.O., All08, II.

At first the scheme flourished. By the end of 1902 there were 31 men, 5 women, and 15 children at Annandale.¹ They were growing maize to provide an income until the coconut trees they were planting matured, and fortunately the continued Australian drought meant that, despite a heavy protective duty levied by the Australian Government upon imports of this product, they received profitable prices for their first shipment of maize early in 1903.²

To improve their administration of the scheme, Burns, Philp appointed Captain T. Williams as a permanent representative in the New Hebrides at the end of 1902 to help arriving settlers and to buy suitable land for new settlements.³ During 1903 eight more male colonists were sent to Annandale, which was then declared sufficiently populated, and three more went to Hog Harbour on the east coast of Santo, where they settled on land bought by Williams. Three other independent settlers, attracted to the group by the propaganda for the settlement scheme

1 Lucas to Hunt, 4 March 1903, ibid.

2 Lucas to Hunt, 4 February 1903, ibid.

3 Ibid.

acquired parts of the old Glissan properties at Undine Bay, Efate.¹ One of the new residents at Hog Harbour was Maurice Witts, a New South Welshman from the Monaro tablelands and a Boer War veteran, who shared the running of a plantation with the other two, the Thomas brothers. Witts has left a diary of his experiences at Hog Harbour during 1905, in which he revealed himself a well educated man who read history books and wrote letters to British and Australian newspapers in his spare time. He was happy with his life of growing maize and planting coconut trees despite vicissitudes such as, 'that tired feeling... when the malarial microbes...assert themselves', earthquakes which rattled cups and saucers and threatened to level houses, and a humidity which coated everything with mildew. He and his partners were also benevolent employers who took care to treat and prevent sickness among their labourers and who seem to have had no runaways.²

During 1903, despite its early promise, the settlement scheme showed signs of failure, for, that year, those belonging to the scheme who left the group or drifted

1 Commander J.P. Rolleston to Admiral Bickford, 4 November 1903, in Admiralty to F.O., 21 May 1904, in F.O. to C.O., 21 June 1904, C.O. 225/68.

2 Diary for the year 1905, kept at Hog Harbour, New Hebrides, by Maurice M. Witts, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, MSS no. 1, passim.

into other occupations there outnumbered the newcomers, so that by the beginning of 1904 those occupying Burns, Philp properties had been reduced to 23 males and 24 dependents.¹ During 1904 and 1905 the exodus became greater, until by 1906 there were only three properties being worked at Annandale² and Burns, Philp had ceased to make any special attempts to encourage new settlers.³

It has been stated that the settlement scheme was ruined primarily by Australian tariffs, particularly the impost on maize which had a disastrous effect on the planters' major source of income after the drought broke in Australia in 1903.⁴ There is abundant evidence for the difficulty caused to New Hebrides settlers by Australian tariffs, which extended to other potentially valuable items such as coffee and bananas; of the

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- 1 Lucas to Hunt, 7 March 1904, C.A.O., All08, II.
 - 2 Sir E. im Thurn to the Earl of Elgin, 9 August 1906, C.O. 225/73; 'New Hebrides Settlement Leases', Papers of Burns, Philp and Company, Burns, Philp Offices, Sydney.
 - 3 Burns to Hunt, 5 February 1906, Papers of Atlee Hunt, N.L.A., MS 52/1563.
 - 4 R.T.E. Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1928, ch. 3, p.8, ch. 6, pp.17-8. Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.228. B.E. Mansfield, 'Studies in External Relations and the Growth of National Sentiment in Australia, 1901-12', B.A. hons. thesis, University of Sydney, 1948, pp.140, 145.

important products of the group, only copra escaped. In 1905 Maurice Witts explained the problem of growing maize:

...although corn grows readily enough and although 'labor' is cheap and land easily obtained, it hardly pays for the trouble growing it; - freight up to Sydney 9d. a bushel, Duty, entering Commonwealth 10d. a bushel, Commission etc., say 2d., making in all about 1/9 per bushel. Average market price 2/6 [per bushel] which leaves the bloated planter about 3/- per bag, with which to pay his 'labor' and to buy champagne with.¹

And it was a firmly expressed conviction of many contemporaries that the chief impediment to the development of British settlement in the period 1902-1906 was the operation of Australian tariffs. This argument was advanced by men as important and diverse as the British Resident Commissioner, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, the Admiral of the Royal Navy's Australian Station, Presbyterian missionaries, and the settlers themselves. Not all such people, however, were well qualified to make pronouncements on the subject. Sir Everard im Thurn, the High Commissioner, showed his lack of knowledge of the economy of the New Hebrides, when commenting about Australia's tariff policy, by claiming

1 Diary of Witts, 3 January 1905.

that 'the most important product of the British settlers in the New Hebrides is maize'.¹ Even Ernest Rason, who was appointed British Resident Commissioner in the group in 1902, was not necessarily a competent judge of the question. His claim that the fall in the price of maize and the consequent inhibition of Australian import duties were the main reasons why most of the Burns, Philp settlers left the New Hebrides must be qualified by his poor knowledge of the total number who went to Santo under the scheme, which, in 1905, he stated was 15.² He also had a liking for simple explanations for complex situations which exasperated the permanent officials at the Colonial Office, one of whom was moved to exclaim: 'It is a terrible thing to have a man whose mind is so confused in charge of such delicate matters.'³ And statements made by the Admiral, missionaries and settlers

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- 1 Im Thurn to Lord Northcote (Governor General of Australia), 22 March 1907, C.A.O., A1, 07/6422. This was an extraordinary statement in the light of the fact that in the period 1901-1906 Australian imports per annum of copra were worth from over twice to ten times as much as imports of maize, except in 1903 when the price of maize was exceptionally high, though even in that year copra was the more valuable commodity. See Appendix B (iii) (b).
 - 2 Rason to im Thurn, 5 September 1905 [copy], C.O. 225/70.
 - 3 Minute by H.B. Cox, 15 April 1905, on Rason to im Thurn [copy], 23 January 1905, C.O. 225/70. See also minute by H.E. Dale, 11 November 1904, on Rason to Sir C. Major [copy], 30 July 1904, C.O. 225/67.

were all advanced to support arguments why the Australian Government should change its tariff policy, mostly in direct representations to that Government, and therefore were not necessarily dispassionate assessments of the situation.¹

There were other reasons probably more important than Australia's tariff policy for the failure of the settlement scheme; for by the end of 1902 12 or 28% of the men who had gone to the New Hebrides under its auspices had left the scheme, and during 1903, when maize prices remained high until near the end of the year, more left than arrived.² Scarcity of labour was one of the most important of these other reasons. Initially prohibited from recruiting from other islands, the settlers at Annandale were forced to rely upon local labour, which proved unreliable and insufficient in the face of competition from French colonists on Santo, who could pay labourers with guns and ammunition - keenly desired goods which British subjects were still not

1 Admiral Sir W. Fawkes to Lord Northcote, 20 June 1906, C.A.O., A1, 06/4798. F.H.L. Paton to A. Deakin, 25 September 1905, ibid., 05/6194. Petition of British settlers in the New Hebrides, in Rason to Northcote, 9 June 1906, ibid., 07/6850.

2 W.H. Lucas to Hunt, 4 February 1903, 7 March 1904, C.A.O., A1108, II.

permitted to sell.¹ Those who commented in 1903 upon why many of the Burns, Philp settlers were leaving the scheme mentioned shortage of labour as the most important reason.² By the end of that year Rason had issued the first recruiting licences British settlers in the New Hebrides had received since 1874,³ but the £500 bond required by the Pacific Islanders Protection Acts was too much for most of the Burns, Philp settlers. The company assisted them in 1904 by employing its inter-island steamer, Makambo, for recruiting, but allegedly false charges by Presbyterian missionaries against methods used by Makambo's recruiters caused Burns, Philp to withdraw this service to the settlers in 1905.⁴ Though a bill was drafted in Britain to reduce the value of the bond for recruiting licences, a crowded Parliamentary agenda and pending changes to the political status of the New Hebrides

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- 1 Commander J.P. Rolleston to Admiral Bickford, 4 November 1903, in Admiralty to C.O., 21 June 1904, C.O. 225/68. Rason to im Thurn, 5 September 1905 [copy], C.O. 225/70.
 - 2 Lucas to Hunt, 4 March 1903, C.A.O. All08, II. W. Le Couteur to Chamberlain, 4 August 1903 (quoting extracts from F. Chevillard to Le Couteur, 12 June 1903), in C.O. to F.O., 11 August 1903, F.O.C.P., 8270/99.
 - 3 Rason to Major, 30 March 1904 [copy], C.O. 225/67.
 - 4 Burns to Hunt, 5 February 1906, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1563.

delayed this object until 1907.¹ The importance of the supply of labour for the success of the scheme can be seen in the survival of Witts and the Thomas brothers at Hog Harbour, who by 1905 were as hard hit as anybody by the Australian tariff on maize, but who had sufficient money to acquire a recruiting licence so that, although competition was fierce, during that year they had a permanent work force of from 14 to 30 indentured labourers, and they also were able to draw extra hands from the nearby Presbyterian mission in emergencies.²

The other most important reason for the failure of the scheme was that it attracted few people with sufficient capital because of insecurity of land titles and climatic conditions in the New Hebrides. Walter Lucas told Atlee Hunt in 1903: 'The question of security of title has kept away hundreds of intending applicants, and those mostly of the class possessing the most capital

1 This is a different account of the reasons for the failure of the British Government to act on this question than given in Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.216-7. But it is based upon H.E. Dale's minute in November 1905: 'A Bill to amend this [£500 bond] has been drafted for two or three years, but no opportunity has occurred for its introduction into Parliament.' Minute by H.E. Dale, 4 November 1905, on Rason to im Thurn, 5 September 1905 [copy], C.O. 225/70.

2 Diary of M.M. Witts for 1905, passim.

who naturally feel dubious about venturing their money without being guaranteed a title to their lands.' This drawback, he said, was pointed out to each intending settler, and so was the prevalence of malaria in the islands, 'with the result that fully 99% of intending settlers...reconsidered their intentions'.¹ It was J.G. Macdonald's accurate prediction that settlers with less than £1,000 capital would not succeed, and when, in 1902, British naval officers serving in the New Hebrides learnt of the small amount of capital possessed by most of the Burns, Philp colonists they were very pessimistic about the scheme's future. Captain F.C.M. Noel wrote: 'I do not see the smallest prospect of any success attending measures entered into, in my opinion, in the wrong spirit, and with insufficient means.'²

(c) 1902-1906

While Australia's efforts to increase the number of British subjects in the New Hebrides were a comparative failure, the rival French settlement programme

1 Lucas to Hunt, 4 February 1903, C.A.O., A1108, II.

2 Noel to Admiral L. Beaumont, 10 August 1902, in Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1902, in Admiralty to C.O., 16 March 1903, C.O. 225/66. See also Commander F. Addington to Beaumont, 22 October 1902, ibid.

also ran into difficulties because of the financial troubles of the S.F.N.H. By June 1902 the French population had declined from 293 a year previously to 226. But in this period a fall in the number of British missionaries and their dependents in the group counterbalanced the arrival of the first batch of Burns, Philp settlers, so that the British population had only increased by three.¹ In the next four years the number of British residents increased with the help of the Australian settlement scheme, which, though many of its members returned to Australia, encouraged some independent settlers to go to the New Hebrides and added to the population with people who left it for other forms of employment in the group. By 1906 the number of British adult males unattached to Christian missions had grown to 91 and the total population to 228. The French, however, had recovered from their slump in 1901-02, and by 1906 their population had increased to 192 adult males and a total of 401. There were 35 other Europeans.² This meant that the French had managed to consolidate their position as the dominant sector in the European population of the New Hebrides. It was also estimated in 1906 that Frenchmen cultivated c.20,000 acres of land

1 Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1902, ibid.

2 Im Thurn to the Earl of Elgin, 9 August 1906, C.O. 225/73.

compared with only 7,000 acres by their British competitors, and, resulting from the activities of Higginson's company in the 1880s, the French claimed ownership to a much larger area of land than did British subjects, though many such claims were virtually fictitious.¹

Chief reasons for this improvement in France's performance in the Anglo-French population race were further financial assistance from the Government to the S.F.N.H., with a resultant revival of its colonization efforts in 1903, and reductions in tariffs imposed upon New Hebridean goods produced by French settlers entering New Caledonia and France, which were abolished completely within prescribed quotas in 1904.²

The population race had some bitter side effects. The great influx of Europeans into the New Hebrides since 1900 was mostly the result of French or Australian attempts to increase their influence in the group and therefore had little relation to its natural resources. The newcomers pressed heavily upon a dwindling supply of New Hebridean labour, and their presence led to a fierce competition in the copra trade, which with

1 Rason to im Thurn, 2 March 1906 [copy], ibid. For a discussion of French land claims-see Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.198-201.

2 Rason to Major, 30 July 1904 [copy], C.O. 225/67. Latham, 'The New Hebrides', ch. 3, p.8.

the fall in the price of maize in Australia late in 1903, said Rason, became 'a vicious rivalry'.¹ A result of efforts to extract more coconuts from native suppliers was a rapid increase in the sale of liquor to them by French - and some British - traders, and a concomitant threat to the security of Europeans in the group, since, wrote Commander D'Oyley: 'Almost all cases of shooting and pillage can be traced to the liquor question.'² During 1904 one British and eight French settlers were murdered and five more British subjects were attacked by natives.³

French efforts to boost their numbers in the New Hebrides resulted in a sudden appearance of land disputes as a problem in Anglo-French relations, either because of confrontation between newly arrived French and established British settlers, or more commonly because of the championship of native rights by Presbyterian missionaries. The problem arose from the fact that the

1 Rason, 'Report on the Trade of the New Hebrides', 24 October 1906, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1907, LVII, Cd. 3289.

2 D'Oyley to Admiral Sir W. Fawkes, 20 October 1906, in Admiralty to F.O., 27 December 1906, F.O.C.P. 8951/102.

3 E. Rason, 'The New Hebrides', United Empire, new series, I, (1910), p.656.

S.F.N.H. had not occupied vast areas of land bought by its predecessor in the 1880s, so that when it placed new settlers on such property the land's original sale, if ever known by its real owners, had often been forgotten by the natives who inhabited it and who might have sold it since to British subjects. Land disputes flared up for the first time in any degree at the end of the 1890s, and, particularly an acrimonious one involving the Rev. A. Fraser and servants of the S.F.N.H. on Epi, they became the subject of a strongly worded protest from the Presbyterian Church in 1900.¹

The financial difficulties of the S.F.N.H. led to a quietening of land troubles in the next two years, but the revival of the company's fortunes and, early in 1904, the Anglo-French agreement on the need for a lands commission in the group inspired it to renew the occupation of untouched acres both for the purposes of colonisation and the strengthening of its land claims. There were resultant clashes between French and British subjects, mostly verbal, but at times accompanied by acts of violence against property, and on one occasion

1 'Memorial on French Aggression in the New Hebrides from the Presbyterian Synod, with a Narrative of Land Disputes in Epi and Efate', in C.A.O. A1108, III. For a full account of such disputes, see Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.213-4.

almost provoking armed conflict when, on Epi, Thomas Swallow and two friends confronted an armed party seeking to avenge destruction of French property.¹ The Acting High Commissioner for the Western Pacific warned the British Government in September 1904 that in Rason's opinion:

the feeling of irritation among the British settlers is growing so acute in consequence of the continued aggressive acts of the employees of the French New Hebrides Company, and the disinclination, or powerlessness, of the French authorities to restrain them, that... it might result in an open rupture through reprisals on the part of the British.²

Many British settlers were also at loggerheads with their compatriots, the Presbyterian missionaries. The Presbyterians, despite inroads made by French Catholic missionaries, were still undoubtedly the strongest Christian body in the New Hebrides, and they saw themselves as moral guardians of the native population of the group and consequently were fearless in condemning what they considered unethical treatment of New Hebrideans whether by British or French subjects. Hence missionaries' zeal

1 For this incident see Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1904, Case no. 210, in Admiralty to F.O., 18 May 1905, F.O.C.P., 8772/48.

2 Sir C. Major to A. Lyttleton, 10 September 1904, C.O. 225/67.

for native rights often conflicted with their desire to assist British settlement as in the case of Burns, Philp's efforts to recruit labourers for its settlers. This moral guardianship even extended to the sexual lives of Burns, Philp's employees at Vila which were the subject of representations in 1903 from Synod to Sir James Burns.¹ One specific and often repeated charge against the mission by settlers was that missionaries unfairly competed with them as traders. Such charges were usually based upon no more evidence than the practice of missionaries paying native teachers and employees with goods or bartering for their food, and Synod condemned any trading for profit;² but there was at least one of its members who was later guilty of ignoring this proscription.³

The other substantial British influence in the New Hebrides, Burns, Philp and Company, was assisted with an annual subsidy of £6,000, first granted by the Australian Government in 1902, for its services to the

1 N.H.M., 25 June 1903. Diary of the Rev. F.J. Paton, 20 June 1903, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, Sydney.

2 N.H.M., 14 June 1905.

3 In 1912 the Rev. W. Mackay on Santo was censured by the Australian Foreign Missions Committee for trading. Minutes of the Foreign Missions Committee of the General Assembly of Australian Presbyterian Churches, 18 December 1912, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, Sydney.

New Hebrides, Solomon, and Gilbert and Ellice Islands, which replaced the subsidies it had received from the New South Wales and Victorian Governments. The higher amount given was to cover improvements in the services and a government stipulation that only European seamen could be employed on subsidised ships. In return the company contracted to run a monthly service to the New Hebrides - extending bi-monthly to the Solomons and four-monthly to the Gilbert and Ellice group - plus an inter-island service in the New Hebrides.¹

During 1901 and 1902 Burns, Philp gained a brief monopoly of the trade of the New Hebrides with the temporary suspension of the Vila-Nouméa service.² But in 1903, with the revival of the fortunes of the S.F.N.H., the advent of Ballande's company in the New Hebrides which started an inter-island service, and the decision that year of the Messageries Maritimes Company to open a Sydney-Vila service, the position of Burns, Philp in the commerce of the group was distinctly weakened. The rival French service between Australia and the group was particularly strong competition, for the vessel used, Pacifique, was both larger than Burns, Philp's ships

1 Minute by Barton for the Executive Council, 2 April 1902, C.P.P., 1901-2, II, pp.1093-5.

2 Noel to Beaumont, 10 August 1902, in Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1902, in Admiralty to C.O., 16 March 1903, C.O. 225/66.

and also faster, since it did not have to make time consuming stops at Lord Howe and Norfolk islands which were imposed upon Burns, Philp by its government contract.¹ From 1903 onwards therefore it is impossible to use Australian customs figures as an index of Burns, Philp's New Hebrides trade, which probably declined considerably that year. In the Federal Parliament in 1904 W.E. Johnson claimed that the company lost £16,000 per annum on its Pacific services. James Page retorted that it would be difficult to persuade Queensland parliamentarians that the company would submit to such a loss.² Perhaps the stated amount of the alleged loss was exaggerated, but in the light of the New Hebridean situation, it was possibly true that the company's service to this group had become unprofitable, for, though Page's remark was a valid comment on its history, he ignored the fact that it was under a ten year contract to maintain the service which could not be broken simply because profits had fallen.

By 1904 French competition and tariff reductions had put France into equal place with Australia in the commerce of the New Hebrides, exports from the group to

1 Rason to Major, 30 July 1904 [copy], C.O. 225/67.

2 C.P.D., XXIII, 28 October 1904, p.6302.

New Caledonia being worth £26,400 and imports from New Caledonia to the New Hebrides £24,896 compared with respective figures of £17,155 and £30,245 for Australia's trade with the group.¹ But that year Burns, Philp took steps to improve its New Hebrides service with an extra ocean going steamer to replace the auxiliary inter-island ship hitherto employed, which resulted in the abolition of transshipment of cargo at Vila, and for which, along with improvements to its other Pacific islands services, it received an extra £6,000 per annum from the Commonwealth Government.² This improvement resulted in a big increase in New Hebrides exports to Australia in 1905 - to £25,923 - and a corresponding decline in exports to New Caledonia - to £18,169.³ The increase, said Rason, largely accrued to Burns, Philp which now had the distinct advantage of a ship trading directly with Sydney which called at practically every trading station in the group, compared with a French inter-island vessel which called at only

1 Rason, 'Report on the Trade of the New Hebrides', 9 May 1905, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1906, LXXVIII, Cd. 2714. Appendix B (iii) (a).

2 C.P.P., 1904, II, pp.1817-18; 1905, II, pp.1445-9.

3 Rason, 'Report on the Trade of the New Hebrides', 24 October 1906, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1907, LVII, Cd. 3289. Appendix B (iii) (a).

five or six ports.¹ This plus passage money paid for New Hebrideans deported from Queensland in 1906 restored Burns, Philp's trade with the group to a profitable business.²

Thus in the period 1899 to 1906 France achieved a clear dominance in population as she had in land holdings in the 1880s, but she was not able to overshadow Australia in the commerce of the group. Through the action of Burns, Philp and the support given the company by the Australian Government this was the one economic field in which, in 1906, British economic interests were superior to those of France.

1 Rason to im Thurn, 24 October 1906, [copy], C.O. 225/73.

2 Lucas to Hunt, 22 May 1908, C.A.O., A1 08/354.

II

Australian, British and French Policy, 1901-1906(a) The Barton Government in Australia, 1901-1903

The newly founded Australian Commonwealth Government was very cautious in its public statements about the New Hebrides. It responded to the specific requests that it ask Britain to secure a land tribunal and a British Resident Commissioner for the islands, which were made at a deputation from Presbyterian missionaries and other Churchmen in January 1901.¹ But, in his first public speeches in which he mentioned the New Hebrides, the Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, did not say that Australia wanted British annexation of the group.² When reviewing the first year of his Government in January 1902, he told his constituents at Maitland that it was unlikely Britain would agree to any such requests and that all his Government desired was 'a better state of

1 The Earl of Hopetoun (Governor General of Australia) to J. Chamberlain, 12 February 1901, C.A.O., A1108, III.

2 Argus, 12 February 1901, p.5; 15 February 1901, p.5.

things in the New Hebrides',¹ and he truthfully told Parliament in April 1902 that he had made no annexationist request to Britain.²

In May 1902, when Barton was on his way to attend an Imperial Conference in England, a private deputation from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria saw the Acting Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, and presented to him a resolution of the Church's Commission of its General Assembly asking that Britain seek an arrangement for the withdrawal of French claims to the New Hebrides.³ Deakin promptly wrote to Barton urging him to press as hard as he could while he was in England for the acquisition of the group.⁴ Barton raised the question of the political status of the islands at a private meeting at the Colonial Office, and while he could get no assurance that Britain would try to annex the New Hebrides, he returned to

1 Age, 10 January 1902, p.6.

2 C.P.D., IX, 29 April 1902, p.12083.

3 Report of deputation, 19 May 1902, C.A.O., A35, bundle 2, no. 23.

4 Deakin to Barton, 20 May 1902, Papers of Edmund Barton, M.L.A., MS 51/1/505.

Australia convinced that Chamberlain understood Australia's viewpoint on the question.¹ However he made no mention of the group in his public statements on his return.²

Deakin's correspondence with Barton in May 1902 suggests the possibility that it was pressure from him that induced the Prime Minister to advocate annexation. It has been suggested by Professor La Nauze that Deakin, though not responsible for the Department of External Affairs, had at least an equal share in the making of the Barton Government's New Hebrides policy.³ And this is borne out by Barton's statement to Deakin, on his retirement as Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs:

There are many matters in the Department in various stages of progress about which we have not had much chance of consultation,

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- 1 Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1902, appendix 29, p.515, C.A.O., C.P. 103, set 12, B2. T.R. Pickering, 'The Evolution of Australia as a State Competent to Act in International Affairs', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1956, p.134.
 - 2 S.M.H., 16 October 1902, pp.7-8; 18 October 1902, pp.9-10. Age, 13 October 1902, p.5; 14 October 1902, p.5; 18 October 1902, p.11. Argus, 29 November 1902, p.15.
 - 3 La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, pp.442, 444.

but there is no part of the New Hebrides business in wh[ich] we have not acted together, & I think you have read every despatch.¹

There is evidence to suggest, however, that Barton was far from a reluctant supporter of an annexationist New Hebrides policy. He was not new to the subject; in 1892, as Acting Premier of New South Wales, he had prevented George Dibbs from exploring the possibility of allowing France to annex the group.² His private correspondence suggests that he was fully in favour of British annexation of the group; his most important reason was apparently his opinion that Australia's security would be threatened if a foreign power were to occupy it. In July 1903 he told his Governor General that he regretted hearing that Britain had refused to try to acquire the islands.³ And in January 1904, after he had retired to the High Court, he told Atlee Hunt:

I should like to know how matters stand now about the New Hebrides. My interest in that, as in all questions of the Pacific, is deep....., and I hope we shall

1 Barton to Deakin, 28 September 1903, Papers of Alfred Deakin, N.L.A., MS 1540/1/469.

2 See above, p.333.

3 Barton to Lord Tennyson, 14 July 1903, Papers of Lord Tennyson, N.L.A., MS 1963/195.

always be 'tenaces proposité', as well as just, in regard of these interests, which will one day be in the care of our rights - of defence.

And he explained that during his administration the acquisition of the group had been an ever present, though unpublicised, aim.¹

The slowness of Barton to press for annexation of the New Hebrides, and his reluctance to publicly announce this aim resulted from his Government's awareness of the diplomatic consequences of stating it and its desire to be as moderate as possible in its representations to Britain on the question. The diplomatic problem was highlighted by Deakin when he confidentially told the Presbyterian deputation that waited on him in May 1902:

We find that every scrap in the papers is cut out by M. Biard d'Aunet [the French Consul-General in Australia] and is sent on with a strong protest. A French paper in Sydney watches every event in the islands; and any reference only means increased activity, and a demand upon the French Government to redoubled exertions. The more we do, and the less we speak about it, the better.²

1 Barton to Hunt, 22 January 1904, Papers of Atlee Hunt, N.L.A., MS 52/2112.

2 C.A.O., A35, bundle 2, no. 23.

Barton expressed his wish for moderation in approaches to Britain about the New Hebrides when, in February 1901, he said at a luncheon organised by the Australian Natives' Association that

...this subject was one which, however firm might be the policy of the Ministry, required a very great amount of prudence and reserve in the exercise of any policy, so that the result of that policy might not be embarrassing to the empire of which we were a part.¹

A consequence of this attitude was that the Government took action, in July 1901, to stop what threatened to be a growing public agitation on the subject by asking Presbyterian Church leaders and others to cease making public statements about French activity in the New Hebrides and to refrain from organising any public meetings on the question.²

The advocacy of the annexation policy in 1903 was triggered off by Britain's recommendation of a Joint

1 Argus, 12 February 1901, p.5.

2 For example, the Rev. John G. Paton to Barton, 18 July 1901: 'I am very sorry I did not know that you wished no further discussion outside your Parliament re the French policy in the New Hebrides..., but I shall henceforth refrain from all allusions to the subject for the press and in public.' C.A.O. A35, bundle 3, no. 11. See also Hunt to R. Wilson, 4 July 1901, ibid., bundle 1, no. 8.

Protectorate and the need to state why that was an unacceptable proposal. It was also probably the result of a growing impatience with Britain's dilatoriness to act on Australia's representations about the New Hebrides, a slowness indicated, to Deakin, by the fact that, in May 1902, of the requests for a land commission and a British Resident Commissioner, only the latter had come to fruition, and this more than a year after it was originally requested. Deakin, when apologising for this delay to the Presbyterian deputation, proclaimed, 'On no subject which we have had to deal with the Colonial Office have we received less satisfaction and experienced more anxiety.'¹

Deakin also felt that the Government was earning unjustified unpopularity by its public silence on the New Hebrides question. From the outset it had believed that public opinion approved of an interventionist New Hebrides policy. In February 1901, in his role as Australian correspondent for the Morning Post, Deakin explained for his English readers his view of the importance of Australian opinion on the question:

There are here all the materials for an international complication of a minor kind. Sydney is affected through her

1 Ibid., bundle 2, no. 23.

commercial interests and Melbourne because of its aggressive tendencies towards a Monroe Doctrine for the Pacific within the Australasian sphere. The Presbyterians everywhere, and especially in Victoria, are politically the most influential among the religious bodies, leading as a rule the Nonconformists, and not infrequently spurring on the Church of England. The religious, political, and commercial interests are almost irresistible locally when they can be kept in combination.¹

While, by its own action, the Government had stifled the public action of, in particular, the Presbyterians, it was, by 1902, fully aware that they and other groups in the community were accusing it of apathy on the question. It was being bombarded with deputations and requests for action from Presbyterians;² the free trade press had taken up the cry of Sydney merchants that its tariff policy was ruining Australia's trade with the group;³ and its one firm supporter among the Sydney and Melbourne morning newspapers, the Age, was becoming increasingly critical

1 Alfred Deakin, Federated Australia, Melbourne, 1968, p.36.

2 See C.A.O., A6 01/1513, A8 A02/57/4; A1 02/3117; A35 bundle 2, nos. 6, 14, 23, bundle 3, nos. 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19.

3 See Argus, 24 February 1902; S.M.H., 17 March 1902; Daily Telegraph, 17 March 1902.

of what it dubbed the Government's 'laissez-aller' policy towards the New Hebrides.¹ The sensitivity of the Government to this paper's criticism was indicated by the report, on the day after the Age had castigated Barton for allegedly not raising the New Hebrides question at the 1902 Imperial Conference, that the Prime Minister had taken exception to its comments about the Government's apathy.² After he retired from office Barton angrily wrote to Hunt, with reference to Britain's New Hebrides policy:

Do you know, if it turns out that after all these years they have done & will do nothing for us, I should be inclined to insist on leave to publish the correspondence in its salient parts. The Government have to consider their responsibility to people & Parliament, & far beyond that, their duty to Australia & its public opinion. The Commonwealth... has suffered obloquy for nearly three years on the ground of its apathy, while all the time it has been actively pushing the question. It is too much that it should continue to suffer abuse & to make enemies simply because the Colonial & Foreign

1 Age, 31 December 1902.

2 Age, 29 October 1902, p.6, and editorial, 28 October 1902. For other relevant editorials see issues for 18 April and 13 November 1902, and 15 June and 9 July 1903.

offices are afraid to let their own wretched pusillanimity & shuffling be known to the world. If leave to publish is asked for & refused, I should still be inclined to publish a narrative which would put the Commonwealth right in Australian opinion.¹

These remarks of Barton to Hunt indicate that he considered the New Hebrides an important subject in the context of his Government's other policies. But exactly how significant was the New Hebrides question to the Government is hard to say, especially in view of the lack of publicity deliberately given to it. However when Barton spoke of his Government's policies to his constituents in January 1902, almost 5% of the space in the verbatim report of his speech was devoted to the New Hebrides, a greater emphasis than that given by James Service in an analagous speech in 1886.² Another quantitative indication that it was an important subject was the fact that during 33 months of office the Government submitted

1 Barton to Hunt, 22 January 1904, Hunt Papers, MS 52/2112. See also H.M. Davies, 'The Administrative Career of Atlee Hunt, 1901-1910', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1968, p.74.

2 Age, 10 January 1902, pp.5-6. For Service's speech, see above, p.80.

37 despatches and cables about it to the British Government.¹ The Government was also willing to contribute money towards maintaining the Australia-New Hebrides shipping service, and in March 1903 it offered to ask Parliament to pay for the administration of the group if Britain were to annex it.²

On the other hand Barton's Government has been accused of being only 'lukewarm' in its desire for the annexation of the New Hebrides.³ To support this assertion, R.T.E. Latham pointed out that, when the Government suggested to Britain in June 1903 that France might sell her interests in the group for £250,000, it refused to provide any money itself except 3% interest on a loan up to that amount.⁴ Barton defended his refusal by claiming that annexation of the group was an 'imperial and not merely Australian' concern; but he may also have believed

1 C.O. 418/9-10, 18-19, 26.

2 Barton to Tennyson, 13 March 1903, C.A.O., A1108, III.

3 R.T.E. Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1928, ch. 3, p.11. See also B.E. Mansfield, 'Studies in External Relations and the Growth of National Sentiment in Australia, 1901-12', B.A. hon.s.thesis, University of Sydney, 1948, pp.137, 141.

4 Ibid. See Tennyson to Chamberlain, 1 June 1903; Chamberlain to Tennyson, 10 July 1903; Barton to Tennyson, 16 July 1903, C.A.O. A1108, III.

that £250,000 on top of the costs of administration that he had already promised would be too much for Parliament to swallow, a reasonable view in the light of the considerable hostility in that body to far smaller subsidies for shipping services to the New Hebrides.¹

Latham, however, added that the Government's attitude was also betrayed by 'its refusal to countenance even a nominal infringement of the great insular principles of Protection and White Australia' for the sake of the New Hebrides, in a reference to its failure to act on the thorny question of tariffs imposed upon New Hebridean goods entering Australia.² But, though Parliamentary opponents of its New Hebrides policy talked freely of competition from the products of coloured labour and a threat to the whole system of protection if tariff relief were given to settlers in the New Hebrides, this is no indication that the Government believed such rhetoric. On the other hand, as with paying money, it had to pay attention to Parliamentary opinion on the subject. Barton indicated this when he wrote to Deakin in September 1903:

1 See below, pp.451, 457, and Appendix, E (ii) (a).

2 Latham, 'The New Hebrides', loc. cit.

It may seem strange that we sho[ul]d be anxious to obtain Territories & still unwilling to encourage them to trade with us.... But then our Parliament will keep the Territories - if it gets them - & will change its opinions, so as to keep them, in the future.¹

It must be remembered also that even British New Guinea was discriminated against by Australian tariffs.

The Barton Government, however, can be accused of slowness to act on the tariff question, for it did see the need for proposing measures to Parliament for the relief of British settlers in the New Hebrides who exported to Australia. It was confronted with the difficulty that there was no settled government in the group with which to make any tariff arrangements and by the problem of giving preference to these islands and ignoring the claims of those already belonging to the empire such as New Guinea and Fiji.² But it was lulled into a sense of false security by the high prices which prevailed for maize in 1902 and 1903, and it was unwilling to approach Parliament about the matter before the question of

1 Barton to Deakin, 28 September 1903, Deakin Papers, MS 1540/1/469.

2 Report of Deputation from Sydney Chamber of Commerce, 15 March 1902, C.A.O., A35, bundle 2, no. 22. Barton to Rason, 12 June 1903, C.A.O., A34.

preferences for British New Guinea was resolved.¹

Another indication of the Barton Government's interest in the New Hebrides was its efforts to acquire accurate information about the group. Principal among these was the despatch of a secret agent there in 1901. The idea was suggested by Arthur Mahaffy, then Assistant to the Resident Commissioner of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate,² and by Wilson Le Couteur who offered his services for this purpose in February 1901.³ Le Couteur was a Jersey Islander, and therefore a fluent speaker of French, who had spent the years 1891-92 in the New Hebrides as agent for the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company and who, at the time of applying for the position of Australia's first spy, was the secretary-treasurer of the Shipmasters' Association of Australia.⁴ After receiving a favourable reference from Sir James Burns and employing a former New South Wales detective

1 Deakin to Tennyson, 19 September 1903, C.A.O., A1108, VIII.

2 Mahaffy to Barton, 22 January 1901, C.A.O., A1108, III.

3 Le Couteur to Barton, 8 February 1901, C.A.O., A35, bundle 1, no. 1.

4 Ibid. F.R.M. Wilson to J. Munro, 10 September 1891, F.C.J.P., V, appendix no. 4. Australasian, 14 April 1900, p.816.

to investigate him,¹ the Government agreed to send Le Couteur to the group under the guise of a representative of Burns, Philp and Company, at the good salary of £7.15.-. per week plus £1 per day for expenses.² He was to make sure the object was unpublicised; and he was to report on the nature and manner of the increase of French settlement in the group, the number of British and French settlers and their economic interests, the attitudes of Europeans and natives to the future of the New Hebrides, the state of the labour supply for planters, and a projected visit of the Governor of New Caledonia to the group.³

Le Couteur spent three months in the New Hebrides and visited all major islands except Aoba, Pentecost and Maewo. On his return he presented to the Government a detailed report which accurately and thoroughly discussed the questions he was asked to examine. His investigations of local attitudes revealed that 'few [British residents] except the missionaries appear anxious for annexation,'

1 Burns to Barton, 2 July 1901; Barton to C. Walker, 17 July 1901, C.A.O., A35 bundle 1, nos. 7, 9.

2 Hunt to Le Couteur, 1 August 1901; Le Couteur to Hunt, 1 August 1901, ibid., no. 11.

3 Hunt to Le Couteur, 1 August 1901, ibid., no. 12.

wanting only equality of opportunity with French settlers; New Hebrideans seemed to favour the British but this had to be set alongside their habit of trying 'to be "all things to all men"'; and there were some Frenchmen who, having suffered from the vagaries of the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides, would not be averse to British annexation. It was clear however, he said, that the French were becoming daily more predominant in numbers and that British planters were suffering acutely from shortage of labour.¹ The report was released anonymously to the public in the Age.²

Le Couteur also assisted the Government in pointing out sources of information when, in May 1901, he wrote of articles relating to the New Hebrides in New Caledonian newspapers, which prompted Atlee Hunt to subscribe to the various French papers published in Australia and Nouméa.³ At the end of 1901, when replying to a Presbyterian deputation, Barton cited as his sources of information deputations and letters from missionaries

1 Le Couteur to Barton, 26 November 1901, ibid., no. 23.

2 Age, 6 February 1902, p.5; 8 February 1902, p.13; 11 February 1902, p.6.

3 Le Couteur to Barton, 10 May 1901, and minute by Hunt, 17 May 1901, C.A.O., A35, bundle 1, no. 5.

and settlers, reports from the British navy, all Sydney and Melbourne morning daily papers and the French Australian and New Caledonian papers. And he claimed: 'There is no subject to which I have given so much attention'.¹

(b) The Watson and Reid Governments in Australia, 1904-1905

As Professor La Nauze has demonstrated, Alfred Deakin carried on the Barton Government's New Hebrides policy when he took office in September 1903.² The policy was also continued after Deakin was replaced by John C. Watson's Labour Government late in April 1904.

It was no foregone conclusion that a Labour administration would support the New Hebrides policy of its predecessors, for there was a strong isolationist strain in Labour Party thinking,³ and, as the discussion below of the views of Parliamentarians shows, a number of its members thought Australia should have nothing to do

1 Report of Deputation, 2 December 1901, ibid., bundle 2, no. 14.

2 La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, pp.446-7.

3 C. Grimshaw, 'Australian Nationalism and the Imperial Connection, 1900-1914', Australian Journal of Politics and History, 3 (1958), p.167.

with the group.¹ Watson himself had declared in favour of Australians restricting their operations to their own continent in his policy speech in the 1903 election campaign,² and the previous year, when opposing the subsidy for the New Hebrides shipping service, he had said: 'it would be a good thing if the fever-stricken islands were confined to French settlers.'³ Atlee Hunt later claimed that he 'had to fight hard' to get the Watson Government to maintain the shipping subsidy.⁴

When, however, the Labour Cabinet considered the New Hebrides question, its members had before them a memorandum from W.M. Hughes, the Minister for External Affairs, which strongly recommended that they should support British interests in the group.⁵ That this viewpoint prevailed, was possibly a victory for the

1 See below, pp.451, 457.

2 S.M.H., 13 November 1903, p.6.

3 C.P.D., XII, 26 September 1902, p.16196.

4 Hunt to J. Roseby, 9 May 1912, Hunt Papers, MS 52/722.

5 Memorandum re Pacific Islands, in Hughes to H.B. Higgins, 17 June 1904, Personal Papers of Henry Bournes Higgins as Attorney General, 1904, C.A.O., C.P.930.

persuasive Atlee Hunt who drew up the memorandum for Hughes,¹ although precisely why Watson altered his views is not revealed in his public statements or private correspondence. The result was that the Prime Minister changed his isolationist tune to an interventionist refrain. He told Parliament the following month that, because of the potential threat to Australia's security if a foreign power occupied the New Hebrides, it was a pity Britain had not annexed the group long before.² Two weeks later Hughes announced that the Government was not going to change Australia's New Hebrides policy when he told a Presbyterian deputation that:

The Government thoroughly realised the great importance of these Islands from an Imperial standpoint. He recognised the harbourages and coaling station facilities which other European nations would take advantage of when the British nation could not protect them and Australia too.... It might be that it was essential to retain our foothold in these islands....³

To the British Government's communication that it had agreed with France on the necessity for establishing

1 For a discussion of this memorandum and Hunt's interest in the New Hebrides, see Davies, 'The Administrative Career of Atlee Hunt', p.77.

2 C.P.D., XX, 28 July 1904, p.3688.

3 S.M.H., 9 August 1904, p.5.

machinery for solving land problems, Watson not only expressed pleasure at the news but also set out recommendations for the solution of the problem which exhibited a thorough grasp of the situation in the group.¹ And he offered to ask Parliament to provide for the costs British settlers would incur in presenting their claims for arbitration.² The Government also approved of Burns, Philp's proposal to improve its shipping services for a bigger subsidy;³ and in Parliament Watson agreed that something must be done about Australian tariffs on New Hebrides produce, admitting 'that there are strategic reasons for infringing upon what otherwise should be the policy of Australia'.⁴ The Labour Government cannot be blamed for not doing anything about these matters, for it was turned out of office in August 1904, less than four months after it came into power.

George Reid, who followed Watson as Prime Minister, had previously dealt with the New Hebrides

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- 1 He emphasised that on investigation many French land titles probably would be proved invalid.
 - 2 Watson to Northcote, 22 June 1904, C.A.O., All08, III.
 - 3 Statement by Hughes to the Presbyterian deputation, S.M.H., 9 August 1904, p.5.
 - 4 C.P.D., XX, 28 July 1904, p.3689.

question during his long term in the 1890s as Premier of New South Wales. In August 1904, just before he took over the Government, he showed his willingness to be identified with those who wanted British annexation of the group when he introduced a deputation of Presbyterians to Hughes.¹ And two weeks after assuming office, he informed Britain that his Government shared the views of its predecessors about the group and would 'employ every available means to further the wishes of the Australian people in this matter.'²

During the period he was in power Reid partly honoured this promise by asking Parliament for an extra £6,000 for Burns, Philp's shipping services to the New Hebrides and other islands. He told the House of Representatives:

We are very anxious to do something to retain our hold upon the Pacific Islands.... One thing we can do is to encourage closer commercial relationships between the Islands and the Commonwealth. Most of our great colonial enterprises have had their beginning in the subsidizing of a trade route.³

1 S.M.H., 9 August 1904, p.5.

2 Reid to Tennyson, 31 August 1904, C.A.O., A1108, III.

3 C.P.D., XXII, 27 October 1904, p.6252. For a discussion of the negotiations for this contract, see Davies, 'The Administrative Career of Atlee Hunt', p.78.

In December 1904 his Government reminded Britain that, though a press report stated that a special Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies had urged French annexation of the group, Australians strongly objected to such an eventuality and their Government should be consulted before Britain considered such a proposal from France. He also asked what further had been done to resolve the land problem.¹

Reid, however, made no progress in dealing with the question of tariffs on imports from the New Hebrides, despite the free trade principles of his Government.

In September 1904 he told the Argus:

It's a most difficult thing...to give preferences to people outside the empire without also extending the same concession to those inside it. Everyone wishes to help these settlers, but at present I cannot say more than that their claims are receiving consideration.²

But the problems of governing with a majority of only two in the House of Representatives and perhaps a lack of desire as strong as that of Barton or Deakin to push the New Hebrides issue - possibly reflected by the fact that his Government sent only four despatches and cables

1 Northcote to Lyttleton, 11 December 1904, C.O. 418/31.

2 Argus, 27 September 1904, p.4.

on the subject to Britain during its 11 months of office¹ - were possible reasons why he did nothing further on the tariff question.

(c) Britain and France, 1901-1904

The advent of the Commonwealth of Australia saw the Colonial Office, still under the control of the imperialistic minded Chamberlain, at odds on the New Hebrides question with the Foreign Office. The latter was now under the control of the Marquess of Lansdowne, whose attitude to the expansion of the empire was as conservative as Salisbury's.² John Anderson indicated this in a minute on the first Australian request in 1901 for action to solve the problem of land ownership in the group:

The F.O. will not...budge in the matter. We told them more than a year ago that the land question ought to be taken up by a Joint International Commission, and recently returned to the charge, but they do not regard the time as opportune....³

1 C.O. 418/31, 36.

2 J.A.S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy, London 1964, pp.436-7.

3 Minute by Anderson, 7 February 1901, on Hopetoun to Chamberlain, 6 February 1901, C.O. 418/9.

The result was that the Foreign Office waited until it was approached by France in June 1901 before it took up the land question.¹ H. Bertram Cox, head of the Australian Department at the Colonial Office, expressed concern at how the land negotiations would proceed, for he was 'not at all certain that the Foreign Office are wholehearted in this matter.'²

Australian representations on the New Hebrides issue during 1901 impressed the officials at the Colonial Office. The cables and despatches of the first few months, wrote one of them:

...show that the Commonwealth Govt. are taking very seriously this New Hebrides question and I think that we shall have to strongly impress upon the F.O. the danger of straining the loyalty of the Australians if this question is allowed to drag on indefinitely.³

The Earl of Onslow, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, approved of the 'moderate and reasonable' tone of the Australian correspondence.⁴ and Chamberlain was moved to

1 F.O. to C.O., 8 June 1901, C.O. 225/62.

2 Minute by Cox, 13 June 1901, on ibid.

3 Minute by G.W. Johnson, 20 May 1901, on Hopetoun to Chamberlain, 30 March 1901, C.O. 418/9.

4 Minute by Onslow, 22 May 1901, on ibid.

proclaim, with reference to the land problem: 'It is urgent to get some settlement before matters are so embittered as to leave us no alternative but war with France or breaking with the Commonwealth.'¹

The Colonial Office's desire to placate the Australian Government on the New Hebrides question, however, was tempered by its unwillingness to trust the responsibility of Australians in a matter which involved Britain's delicate relations with France. On deciding to appoint a resident Commissioner for the group, Chamberlain wrote: 'If I knew an Australian who could be trusted I would take him but...I do not'.² The Office was consequently unwilling to fully inform Australia of Britain's negotiations with France because it was felt that there was a danger that information 'w[ould] be published in the newspapers next day & spoil everything.'³ The British Government has been criticised for this attitude,⁴ but its fear was not illusionary. Between 1900

1 Minute by Chamberlain, 2 March 1901, on Admiralty to C.O., 18 February 1901, C.O. 225/61.

2 Minute by Chamberlain, 16 August 1901, on F.O. to C.O., 10 August 1901, C.O. 225/62.

3 Minute by Cox, 15 October 1901, on Hopetoun to Chamberlain, 26 August 1901, C.O. 418/10.

4 La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, pp.444,453.

and 1906 there were four cases of confidential despatches being leaked to the Australian press,¹ one of which was the publication in the Argus in June 1903 of a confidential memorandum forwarded to the Australian Government in November 1902, which summarised all negotiations with France on the land problem during the previous two years.²

There was also a limit to the extent Chamberlain was prepared to go to satisfy Australian aspirations towards the New Hebrides. His Permanent Under Secretary, Sir Montague Ommaney, suggested in April 1901 that a solution might be to offer France some territory, such as Gambier or British Honduras, in return for British annexation of the group, though he recognised that such a move could prove unpopular in Britain. Chamberlain emphatically replied that he 'could not consider for a moment' the abandonment of any part of the empire.³ And when, in June 1903, the Australian Government asked if Britain would provide up to £250,000 for buying French interests in the group, Chamberlain declared: 'I for one

1 Minute by H.T.A., 31 October 1906, on Northcote to Elgin, 6 July 1906, C.O. 418/45.

2 Tennyson to Chamberlain, 18 June 1903, C.O. 418/26.

3 Minutes by Ommaney, 23 April 1901, and Chamberlain, 24 April 1901, on F.O. to C.O., 12 April 1901, C.O. 225/61.

will not ask the Taxpayer of this Country to find a penny. We have no interest in the Islands except Australia's & if Australia wants them...Australia must find the money.'¹

At the same time, however, Chamberlain announced that he was prepared to rescind his former objection to exploring the possibility of ceding British territory to meet Australia's desire for British annexation of the New Hebrides. This was a major, though unpublicised, concession to Australian demands, and it marked the only occasion when Britain made an attempt to satisfy Australia's annexationist aspirations towards the group. He wrote that from conversations with Theophile Delcassé, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, he thought 'it possible that France might part with the New Hebrides for a compensation which it might be possible for us to agree to.'² But he recognised that a stumbling block remained in the attitude of those who were responsible for Britain's foreign policy and that 'the real question is whether the F.O. has enough in hand to tempt the French to be liberal in the matter'.³

1 Minute by Chamberlain, n.d. [July 1903], on Tennyson to Chamberlain, 1 June 1903, C.O. 418/26.

2 Ibid.

3 Minute by Chamberlain, 29 August 1903, on Tennyson to Chamberlain, 26 August 1903, ibid.

Chamberlain's fear about the attitude of the Foreign Office to the concession of territory was justified, for when in February 1904 Lansdowne did make an offer to France for the New Hebrides - in the course of his discussions with Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador, which resulted in the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 - he was willing to concede only the tiny Isles de Los off the coast of French Guinea.¹ This offer was promptly rejected by France, though the islands in question contained a valuable harbour, for in these negotiations Cambon was confident that Britain wanted to reach an agreement more urgently than did France and he could therefore afford 'to be difficult', with the result that France obtained the Isles de Los anyway.²

During the Entente negotiations France asked for a partition of the New Hebrides, which Britain,

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- 1 Lansdowne to Cambon, 5 February 1904, G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperly (eds.), British Documents on the Origin of the War, 1898-1914, II, London, 1927, p.343. La Nauze expressed himself mystified as to why Lansdowne made this offer (Alfred Deakin, pp.446-7), but it seems clear that it was a response to Colonial Office pressure.
 - 2 C. Andrew, Theophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale, London, 1968, pp.212-3.

because of Australia's views, rejected.¹ But Delcassé instructed Cambon that if partition was impossible he might consider letting Britain have the group in return for territorial compensation.² However he probably would have placed a high price on French interests in the islands, for, in the period 1900-1904 the French Government had shown a greater interest in them than in any previous years. This was reflected by the appointment of the Governor of New Caledonia as High Commissioner for the group with powers similar to those possessed by the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, by the sending of a resident commissioner to the islands, by the provision of a subsidy to the Marist Fathers to send additional missionaries there, and by the lowering and final abolition of import duties on French produced New Hebridean exports to France and New Caledonia. The result had been that, as discussed above, the French had become dominant in population and had strengthened their influence in the group, a point which Cambon emphasised

1 Gooch & Temperly, British Documents, pp.293, 305, 315.

2 Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1871-1914, 2nd Series, III, Paris, 1931, pp.486, 511, 518.

in his reply to Lansdowne's offer of the Isles de Los.¹ During this period the French Government also continued to resist British requests for an international prohibition on the sale of arms and liquor to New Hebrideans,² and it prevented any progress being made in negotiations for a solution to the land problem by insisting that all registered titles to land should be accepted without question.³

(d) Australia, Britain, France and the Convention of 1906

The year 1906 was the major turning point in the political history of the New Hebrides. It saw the ratification of the Anglo-French Convention drawn up by a Commission which met in London in February that year, which declared a joint protectorate over the group and established a Condominium government. Details of this Convention have been expounded by R.T.E. Latham, Linden Mander and Deryck Scarr, and the latter has thoroughly examined the negotiations relating to the land problem,

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- 1 Cambon to Lansdowne, 18 February 1904, Gooch & Temperly, British Documents, p.345.
 - 2 C.O. to F.O., 19 January 1902; F.O. to C.O., 7 August 1902, F.O.C.P., 8185/25, 113.
 - 3 For these negotiations, see Deryck Scarr, Fragments of Empire, Canberra, 1967, pp.221-3.

which was one of the major issues at the Commission.¹
It was this problem which led to its meeting, France having suggested in December 1905 broadening a projected conference about land matters to one dealing as well with the political status of the group.²

As Dr Scarr has pointed out, the British delegates - Bertram Cox and H.E. Dale of the Colonial Office, C.J.B. Hurst, the legal adviser of the Foreign Office, and, their leader, Sir Eldon Gorst, the Assistant Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs - gave ground practically all the way on the land question, conceding in the end all France wanted, in that titles registered before 1896 were to be virtually inviolable, which would confirm the enormous and often extremely dubious purchases of Higginson's Compagnie Calédonienne des Nouvelles-Hébrides unless British settlers could prove that their titles were historically more respectable.³
The final result, as the judgements of the Joint Court of the New Hebrides indicate, was that natives were

1 See Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 4; Linden A. Mander, 'The New Hebrides Condominium: 1906 to the Present', Pacific Historical Review, 13 (1944), pp.151-4; Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.223-7.

2 Ibid., p.223.

3 Ibid., pp.225-7.

forced to rely upon the generosity of that Court in granting them tribal reserves in order to retain the use of land that was claimed by Europeans, though, because British settlers were first in the group, much of the land their successors claimed was granted to them. Such British land, however, was much smaller in area than that awarded to French subjects.¹

Another major issue considered by the Commission was the recruitment of native labourers. The French delegates successfully persuaded the British to accept most of their proposed regulations in this field, which imposed restrictions on the freedom of action of their own colonists, but which prevented British authorities from having any jurisdiction over them and left French recruiters considerable freedom.²

1 J.C.N.H., Land Registration Judgements, passim. In these land cases, which did not commence until 1928, the principal British claimants, Burns, Philp and Company and the Presbyterian Mission, were also often helped by the fact that they filed their applications before those of their French rivals, so that the latter were placed in the disadvantageous position of having to contest judgements already given. This, plus the granting of native reserves, which in recent times has been calculated on the basis of 25 acres per head of population, resulted in the S.F.N.H. being finally granted less than 300,000 of the original c.2,000,000 acres it claimed; (for the latter information I am indebted to J.P. Trainor, the British judge in the New Hebrides).

2 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the New Hebrides Commission...', 20, 23 February 1906, F.O.C.P. 8721.

On this and on other subjects the French had the distinct advantage that their delegation contained the only member of the Commission who had any first-hand experience of the New Hebrides, Edouard Picanon, a former Acting Governor of New Caledonia, who assured the meeting that the scattered nature of the European population in the group would make impracticable a proposal of the British delegation that all recruiting should be verified by independent European witnesses; he probably insisted upon this because he would have known there were parts of the group which were good recruiting areas, such as Tanna and Aoba, where the local Europeans were mostly British, many of them missionaries.¹ The British delegates in fact made no special effort to acquire local information about the group, relying on their own knowledge of correspondence about the islands received by their Government. A.K. Langridge, the Secretary of the Presbyterian John G. Paton Mission Fund, offered to give the Foreign Office names of men who had lived in the New Hebrides, but was politely ignored.²

As a result of this failure to acquire local

1 Ibid. Minute by H.E. Dale, 11 August 1906, on Northcote to Elgin, 14 June 1906, C.O. 418/44.

2 Langridge to Sir E. Grey, 3 February 1906; F.O. to Langridge, 10 February 1906, F.O.C.P. 8951/12-13.

knowledge and an unwillingness to put great pressure on the French negotiators, the British delegates conceded other points which were to have a considerable effect on the working of the Condominium. They allowed the French to whittle down the penal powers of the Joint Court. The maximum of one month's imprisonment for breaches of the regulations relating to the sale of arms and liquor was accepted because Picanon insisted that the climate made this term the longest a European could be expected to endure in the New Hebrides,¹ a curious proposition considering that Europeans could be and were imprisoned for much longer periods in Fiji and New Caledonia, where the climate is similar to that of the New Hebrides. And no reason was given why Gorst and his colleagues accepted the reduction of their proposed £40 as the maximum fine for convictions of the Joint Court to the £20 proposed by the French, which, as later experience proved, was ridiculously low in the face of the enormous profits that could be made from the sale of goods proscribed by the Convention.²

More seriously, the Joint Court was given no power to carry out its judgements in criminal matters,

1 'Minutes of the New Hebrides Commission...', 22 February 1906.

2 For an example of such profits, see Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.233.

which was a great victory for the French delegates, who, as their leader, Saint-Germain, observed, wanted as little neutral administration as possible. Dual authority, he said, granted Frenchmen a privileged position from which they could further expand their influence in the group.¹ The Joint Court's powerlessness made meaningless the one major French concession in the administrative details of the Convention - the banning of the sale of firearms and alcohol to New Hebrideans - the moment local French authorities decided, as was to happen, to ignore the laws imposed on their nationals.

On the other hand, in agreeing to the principle of a joint protectorate, France did make a considerable concession in the light of her previous policy towards the group, and this was the one decision of the Commission about which Saint-Germain was defensive in his long report on its work to Georges Leygues, the French Minister for the Colonies. He recognised that there would be critics in France who would object to this formal abandonment of French pretensions to annex the group. His defence was that the understanding of 1878 had given Britain equal rights with France in the islands and that this had

1 Rapport de M. Saint-Germain Sénateur au Ministre des Colonies sur la Convention Franco-Anglaise, 13 April 1906, Des Granges Papers, Australian National University, Canberra.

been confirmed by the Convention of 1887.¹ Previous French Governments, however, had not recognised this. In 1889 France had objected to Romilly's appointment as British Deputy Commissioner on the ground that it would give Britain a status in the group which she had not hitherto enjoyed, the agreements of 1878 and 1887 having confirmed the maintenance of the group's independence. And it had been the declared policy of the French Government that had signed the 1887 Convention that this was in no way to hinder the aim of ultimate French annexation, a policy which was endorsed by the Inter-Ministerial Commission of 1900.² Saint-Germain claimed that, given previous arrangements such as the case of Samoa, a Condominium was not necessarily permanent and that it would give France even greater opportunity to increase her influence in the group than existed under the status quo, in order to argue later for annexation.³ He claimed that anarchic conditions had given Australians their best argument for urging British annexation of the islands; but since Britain had never supported such an argument, and since France had successfully

1 Ibid.

2 See above, pp.217, 355-6.

3 Rapport de M. Saint-Germain....

ignored for nearly 20 years all British requests for improvements to the status quo precisely because she saw her own citizens profiting from it, there was no real advantage to her in finally agreeing to impose restriction upon her colonists. On the one hand, by so doing she was able to force the acceptance of her views on the land question, but on the other hand, she paid the price of allowing an even more powerful argument to Australians if her citizens were to ignore the agreed prohibitions. By giving Britain a formal status in the group, and by binding the French Government to the acceptance of a responsibility for controlling the activities of its nationals, Saint-Germain and his colleagues had greatly restricted the freedom of action of future French governments to pursue the annexationist goal of their predecessors. Up to the present day, France's victory on the land question has had no impact upon the political status of the group, for that has not been altered since 1922, before the Joint Court had started judging land cases, whereas her concessions on the arms and drink question and her willingness to impose regulations upon French recruitment and use of labour markedly weakened her position in 1914 when the Condominium

was finally revised.¹

Australians, therefore, had some reason to be pleased with the Convention of 1906, for it was one more nail in the coffin of French ambitions to annex the New Hebrides. But the Deakin Government, as Professor La Nauze has shown, expressed great annoyance at Britain's failure to inform it that negotiations for a joint protectorate were taking place.² The British Government was clearly guilty of cavalierly ignoring Australia's close interest in the question, perhaps as La Nauze suggested because of the confusion consequent on a change of government.³ However the permanent officials at the Colonial Office were also at fault. They were unreasonably convinced that they knew what Australia wanted. Dale commented in March 1906, before Australian protests were heard, 'the draft Convention...provides practically for what Mr. Deakin desires.'⁴ They claimed they were only

1 See below, pp.588-9.

2 La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, pp.448-50.

3 Ibid., pp.448-9. This has also been suggested in Ronald Hyam, Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905-1908, London, 1968, p.304.

4 Minute by Dale, 16 March 1906, on Northcote to Elgin, 7 February 1906, C.O. 418/44.

carrying out Australia's request for them to find out on what terms France would accept a joint protectorate;¹ but they did not even acknowledge that they were acting on this request, nor did they ask what terms Australia considered desirable. Perhaps this was because they did not want Australian representations to ruin a chance to solve a most bothersome problem, reasoning that it would be better to present Australia with a fait accompli; and certainly their mistrustfulness of Australian security inhibited any disposition to inform the Commonwealth of the negotiations once they were under way. 'As regards keeping Australia better informed as to the progress of negotiations,' wrote Ommaney, 'it must be remembered that we can never be sure that anything we tell them will not find its way into the newspapers.'²

There was no chance that Britain would have

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- 1 Minute by Dale, 11 August 1906, on Northcote to Elgin, 14 June 1906, ibid. For the Australian request, see La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, p.448.
 - 2 Minute by Ommaney, 19 March 1906, on Northcote to Elgin, 7 February 1906, C.O., 418/44.

invited an Australian or New Zealand¹ representative to participate in the Commission. Ommaney wrote later that he was 'convinced that if delegates from Australia and New Zealand had been present, the negotiations with France would have broken down at the outset.'² The British Government in its reply to Australian objections suggested that the long list of amendments to the Convention Deakin submitted when he was given a chance to comment on it did not presuppose any knowledge of local conditions other than that already possessed by the British Government, which implied that Australian representation on the Commission would have served no particularly useful purpose.³ And Dale triumphantly pointed out that the Australian Government failed to criticise to any degree the clauses dealing with the land question, which he considered the 'most dangerous' and most important provisions of the Convention and which

1 For New Zealand's interest in the New Hebrides in the period 1901-1906, see Angus Ross, New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, 1964, pp.284-6.

2 Minute of Ommaney, 8 November 1906, on F.O. to C.O., 20 October 1906, C.O. 225/74.

3 Elgin to Northcote, 16 November 1906, C.P.P., 1907, p.556.

were 'far too favourable to the French'.¹

In view of the central importance of the land question in Australia's representations on the New Hebrides issue since 1901, it was certainly surprising that the Convention's solution to that problem was meekly accepted by Australia. Cox had recommended that the terms of the Convention be fully explained to Australia in a despatch rather than a cable because:

...it is impossible to explain the land settlement principles in a telegram & if we tell them beforehand about arms & liquor, recruiting etc which they will like we shall have discounted the value of these articles beforehand, and we want the sweetner of these provisions to neutralise the bitterness of the land clauses.²

In Deakin's reply ironically enough the land settlement was accepted in principle but 'strong exception' was taken to the provisions for enforcing the regulations on other questions, in particular the power given to Resident Commissioners to nullify the decisions of the

1 Minute by Dale, 11 August 1906, on Northcote to Elgin, 14 June 1906, C.O. 418/44.

2 Minute by Cox, 3 March 1906, on F.O. to C.O., 1 March 1906, C.O. 225/74.

Joint Court.¹ Dale, however, was wrong in assuming that this was a reflection of Australian ignorance of the true situation, for the Australian reply was in fact based upon an attempt to acquire accurate local information. As soon as the Government received the draft Convention, as well as asking for the views of the New Zealand Government, it sent a detailed questionnaire seeking information on salient points to as representative a group of people in Australia connected with the New Hebrides as could, on short notice, be found: the Rev. Daniel Macdonald, who had just retired from the position of Presbyterian missionary at Havannah Harbour which he had held for over 30 years, and who had proved himself a strong supporter of British settlement in the group; the two Australian commercial firms involved in the islands, Burns, Philp and Company, which was also the largest British landowner there, and Kerr Brothers; J.G. Macdonald, a former planter in the group and contributor to the Sydney Morning Herald on New Hebrides affairs; and Rear-Admiral Sir W.H. Fawkes, the commander-in-chief of the Royal Navy's Australian Station.²

1 Deakin to Northcote, 13 June 1906, C.P.P., 1907, pp.569-73.

2 Hunt to D. Macdonald, J.G. Macdonald, Burns, Philp and Company and Kerr Brothers, 27 April 1906; Deakin to Northcote, 27 April 1906, C.A.O., A1, 06/4798.

Only the replies of the two Macdonalds and Burns, Philp were received in time for the drafting of Deakin's comments on the Convention. The missionary and ex-planter warned that mere registration of titles was an insufficient basis for judging land disputes, but the largest British landholder expressed no fear that its claims would be seriously disrupted by the land clauses of the Convention. This was possibly because the company had little interest in its New Hebrides properties, but it probably influenced the Government's decision not to raise serious objections to these clauses. All three correspondents stressed the need for independent witnesses for the recruitment of labour and that they could be readily obtained - 'There is still a strong leaven of the "blackbirder" in the inter-island recruiter', wrote J.G. Macdonald. And Burns, Philp and Daniel Macdonald emphasised the need for heavy money penalties and their strict enforcement for breaches of the proposed prohibition on the sale of arms and liquor to the natives.¹ This information, added to an understandable mistrustfulness of the intentions of French governments were good and, as it turned out, prophetic reasons for Australia's objection to the lack of authority of the proposed Joint Court.

1 D. Macdonald to Hunt, 30 April; Sir J. Burns to Hunt, 30 April; J.G. Macdonald to Hunt, 3 May 1906, ibid.

The British delegates, said Dale, had considered that to give the Joint Court more authority 'would be less acceptable to Australia, as tending to make the Joint Protectorate more "Joint" & thereby giving France a firmer footing in the group.'¹ This was a convenient dovetailing of alleged Australian views with the attitude of the French delegates, who were determined to reduce the powers of that Court as much as possible; but it was a serious indication of Britain's failure to consult Australia, for the gravamen of the Australian Government's objection to the Convention was the very opposite of this. The Australian view was no new one thought up after the Convention was formulated. Deakin had expressed it in August 1905 when he wrote to Richard Seddon, the Prime Minister of New Zealand:

We so far have opposed a Joint Protectorate though...in face of the hopelessness of annexation by the Mother Country we may be forced to reconsider it. On two conditions it might become acceptable as the least worst of the remaining contingencies. These are:

1. The Protectorate to be perpetual & unalterable in its terms except with the concurrence of N[ew] Z[ealand] and the C[om]m[on]w[ea]lth as well as the two high contracting parties. The Samoan surrender

1 Minute by Dale, 6 July 1906, in im Thurn to Elgin, 21 May 1906, C.O. 225/72.

could not be repeated under such safeguards.

2. No concession to be made by any of the parties be accepted for the islands unless it were made without discrimination or distinction to the whole of their inhabitants. This would prevent the rivalry between French & English Companies or settlers, at all counts with the support of their governments.¹

In this context the land clauses of the Convention could be accepted, for if there was no chance of the Condominium being revoked it would not matter if French subjects gained a greater proportion of the land, especially as this was the one area where the neutral Joint Court was to have absolute authority. The Australian Government was admittedly ignoring the interests of New Hebrideans at this point, but it rightly insisted that they could suffer severely from the lack of authority of the Court in the realms of recruiting and the sale of arms and drink. The paragraph of Deakin's critique of the Convention which summed up this opinion contained one of the most pertinent criticisms of that agreement made by any contemporary:

The value of this Convention in securing harmony among the non-native population, and promoting the welfare of the aborigines,

1 Deakin to Seddon, 17 August 1905, Deakin Papers, MS 1540/6/4485.

depends not only on the form and nature of the laws, but in an even greater measure on the absolute impartiality of the officers charged with the duty of carrying them into effect....¹

The vehement and unexpected nature of the Australian Government's reaction to the Convention - reinforced by an almost identical reply from New Zealand which was agreed to by Deakin and Seddon when the latter, just before his death, visited Australia - impressed the Colonial Office with the need to do something to abate the hostility aroused. Cox told Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary:

I think a reassembly of the Commission is necessary & that if the F.O. concur a Commonwealth representative should come over. He should be given as high a place in precedence as is possible - next to the President among our members. Any less position may offend Australia which would be most undesirable....

Elgin agreed that this was 'the best way of meeting Australian criticisms.'²

The Foreign Office, however, was less mindful of the need to placate Australia and considered that the

1 Deakin to Northcote, 13 June 1906, C.P.P., 1907, p.573.

2 Minutes by Cox, 21 August, and Elgin, 22 August 1906, on im Thurn to Elgin, 20 August 1906, C.O. 225/73.

Colonial Office's suggestion would unduly prolong the settlement of the New Hebrides question, which had been made especially undesirable by recently received news of a German attempt to buy land in the group.¹ The upshot was an attempt to persuade France to declare the joint protectorate and to leave the ratification of the details of the Convention until they could be reconsidered. This was, not surprisingly, rejected by the French Government, which considered that the victories won by its delegates at the Commission might be lost if France committed herself to a joint protectorate before Britain formally agreed to them.² In the face of the German

1 F.O. to C.O., 31 August 1906, C.O. 225/74. The land in question was a harbour-front property owned by Chevillard at Vila.

2 R. Lister to Sir E. Grey, 26 September 1906, F.O.C.P., 8951/74. F.O. to C.O., 27 September 1906, C.O. 225/74.

threat, which seemed very real,¹ Australia was left with no alternative but to agree, in October 1906, to the immediate signing of the Convention.²

1 Admiral Fawkes told the Governor General that it was probable that the land was to be bought for a German coaling station; (Fawkes to Northcote, 3 September 1906, C.A.O., A1108, IV). Commander D'Oyley discovered that an exorbitantly high price was being offered for the land, which seemed to indicate to him the probability of German Government support for the move. He also secretly saw German correspondence which seemed to support this interpretation; (D'Oyley to im Thurn, 25, 31 August 1906, in im Thurn to Elgin, 20 September 1906, C.O. 225/73).

2 See La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, p.451.

III

Australian Opinion, 1901-1906(a) Parliament

It has been asserted that 'in the twentieth century there has never been any strong public opinion in Australia on the New Hebrides question.'¹ This conclusion was supported by a later study of attitudes of members of the Australian Parliament in the period 1901-1906, who were said to be generally apathetic towards efforts to increase British influence in the New Hebrides, and whose views allegedly indicated that isolationism was a stronger force in Australia at that time than was an imperialistic attitude toward the

1 R.T.E. Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1928, ch. 4, p.12.

Pacific.¹

In the Commonwealth Parliament in the period 1901-1906 discussions about the New Hebrides centered upon the issues of the political status of the group, the lifting of tariffs imposed on New Hebrides goods entering Australia, and the provision of the government subsidy for shipping services to the New Hebrides and other Pacific islands. Most of the debates occurred in the second Parliament, which sat from 1904 to 1906,² and upon which the following analysis is based.

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- 1 B.E. Mansfield, 'Studies in External Relations and the Growth of National Sentiment in Australia, 1901-1912', B.A. hons. thesis, University of Sydney, 1948, pp.144-7, 159. Though an undergraduate thesis, this work is competent and, to date, contains the best attempt to consider Australian attitudes outside government circles to the Pacific in the period it covers. It is a reasonable assumption that debates on the New Hebrides issue in the Commonwealth Parliament would reflect to some degree opinion in the country at large, for there was no occasion when the Government staked its life on it, as there had been in South Australia and New South Wales in the 1880s. Nor is there any indication that members were forced to follow any party-line on the question, not surprisingly in view of the lack of cohesion in all parties in the period 1901-1906; (see I.R. Campbell, 'Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups in Australia, 1900-1905', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1962, pp.88-90).
 - 2 The only extensive discussions of New Hebrides affairs in the first Parliament, though there were frequent questions on the subject, was on the shipping subsidy issue in September 1902, See C.P.D., XII, pp.16195-8.

The claim that Parliament was apathetic about the New Hebrides is supported by the comment of the Argus that, on the day in July 1904 Staniforth Smith in the Senate and William Elliot Johnson in the House of Representatives both moved resolutions urging the Government to take action to support British settlers in the New Hebrides, they 'drove nearly all the members into the smoking-rooms.'¹ Yet, of 111 members who were elected to Parliament in 1904, 50 spoke about the group in the ensuing three years.² This admittedly was less than half the total but, since the Government did not encourage debates on the New Hebrides, the scope for the expression of views on that question was limited primarily to four private members' motions and debates on the Pacific shipping subsidy.³ There were probably members

1 Argus, 29 July 1904.

2 See Appendix E (ii) (a).

3 C.P.D., XX, 28 July 1904, pp.3646-54, 3681-9; XXI, 11 August 1904, pp.4083-100; XXII, 20 October 1904, pp.4873-4; 27 October 1904, pp.6252-5; XXIII, 28 October 1904, pp.6300-25; XXIV, 8 December 1904, pp.8113-4, 81120, 81126, 81131, 81132, 81156; 9 December 1904, pp.8194-8; 13 December 1904, pp.8240-96; XXV, 10 August 1905, pp.788-811; XXXII, 19 July 1906, pp.1537-42.

who would have spoken, given more opportunity.¹ Nor can the division in the Senate on the subsidy be taken into account, because this vote was not necessarily a reflection of opinions about the worthwhileness of subsidising an Australia-New Hebrides shipping service; some voted for it solely because they felt the Government had to honour its obligations,² and others voted against it not because they disapproved of the idea but because they objected to Burns, Philp and Company getting the subsidy without tenders being called for the contract.³

Of those who spoke on the New Hebrides question, 34 were in favour of efforts to increase British influence in the group⁴ and 16 opposed such moves.⁵ ~~Twelve~~ of the opponents were members of the Labour Party; that party,

1 For example, Robert Harper, a prominent Victorian Presbyterian supporter of an interventionist New Hebrides policy outside Parliament. See Appendix E (i) (a), and above, pp.234, 287 note 4, and 324. See also below, p.553.

2 For example, Willian Trenwith, C.P.D., XXIV, p.8293.

3 For example, George Pearce, ibid., p.8283.

4 See Appendix E (i) (a). Six of these spoke only in favour of the shipping subsidy.

5 See ibid. Four of these are classified solely on what they said when opposing the shipping subsidy.

however, was ~~nearly~~ evenly divided on the question, since nine of its members supported the policy.¹

An analysis of the backgrounds of the Labour Party members² reveals no obvious reason for the division of opinion within the party. Three who were ministers in the Labour Government of 1904 were interventionists, but one of their colleagues was an opponent.³ Socio-economic status had no apparent effect on the division,⁴ but, considering that in all parties those belonging to the working class⁵ were markedly more opposed to an active New Hebrides policy than were those in other occupational groups,⁶ the fact that a majority of Labour members belonged to this class probably explains in part the strength of opposition in their party. Few of its members were educated beyond the primary level; a comparison of their

1 See Appendix E (ii) (a) and (b).

2 Such an analysis provides no positive conclusions about reasons for opinions on the New Hebrides question, but it can indicate possible reasons for differences of opinion.

3 See ibid. (a).

4 See ibid. (h).

5 That is those employed as manual labourers before they were elected to Parliament, with three possible exceptions indicated in ibid. (a).

6 See ibid. (c).

educational backgrounds with those of the whole Parliamentary group under consideration indicates that limited education was another possible reason for the strength of opposition in the party.¹

Three of the four Roman Catholics in the whole group were opponents; but the one who was an interventionist, Dr William Maloney, was the only one who was not a member of the working class or who had better than a primary education. The smallness of the number of Catholics who expressed an opinion on the question indicates that they had no significant influence on the strength of opposition to the Government's New Hebrides policy. On the other hand, each of the eight known Presbyterians who spoke on the issue strongly advocated promoting British interests in the group.

There was also a geographic basis for the division in opinions expressed about the islands. Twenty-four members who came from Victoria and New South Wales were supporters of the interventionist policy and only three from these states were opponents; each of the latter were working class members of the Labour Party who had no better than a primary education. In both the Labour Party and the group as a whole a distinct minority of

1 See ibid. (d) and (k).

those from other states were interventionists, and even among members of the Protectionist and Free Trade Parties from these states who spoke on the question supporters of an active policy numbered only half the total.¹

The smallness of the number of those with only a primary education who did not belong to the working class² makes it hard to decide whether a limited education may have tended to make Parliamentarians parochially minded or whether the predominantly working class nature of those with only a primary education was possibly the more important source of an isolationist viewpoint. The two factors probably complemented each other, neither socio-economic nor educational influences encouraging those who were moulded by them to be interested in the world beyond Australia. On the other hand, a secondary and, in particular, a tertiary education probably helped encourage those in other occupations to be interested in overseas affairs.³ Eight of the 11 engaged in commercial

1 See ibid. (f) and (h).

2 See ibid. (1).

3 These hypotheses about the influence of class and education are supported by modern public opinion research on attitudes about foreign policy in the United States of America. See E.R. May, 'American Imperialism: A Reinterpretation', Perspectives in American History, 1 (1967), pp.140-1.

occupations who were interventionists came from New South Wales, the only Australian state with significant trading relations with the New Hebrides, but only half of these are known to have had direct or closely related interests with the group.¹

The influence of the state from which members came upon their attitudes to the New Hebrides question was explained by Alfred Deakin in 1901 in his identification of Sydney and Melbourne as the principal centres of public interest in the New Hebrides and as the major locations of the pressure groups supporting an interventionist New Hebrides policy.² Deakin's suggestion that New South Wales was as interested in the group as Victoria recently has been criticised,³ but the above analysis of Parliamentary opinions and the examination below of the

1 James Walker, a director of Burns, Philp and Company, and a former director of the Australasian New Hebrides Company, (C.P.D., XXIV, pp.8199, 8250); William Kelly, a shareholder in Burns, Philp, (C.P.D., XXIII, p.6305); Dugald Thomson, a former director of the A.N.H. Company and partner in Robert Harper and Company, import merchants (see above, p.261, Fred Johns, Johns's Notable Australians, Melbourne, 1906, p.172); and John Gray, manager of Lever Brothers in Sydney (ibid., p.79).

2 See above, pp.406-7.

3 K.J. Melhuish, review of Deakin, Federated Australia, in Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, 55 (1969), p.303.

views of newspapers and activities of pressure groups¹ refute this criticism. But a comparison of the geographical with the socio-economic and educational divisions in opinions does not indicate that the former was necessarily more important in determining attitudes on the question than was the latter.²

Hostility to the lifting of tariffs on imports from the New Hebrides was not an important factor in opposition to the interventionist New Hebrides policy. It does not account for the division of opinion within the Labour Party;³ and of the other five opponents two were Free Traders. One of these Free Traders belonged to the working class and all three Protectionist opponents had the same socio-economic background. None of these five is known to have had better than a primary education. Only one of all opponents is classified as such on the basis of an expression of hostility to the lifting of tariffs alone, and though he, Edward Mulcahy, was a member of the Protectionist Party, he was also a Roman Catholic. However more Free Traders than Protectionists spoke on the New Hebrides issue.⁴

1 See below, section IV (b).

2 See Appendix E (ii) (m) and (n).

3 See ibid. (g).

4 See ibid. (b).

The common theme of opponents was summed up by Andrew Fisher who dubbed them as 'those who are entirely against Australia having anything to do with any lands except Australia'.¹ Most of them, befitting their lack of interest in the New Hebrides, were, as has been pointed out,² ill-informed about the group and expressed their opposition in terms such as the white Australia and anti-capitalist slogans employed to damn the subsidy for Burns, Philp's shipping service to the group. But one of the leading critics of the interventionist policy, Senator William Higgs, read widely on the subject for balls to throw at his favourite Aunt Sallies - the shipping subsidy and the Burns, Philp settlement scheme.³ And another, the ardent Irish nationalist Hugh Mahon, proclaimed: 'From ancient times every nation which has attempted unduly to expand itself has either suffered reverses or come to grief.'⁴ Both these articulate spokesmen for the opposition were journalists rather than manual workers.

Not all supporters of the active New Hebrides

1 C.P.D., XXII, p.6255.

2 Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 3, pp.9-10.

3 C.P.D., XXI, pp.4087-9; XXIV, pp.7890-1, 8168, 8240-9.

4 C.P.D., XXIII, p.6313.

policy went as far as Andrew Fisher, who declared that he was one of those 'who think it to be the duty of Australia to secure all the adjacent islands.'¹ His future colleague in Labour governments, Senator George Foster Pearce, did not think it advisable to add the New Hebrides to the British empire, though he strongly supported promoting British interests there as 'a practical application of the Monroe doctrine to the Pacific.'² Many did not indicate whether their support for the policy was because they simply opposed foreign annexation of the group or whether they wanted British annexation, but Pearce was the only one who specifically mentioned the former, and there were 19 who stated support for Britain's claim to the group.³

The most prominent of the imperialists were William Johnson and Staniforth Smith who moved the private members' motions on the question and who were the chief spokesmen for the interventionists at question time in

1 C.P.D., XXII, p.6255.

2 C.P.D., XXI, p.4084.

3 See Appendix E (ii) (a).

the two Houses.¹ They were probably the only members of Parliament who might have visited the New Hebrides; Johnson had travelled through the Pacific as a ship's officer in the late 1870s or early 1880s,² and Smith had toured New Guinea and other Pacific islands on his frequent travels in the early 1900s during parliamentary recesses.³

Johnson's interest in the New Hebrides resulted from his Pacific voyages and from the agitations on the question in the 1880s.⁴ In 1886 he had spoken at one of the public meetings in Sydney.⁵ He was not attached to Sydney's commercial community, being an artist by profession; but he was a Presbyterian.⁶ He stated in his speeches in the Commonwealth Parliament that his most important reason for advocating British annexation of the

1 For Johnson: C.P.D., XX, pp.3672, 3681-7; XXIII, pp.6300-4; XXV, pp.788-98; XXIX, p.6070; XXXI, pp.202, 684-5; XXXII, pp.1537-42, 2495-6, 2578; XXXIII, p.3015. For Smith: C.P.D., XVI, p.4288; XIX, pp.1464, 2173; XX, pp.2856, 3646-54; XXIV, pp.8168, 8278-80; XXV, p.462; XXVIII, p.4687; XXXI, pp.284-6.

2 C.P.D., XX, p.3681

3 Fred Johns, Johns' Notable Australians, Melbourne, 1906, p.159.

4 C.P.D., XX, p.3681

5 Ibid., S.M.H., 21 April 1886, p.9.

6 S.M.H., 13 December 1932, p.10.

New Hebrides was the prospective opening of the Panama Canal. With their magnificent harbours - Havannah Harbour in particular - these islands were, in his opinion, an ideal location for a British naval base to protect the commerce which he thought would greatly increase when the canal was opened. Conversely French occupation of the group would present a potentially dangerous threat to this trade and to the security of the Australian mainland. He also emphasised the economic potential of the islands and the need to protect British missionaries.¹ He was very well informed about conditions in the group, and even opponents of the policy he advocated praised his erudition on the subject.²

Staniforth Smith's interest in the New Hebrides did not arise from any initial personal acquaintance with the Pacific; nor, as a Western Australian and Anglican,³ did he have any other personal connection with the group. His predominant reason for insisting upon British annexation was the threat to Australia and her Pacific trade routes via the future Panama Canal if a

1 See in particular, C.P.D., XX, pp.3681-7, XXIII, pp.6300-4; XXXII, pp.1537-41.

2 C.P.D., XXIII, pp.6304, 6313.

3 West Australian, 15 January 1934, p.1.

foreign power were to occupy the islands. 'The ownership of the New Hebrides,' he said, 'would be absolutely of no importance to Australia, but for the fact that there are in the group some excellent harbours suitable for use as strategic bases.... So far as the territory is concerned, we do not want it'.¹ He, like Johnson, read widely on the subject and was a fount of accurate information on it, which he also displayed in pamphlets, and in a newspaper article² which earned him high praise from the Victorian Presbyterian Messenger, a journal which was ever ready to criticise articles in the secular press purporting to inform about the New Hebrides.³

Johnson and Smith received prominent support from two leading Sydney Presbyterians. In the House of Representatives Dugald Thomson, a former director of the Australasian New Hebrides Company, spoke most frequently on the New Hebrides question in the first Parliament of the Commonwealth and moved an amendment to strengthen one

1 C.P.D., XXXI, p.284.

2 M.S.C. Smith, Australia and the New Hebrides, Sydney, 1904; Speech on the New Hebrides, Melbourne, 1904. Daily Telegraph, 23 June 1904, p.7.

3 Messenger, 1 July 1904, p.443. For other such reviews, see ibid., 21 February 1902, p.46; 4 March 1904, p.103; 11 March 1904, p.135.

of Johnson's motions in August 1905.¹ In the Senate James Walker, whose interests as Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales and as a director of Burns, Philp and Company happily coincided on this issue,² frequently spoke in favour of supporting British interests in the New Hebrides.³

Two members of the Labour Party switched on the New Hebrides question from isolationist to interventionist positions in the years 1904-1906. One was John Watson, who adopted a different outlook on becoming Prime Minister in 1904.⁴ The other was James Wilkinson, who declared in 1904 that the money proposed to increase the Pacific shipping subsidy would be better spent in Australia than upon encouraging Burns, Philp to import products which would compete with those of Australian farmers.⁵ The following year he reversed this position by proclaiming that Australia should be prepared to spend money to prevent foreign naval bases being established in the New Hebrides

1 C.P.D., I, p.1073; VIII., p.10541; XII, p.16196-8; XXV, pp.806-8.

2 Johns, Johns's Notable Australians, p.180. C.P.D., XXIV, p.8250.

3 C.P.D., XXI, pp.4090-1; XXIV, p.8247; XXV, p.536; XXXI, p.170; XXXV, p.6019.

4 See above, pp.417-8, and also C.P.D., XXII, p.6253.

5 C.P.D., XXIII, pp.6309-10.

and that he, though an ardent supporter of protective tariffs, was prepared to allow British subjects in the group to export their produce to Australia duty free.¹ The tide of opinion in the second Commonwealth Parliament was imperialist, not isolationist.

Along with Johnson, Smith and Wilkinson, 19 of the 21 members who mentioned reasons why they supported an interventionist policy towards the New Hebrides spoke of the need to protect either the security of Australia or of her future trade route to Europe via the Panama Canal - 14 used the former argument and nine the latter. In contrast, only seven argued the economic potential of the group - three of these were definitely engaged in commercial occupations - and six, four of whom were Presbyterians, indicated a concern for the work of Christian missionaries there. Only one member raised the convict bogey which had so frightened Australians in the 1880s, the cessation of transportation to New Caledonia having killed this as a fruitful subject to be exploited in favour of an imperialist New Hebrides policy. Nobody mentioned any concern for the welfare of the native inhabitants of the islands.² The preoccupation with security was a reflection of a growing uneasiness in

1 C.P.D., XXV, p.806.

2 See Appendix E (ii) (a).

Australia in the 1900s about the vulnerability of the country's shores and commerce to the ships of foreign powers which might establish naval bases in the Pacific.¹ The Sydney Morning Herald expressed this apprehension when it declared in 1905 that the once independent islands of the Pacific:

...are becoming year by year the means by which other nations are advancing closer to us and doing away with that isolation of distance and interests which furnished the best guarantee of our peaceful progress during the first century of our existence.... [French annexation of the New Hebrides] would complete an almost unbroken chain of foreign outposts about the northern and eastern coasts of Australia.²

Though there were few besides Johnson, Smith, Thomson and Walker who spoke frequently in Parliament in favour of promoting British interests in the New Hebrides, the fear that foreign annexation of the group would present a threat to Australia's commerce and security was sufficient to convince a large number of their colleagues that they, not their isolationist opponents, had Australia's best interests at heart.

1 D.C.S. Sissons, 'Attitudes to Japan and Defence, 1890-1923', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1956, p.28.

2 S.M.H., 23 December 1905.

(b) Newspapers

The Barton Government's successful attempt to prevent a public agitation on the New Hebrides question in 1901,¹ and the policy of that Government to avoid as much as possible publicity for its actions on the question, which was continued by its successors, probably had an effect on limiting the frequency with which newspapers commented editorially on the issue and, ultimately, upon the degree of interest shown by the public at large. However, despite the Government's wish to keep the New Hebrides from becoming a widely discussed public issue in the period 1901-1906, the New Hebrides received much more attention than any other Pacific islands during these years in the editorials of the four major morning newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne, and the number of such editorials indicated an interest in the group as great as that shown by three papers in a similar survey in the period 1888-1893. The main difference in the results of these surveys was the greater number of New Hebrides editorials in the Sydney Morning Herald in the twentieth century period, which was matched by its Sydney contemporary, the Daily Telegraph. The Argus ran considerably less such editorials in the later period than in the nineteenth century years,

1 See above, p.405. See also below, pp.476-7.

but the other Melbourne paper, the Age, printed more than any other; and together the Melbourne papers published exactly the same number of editorials dealing with the New Hebrides as did the Sydney papers.¹

Three of these newspapers published articles by visitors to the New Hebrides during the years 1901-1906. The Age published Le Couteur's report to the Federal Government in 1902;² and the Argus used two articles by an independent visitor, Carlyle Smith, who made a brief visit to the group in 1903, but who deserved the Messenger's comment that 'to refute the errors in...[his articles] would take up more space than is available in a weekly journal.'³ The Daily Telegraph sent no reporter to the group, but in 1904 it published an accurate article about it by Senator Staniforth Smith.⁴ The Sydney Morning Herald showed the greatest interest in the islands of these four papers by sending there two special correspondents - 'Banjo' Paterson in 1902 and Beatrice Grimshaw in 1905. Paterson produced a glowing account of the economic potential

1 See Appendix C (iii) (a) and c.f. Appendix C (ii).

2 See above, p.415.

3 Argus, 20 February 1904, p.5; 27 February 1904, p.5.
Messenger, 11 March 1904, p.135.

4 See above, p.461.

of the group, writing: 'For richness and carrying capacity those islands are among the finest lands in the world, and it will be a costly mistake if our nation allows them to pass into any other hands.'¹ As was not out of keeping with such hyperbole, he at times confused the places he visited,² but his account of the Burns, Philp settlers and their initial experiences was thorough.³ Beatrice Grimshaw spent nearly all of October and November 1905 in the New Hebrides and the Herald published nine of her articles,⁴ but the wealth of her detail was impoverished by exaggeration and what the New Hebrides Magazine called 'a tendency to take rather seriously the "yarns" with which "new chums" are always regaled.' Nevertheless that journal was willing to concede that she displayed a sympathetic insight into the problems of islands life.⁵

1 S.M.H., 25 July 1902, p.8.

2 For example Aneityum for Tanna, ibid., 26 July, p.12.

3 For his other articles, see ibid., 1 July, p.5; 24 July, p.5; 30 July, p.7.

4 S.M.H., 1905 & 1906, 25 November, p.6; 2 December, p.6; 9 December, p.6; 16 December, p.6; 23 December, p.6; 30 December, p.5; 6 January, p.6; 24 February, p.6; 3 March, p.6.

5 New Hebrides Magazine, April 1906, p.1.

All four of these Sydney and Melbourne newspapers wanted Britain to rule the New Hebrides, and they unanimously agreed with the majority of members of Parliament who were in favour of the annexation policy that the security of Australia and her Pacific trade routes was the most important reason for advocating this.¹ These views were commonly expressed in the myth that the New Hebrides would be vitally important when the Panama Canal was opened and in the 'chain of islands' concept which was popular in the 1880s. The Age explained the first of these:

With their splendid harbors,...their fine climate and magnificently fertile soil, they [the New Hebrides] seem to have been intended by nature for a naval base. They are situated midway between Noumea and Fiji, about 1400 miles north-east of Sydney, and directly on the path of what will infallibly become one of the greatest trade routes in the world immediately the Panama Canal is completed and opened to sea traffic.²

1 Age, 29 March, 10 June 1901, 12 February, 31 December 1902, 11 April, 9 December 1904, 17 July 1905, 5 March 1906. Argus, 13 November, 6 December 1901, 4 August 1905, 7 March, 4 June 1906. S.M.H., 21 March, 15 April 1904, 11 August, 30 November 1905, 19 February, 14 June, 23 October 1906. Daily Telegraph, 21 March, 24 June 1904, 21 March, 30 November 1905, 5 March 1906.

2 Age, 5 March 1906.

Though even the drawing of a straight line between Sydney and Panama City would have indicated that the group was not destined to be an important port of call on this future trade route, it was a persuasive argument for those who were looking for reasons to extend Britain's empire in the Pacific. The second concept also telescoped the geography of the Pacific, but, given Australians' sense of weakness in the face of the prospect of foreign attack, it was an even more persuasive reason for concern about the political fate of the only major Pacific island group as yet unoccupied by a foreign power. The Argus explained:

A continuous chain of islands curves round from New Guinea through the Solomon, Santa Cruz, and New Hebrides groups, and Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands, almost to the picturesque heights of Port Jackson, and the presence of a foreign even if friendly power on one of the groups is a contingency not to be contemplated with equanimity.¹

These newspapers criticised the Government for now allowing the products of British settlers in the New Hebrides into Australia duty free, including the Age, the only protectionist journal among them.² The Sydney papers were more interested in the economic potential of the

1 Argus, 6 December 1901.

2 See above, p.407, note 3, and the Age, 17 July 1905; 25 June 1906.

group than were their Melbourne contemporaries,¹ understandably in the light of Sydney's dominant position in Australia's trade with the islands. All of these papers expressed a general interest in New Hebrides affairs, but they saw them mainly coloured by their interest in the Anglo-French struggle for political supremacy. The Age specifically declared that the threat of French annexation was more important to it than any other matters relating to the group.²

In keeping with their desire for British annexation of the New Hebrides, the Melbourne and Sydney morning newspapers expressed dislike of the Anglo-French Convention of 1906, though they were forced to rely upon cabled reports about it from the French press; neither the British nor Australian Governments released details of it until it was ratified. The Argus prophesied: 'Dual control appears doomed to failure.'³ And all agreed that France seemed to have received the better deal.

1 S.M.H., 29 July, 26 December 1902; 23 October 1906. Daily Telegraph, 24 June 1904.

2 Age, 10 June 1901.

3 Argus, 7 June 1906. See also Age, 5 March, 4 June 1906; S.M.H., 5 March, 23 October 1906; Daily Telegraph, 5 March 1906.

The view that Australia had been given only half the cake she wanted when Britain agreed to a joint protectorate with France for the New Hebrides, as depicted by the Melbourne weekly Table Talk,¹ was a widely prevailing opinion expressed by other Australian newspapers. Of 20 Victorian and New South Wales country papers consulted for the period March to June and October to November 1906,² each of the ten that commented on the Convention adopted this viewpoint and agreed that Australia's defence interests were the most important involved.³ The Bathurst Daily Argus most explicitly expressed the 'dog-in-the manger' nature of this imperialism: 'We don't want the islands ourselves, but we....desire to shut other nations out of the Pacific islands.'⁴

The morning newspapers of the capital cities

1 See over.

2 This period was selected after consulting the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane morning daily papers for the whole of 1906. It covers the news of the results of the Anglo-French Commission and of the ratification of the Convention. The papers were selected to include both daily and less frequently published journals. Poor library holdings restricted the range of choice of New South Wales papers. See Appendix C (iii) (b) and (c).

3 See ibid.

4 Bathurst Daily Argus, 4 June 1906.



The "Times" admits that the Bannerman Government committed a grave error in not adopting Australia's views of the New Hebrides question.

3 West Australian, 6 April 1906.

4 Morning Herald, 6 March, 8 June 1906.

of the other Australian states differed in their reception of the Convention. The Brisbane and Adelaide papers in this group supported the viewpoint of their Sydney and Melbourne contemporaries.¹ But in Hobart the Mercury, though approving of British annexation of the New Hebrides as an ideal goal, adopted the realistic approach that given the impossibility of attaining this aim, a joint protectorate was the best solution.² In Perth the West Australian was the most enthusiastic supporter of the Convention, hailing it as 'a step forward...in the interests of peace and humanity.'³ The Perth Morning Herald also treated the news of the Convention with more joy than its eastern counterparts, though it was unhappy that Britain had not tried to arrange for an exchange of the New Hebrides for some African territory such as Gambia.⁴

The Western Australian and South Australian newspapers consulted published fewer editorials about the New Hebrides in the six month survey period in 1906

1 Brisbane Courier, 9 March, 21 May, 4 June, 20 October, 2, 11 November 1906. Daily Mail, 5 April, 4 June, 19 October, 23 October 1906. Advertiser, 9 June, 29 October 1906. Register, 14 March 1906.

2 Mercury, 5 March 1906.

3 West Australian, 6 April 1906.

4 Morning Herald, 6 March, 8 June 1906.

than did the other metropolitan papers,¹ which is a possible indication, alongside the views of the members of Parliament from these states, that there was less public interest in the group there than elsewhere. In contrast all the metropolitan papers in the eastern seaboard states published a similar number of editorials, with Brisbane actually leading the field. The survey of country papers in Victoria and New South Wales reveals that, though a higher proportion of journals in the former state mentioned the New Hebrides, their total number of editorials about the group was of the same proportion as those published by their New South Wales counterparts. However, it is notable that half the country papers in these states were silent; this, particularly in the case of Victoria, indicates a lower level of public interest in the group in 1906 than in 1883 or 1886, an indication reinforced by the far smaller number of editorials in all papers consulted for the former period.²

On the other hand, in comparison with the 1880s, positive opposition to an interventionist New Hebrides policy in New South Wales seems to have declined by the

1 See Appendix C (iii) (b), (c) and (d).

2 See ibid., and c.f. Appendix C (i).

1900s; only the Bulletin, of all New South Wales journals looked at, remained uncompromisingly isolationist on this question.¹ Nor were there any papers, as there had been in the 1880s, which, though opposed to French annexation of the group, disapproved of British annexation. The Sydney Morning Herald was one which had shifted from this opinion. In 1902 it explained that it had been influenced by American and German annexations in the Pacific in the late 1890s as well as by the growth of Russian and Japanese naval power in the northern Pacific. 'The immediate result of this,' it said, 'is that in the ocean where for so many years we were accustomed to regard ourselves as comparatively alone we have now powerful neighbours and trade rivals.'² As the Bathurst Daily Argus realised, it was no longer possible in the 1900s, as it had been in the 1880s, to believe that foreign powers would not fill vacuums created by Britain's refusal to extend her empire in the Pacific.

(c) Pressure Groups and Public Opinion

The markedly smaller number of editorials in the Australian press on the New Hebrides question in the

1 Bulletin, 19 July 1902, 1 September 1904.

2 S.M.H., 25 August 1902.

six month period examined in 1906 compared with the four month periods surveyed in 1883 and 1886, was partly, if not largely, the responsibility of the Australian Government's attempts to minimise publicity on the issue. Robert Harper, introducing a Presbyterian deputation to Barton at the end of 1901, said:

...at your request, although members of the Mission Board and the Mission Committee had been receiving continually information regarding...further aggressions on the part of the French, they have in deference to your wishes, not made these public, and have refrained from taking action or calling public attention to the matter.

And James Balfour added that even when the New Hebrides issue was discussed at the 1901 meeting of the General Assembly of the Victorian Presbyterian Church newspaper reporters were asked not to take notes of what was said.¹ When in January 1902 the Convenor of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales inquired about the advisability of holding a public meeting on the question, the Government told him that such an action would not 'bring about greater vigilance & activity on the part of the Government.... Communications are now in progress through His Majesty's Government...and

1 Report of deputation, 2 December 1901, C.A.O., A35, bundle 2, no.13.

the Government of France which...might be seriously prejudiced by any agitation at the present moment.'¹ Consequently no public meetings were organised by the Presbyterian Church in Australia in the period 1901-1906.

The Presbyterian Mission Synod in the New Hebrides also resolved in July 1901 to ask its members 'not to publish anything in the papers' about adverse conditions in the group.² And the Convenor of its Public Questions Committee told Barton in November that year that the missionaries had honoured this injunction 'despite the strong temptation to stir up Public Opinion in the matter.'³ In 1904 Ernest Rason noted the resultant lack of inflammatory reports in the Australian press about disputes over land between British and French settlers but gave himself undue credit for suppressing publicity about the incidents.⁴

Australian Presbyterian Churches, however,

1 Draft letter, Hunt to the Rev. J. Lamont, 24 January 1902, ibid., bundle 3, no. 19.

2 N.H.M., 4 July 1901.

3 F.H.L. Paton to Barton, 9 November 1901, C.A.O. A35, bundle 3, no. 18.

4 Rason to Sir C. Major, 13 June 1904 [copy], C.O. 225/67.

kept up constant pressure on their Government on subjects such as land disputes, French ill-treatment of natives and the political status of the group.¹ The Victorian Church led this campaign - a result of Melbourne's being the seat of government combined with the greater amount of support given by that Church than by other Australian Churches to missionary work in the group;² and the New South Wales Church gave it prominent assistance.³

The Victorian Church also sought the cooperation of other bodies in its efforts to maintain pressure on the Government without resorting to public meetings. At the beginning of 1901 two delegates from its Foreign Missions Committee approached the Victorian executive of the Australian Natives' Association;⁴ and that organisation continued the active interest it had shown in the New Hebrides in previous years.⁵ In 1904 it provided a speaker for a public meeting in Melbourne organised by

1 See above, p.407.

2 In 1903 ten of 13 missionaries supported by Australian Churches were financed by the Victorian Church. See front end papers of New Hebrides Magazine 1903.

3 G.A.P.N., 12 May 1902. S.M.H., 9 August 1904, p.5. [Sydney] Messenger, 9 March, 20 April 1906.

4 P.V.F.M.C., 25 January, 13 February 1901.

5 A.N.A.R., 12 March, 30 August 1901.

Staniforth Smith to urge the lifting of Australian tariffs on imports from the group.¹ And in 1906 Victorian branches of the association, the Victorian Board of Directors, and the national conference of the organisation expressed hostility at Britain's failure to consult Australia about the drafting of the New Hebrides Convention.² That year the Victorian Presbyterian Church provided its Foreign Missions Secretary, Frank Paton, son of the redoubtable propagandist John G. Paton, as a speaker on the New Hebrides question to local Victorian A.N.A. branches.³

In 1905 the Victorian Missions Committee instructed its Convenor to write to R.J. Larking of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce to thank him for his successful motion on the New Hebrides issue at the annual meeting of the Australasian Chambers of Commerce in April that year.⁴ Both the Melbourne and Sydney Chambers of

1 Ibid., 30 August 1904.

2 Ibid., 22 March, 5 April, 7 November 1906. Argus, 8 March 1906, p.6; 15 November 1906, p.5.

3 One of his speeches was published as F.H.L. Paton, Australian Interests in the Pacific, Melbourne, 1906.

4 P.V.F.M.C., 3 May 1905.

Commerce showed an interest in the New Hebrides in the early 1900s. In Melbourne, led by James Balfour, the Chamber expressed hostility to the idea of French annexation of the group in 1901 and 1906.¹ In Sydney, the Chamber of Commerce in 1902 sent a deputation to Barton to ask for the appointment of a British Resident Commissioner in the group, the legalising of inter-island recruiting for British settlers there, and the freeing of New Hebrides goods from the impost of Australian tariffs. The Chamber's President, E.H. Rogers, told Barton that 'a considerable trade had been built up between the New Hebrides and New South Wales, and it was capable of considerable expansion'; and to support the request about tariff policy the deputation presented a petition from 41 Sydney merchants or trading companies who claimed an interest in Australia's trade with the group.²

Apart from the Presbyterian Church, the A.N.A., and the Melbourne and Sydney Chambers of Commerce, there was little public interest in the New Hebrides question in Australia in the period 1901-1906. In 1906 the Melbourne and Sydney Methodist journals, the Spectator

1 Argus, 17 September 1901, p.9. Journal of Commerce, 19 June 1906, p.8.

2 Report of deputation, 15 March 1902, C.A.O., A35, bundle 2, no. 18. S.M.H., 17 March 1902, p.5.

and Methodist, did not comment about the New Hebrides Convention. The Melbourne Catholic Advocate disparaged Presbyterian action on the question by remarking:

'It certainly will not be the fault of the various Protestant Missionary Societies if England is not eventually embroiled in war with France in connection with the question of possession of the New Hebrides.' And it indicated a reason for this attitude when it added that:

The French Government certainly have been doing something extensive in the way of suppressing religion recently in France, but neither Dr. Paton nor his friends ever expressed a word of sympathy with the victims, or disapproval of such action.¹

In Sydney that year the Catholic Press and the Catholic Freeman's Journal ignored the New Hebrides issue. And the Victorian Labour Party's journals Tocsin and Labor Call also ignored the issue in 1906.

A.W. Jose, the London Times' Australian correspondent, who was himself very interested in the political status of the New Hebrides,² told Deakin at

1 Advocate, 9 June 1906, p.20.

2 See his articles written for the Times and published on 8 December 1904 and 21 April 1906; and c.f. Jose to L.S. Amery, 23 July 1907: 'Can't The Times harass the Imperial Government to some extent about the latest New Hebrides trouble?' Papers of A.W. Jose, Uncat. MSS, set 266, item 4, M.L.

the beginning of 1907: 'on Imperial questions you unmistakably have the whole of Australia behind you. On the New Hebrides trouble, for instance, both your old enemies the Sydney morning papers back you heartily.'¹ And Deakin told Lord Northcote in 1905 that it was clear, with reference to the New Hebrides, that 'Parliament, the press, and the public are united upon this question'.² However this alleged unanimity - which the above examinations of the views of members of Parliament and of the Catholic press indicate was not as solid as Jose and Deakin imagined - was not necessarily a sign of deep public interest. In Brisbane the Daily Mail commented in 1904:

We in Australia, whilst rarely backward in our advocacy of every point tending to the maintenance of a wise policy in our domestic affairs, are prone to give less attention to a matter so important to the welfare and security of the whole Commonwealth as that of our responsibilities in the Pacific.³

And in Hobart the Mercury considered that, with reference to the New Hebrides Convention: 'The general body of

1 Jose to Deakin, 16 January 1907, Deakin Papers, MS 1540/4/3209, N.L.A.

2 Deakin to Northcote, 23 August 1905, C.A.O., A1108, Vol. IV.

3 Daily Mail, 14 April 1904.

people in the Commonwealth do not, perhaps, trouble themselves very much one way or the other about the matter.'¹

A survey of candidates' speeches in the three Australian election campaigns in 1901, 1904 and 1906 in Victoria and New South Wales, the states where, if anywhere, public opinion was likely to be strong on the New Hebrides question, confirms the lack of public interest in it which the Daily Mail and Mercury thought existed. In New South Wales in 1901 eight candidates whose speeches were reported in the Sydney Morning Herald mentioned the need for Australia to be concerned about affairs in the Pacific islands, but only Barton, in one of his addresses, and Dugald Thomson placed any significant stress on this matter or specifically mentioned the New Hebrides.² In Victoria in the 1901 campaign, of those whose speeches were recorded in the Argus,

1 Mercury, 16 November 1906.

2 For Barton and Thomson, S.M.H., 8 February, p.5; 19 February, p.5. The other candidates were E.M. Clark (22 January, p.5), T.R. Brown (30 January, p.8), J.G. Griffen (21 February, p.8), J.P. Gray (ibid.), H.H. Wilks (22 February, p.6), J.G. Griffen (14 March, p.7), and J.H. Carruthers speaking in support of F.E. McLean (26 March, p.6).

only Barton and one other candidate mentioned the group,¹ and only one other mentioned Australia's interest in the Pacific.² In the 1903 campaign only Deakin in his policy speech mentioned the New Hebrides in reports of candidates' speeches in the Argus and Sydney Morning Herald.³

At the outset of the 1906 election campaign the Age called for 'a clear and comprehensive Commonwealth Pacific policy, whose object shall be the immediate acquisition and development of all Pacific territories possessed of harbors which strategically command our littoral, and which lie along the line of the future Panama Canal traffic.' But it pessimistically admitted that this was unlikely to be an important subject in the forthcoming campaign.⁴ And, despite the fact that the campaign was held immediately after the ratification of the New Hebrides Convention, besides Deakin in his policy speech, only two Victorians whose speeches were reported in the Age took up that paper's call, with only one of them mentioning the New Hebrides by name.⁵ In

1 For Barton, Argus, 15 February, p.7. The other was F.T. Sargood, a prominent Presbyterian, ibid., 26 February, p.7.

2 Allan McLean, Argus, 9 March, p.14.

3 Argus, 30 October 1903, p.5.

4 Age, 11 October 1906.

5 J. Hume Cook, Age, 15 November 1906, p.8. The other was Agar Wynne, ibid., p.6. For Deakin's speech, see Age, 18 October, p.6.

New South Wales no candidate who was reported by the Sydney Morning Herald in this campaign mentioned the group. The total of eight candidates in Victoria and New South Wales who were reported to have spoken about the New Hebrides in the first three Commonwealth election campaigns does not warrant any assumption that there was any significant public interest in the group in the period 1901-1906.

PART FIVE

I

Trade, Settlement and the State of the
Condominium, 1907-August 1914(a) Trade and Settlement

French settlement in the New Hebrides continued to grow at a faster rate than British settlement after the establishment of the Condominium, which was proclaimed in the group in December 1907. By 1910 the total French population had increased from 401 in 1906 to 566, compared with an increase in the number of British residents from 228 to 288 in the same period. Nearly two-thirds of the French citizens lived on Efate, and they were in a majority on Epi, Malekula, Ambrym, Pentecost, and Santo. On the other hand there were only two Frenchmen compared with 37 British subjects on the islands south of Efate, and there were large majorities of the latter on Tongoa, Paama, Aoba, and in the Banks Islands.¹

The British Resident Commissioner, Merton King,

1 M. King, Report on the New Hebrides, 1908-1910, in A. Mahaffy to L. Harcourt, 27 November 1911, C.O. 225/97.

who replaced Rason in 1907, wrote in 1911 that 'the British born and bred' in the group were 'slightly in the majority as compared with the Australians.'¹ It is probable however that with the removal of missionaries and officials Australians would have predominated. One English resident in the islands, R.G. Fletcher, wrote in 1914 that there were 'only three Englishmen' who were planters in the group as distinguished from 'Orstrylyuns' as he satirically called them; Fletcher was prone to exaggerate, but his work as a surveyor of British properties in the islands would have given him a good knowledge of the subject.² Of 25 people who wrote to King in the years 1907 to 1914 enquiring about planting or trading opportunities in the group, 19 wrote from an Australian address or said they were Australian.³ And it is likely that a number of King's 'British born and bred' would have arrived in the islands after a period of residence in Australia. Most settlers in the New Hebrides, wrote Walter Lucas of Burns, Philp and Company

1 King to Harcourt, 26 February 1911, C.O. 225/98.

2 Bohun Lynch (ed.), Isles of Illusion, London, 1923, p.105.

3 Of the other enquiries, two were from New Zealand, two from Fiji, and one each from British subjects living in New Caledonia and Italy. See N.H.B.S., files 19/07, 68/13.

in 1910, went there from Australia.¹

The increase in the French population, apart from an influx of government employees with the establishment of the Condominium, resulted mainly from the continued activity of the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides in settling its vast New Hebrides properties.² In 1908 Wilson Le Couteur, after his first return to the group since he went there as an Australian secret agent in 1901, wrote:

Where before, even as recently as seven years ago, I had seen large tracts of the French [Company's] possessions on the coast of Epi and the Saigon [sic] channel, Santo, lying fallow, I now stood amazed at the scene presented. Plantation upon plantation followed each other....³

The S.F.N.H.'s efforts to establish settlers on its land were greatly helped in 1908 and 1909 by an economic depression in and consequent emigration from New Caledonia. T.E. Roseby, an Australian who was appointed the British judge in the New Hebrides, reported

1 Lucas to W.E. Johnson, 9 August 1910, in Lucas to A. Hunt, 9 August 1910, Papers of Atlee Hunt, MS 52/1660, A.N.L.

2 T.E. Roseby to Sir E. im Thurn, 28 May 1910, N.H.B.S., 57/10.

3 S.M.H., 29 August 1908, p.8.

in 1909:

At the present moment...the very misfortunes of New Caledonia are the opportunity of French influence in this group. The journey from Noumea is short and cheap, and scores of men are arriving from New Caledonia by each boat to try their fortunes here....¹

The following year, however, Roseby noted that a large number of these French immigrants had not remained in the group.² But he suggested one of the most important reasons why the French population in the New Hebrides was growing at a faster rate than the British when he pointed out that New Caledonia, where there was a large reservoir of Frenchmen, was much closer to the group than was Australia.³ Another reason he offered was that:

The average Britisher (say Australian) who comes down here is not content unless he sees some prospect of making a competence, while many of the French...are content to grub along on a small area for moderate returns, especially as things are so depressed in Nouméa.⁴

1 Roseby to Hunt, 30 May 1909, in C.O. to F.O., 24 August 1909, F.O.C.P., 9660/49.

2 Roseby to im Thurn, 28 May 1910, N.H.B.S., 57/10.

3 Roseby to Hunt, 30 May 1909, in C.O. to F.O., 24 August 1909, F.O.C.P., 9660/49.

4 Roseby to L.E. Groom, 14 October 1909, Papers of L.E. Groom, MS 236/2, folder 9, N.L.A.

Many French settlers, he told Hunt, lived in conditions 'which would revolt an ordinary Australian worker'.¹

The other most important reason for the failure of British subjects in the population race in the New Hebrides was that they did not have the advantage of a large company to assist them to establish themselves in the group. In 1909 James Burns of Burns, Philp and Company told Arthur Mahaffy, the assistant to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, who was visiting Australia, that he was thinking of refurbishing his company's settlement scheme by publicising it again and adding a grant of £20 per settler as additional incentive; Mahaffy's scepticism at the probable success of such a project was a probable reason why it was not put into practice.² Mahaffy attempted to induce the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to invest in the group,³ but that Company rejected the idea since it saw no available market for New Hebrides sugar because of its own planned expansion of the sugar industry in Australia and competition

1 Roseby to Hunt, 12 April 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/720.

2 Mahaffy to im Thurn, 21 November 1909, in C.A.O., A1108, XIV.

3 Mahaffy to the Fiji Manager, Colonial Sugar Refining Company, 25 April 1911, in May to Harcourt, 29 June 1911, C.O. 881/12/201.

from cheap labour regions such as Java.¹

In 1910 Walter Lucas reported that about 20 leases under the original Burns, Philp settlement scheme were still current and were supporting between 40 and 50 British subjects.² The scheme was not actively promoted in the period 1907-1914 though it was still open to prospective settlers. Only eight new settlers in these years who stayed for any length of time in the group took up land under the auspices of the scheme.³

Another Australian company, the Pacific Isles Investment Company - established in Sydney in July 1912 by Thomas Maning, a merchant and British Vice-Consul in Nouméa, and Sydney capitalists - pulled off a coup for British interests in the New Hebrides by promptly buying 65,000 acres of French land on Santo and Efate, including, on the latter island, the largest plantation in the group, which was the one to which the French proudly took visitors

1 E.W. Knox to Mahaffy, 19 May 1911, ibid.

2 Lucas to Hunt, 7 October 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1663. In 1915 there were 19 current leases. See Deryck Scarr, Fragments of Empire, Canberra, 1967, p.228, note.

3 'New Hebrides Settlement Leases', Burns, Philp Papers, Burns, Philp and Company, Sydney. Lucas to Hunt, 20 September 1912, C.A.O., A1, 12/17032.

to see.¹ The following year, 1913, however, the company was in trouble with the local British administration over the non-payment of long overdue wages of the native labourers inherited from the former French owners of this plantation.² Before the end of that year the company had gone into liquidation.³

Some British planters, such as Hugh Roxburgh on Epi, were making a good profit from their plantations.⁴ One of the original members of the Burns, Philp settlement scheme made a sufficient success of planting and trading to return to his home in Australia in 1911 'comfortably well off.'⁵ In 1910 a surveyor working for the Australian Government reported that the small number of traders on Tanna were doing quite well.⁶ On Erromango S.O. Martin - a South Australian who went to the New Hebrides in 1904 under the auspices of the Burns, Philp scheme but who

- 1 Mahaffy to Sir B. Sweet-Escott, 26 February 1913, N.H.B.S., 3/13. See also Maning to Hunt, 14 January 1914, Hunt Papers, MS 52/757; and Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.231.
- 2 King to Sweet-Escott, 26 June 1913, N.H.B.S., 3/13.
- 3 Maning to Hunt, 14 January 1914, Hunt Papers, MS 52/757.
- 4 King to Hunt, 27 November 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/664.
- 5 S.M.H., 24 February 1911, p.6.
- 6 Vance to Hunt, 8 April 1910, C.A.O., A1108, VIII.

purchased his own land in the plateau country of Erromango - had started a flock of sheep which by 1909 numbered about 1200 and from which he was able to supply commercial and naval ships and the residents of Vila with mutton at prices cheaper than those of imported meat from Australia.¹ By 1914 his flock had increased to 3,000 and he was exporting 40 bales of wool per annum.² A visitor to the group that year reported that William Lang was growing about 30,000 coconut trees on his Malekula plantation and had established 'nicely laid-out park grounds and well-kept gardens, surrounding a substantially-built, roomy and comfortable homestead'.³

By 1910, however, King claimed that there were few British settlers who were 'really doing well.'⁴ The previous year A.K. Roche had told Roseby that 'he would clear out if he could get half his money back, & that there was not another British planter in the group who wouldn't do the same.'⁵ One of Roche's

1 W. Le Couteur, 'The New Hebrides', S.M.H., 1 September 1908, p.10. Lucas to Hunt, 12 July 1909, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1614.

2 J. Mayne Anderson, What a Tourist Sees in the New Hebrides, Sydney, 1915, pp.26-7.

3 Ibid., p.54.

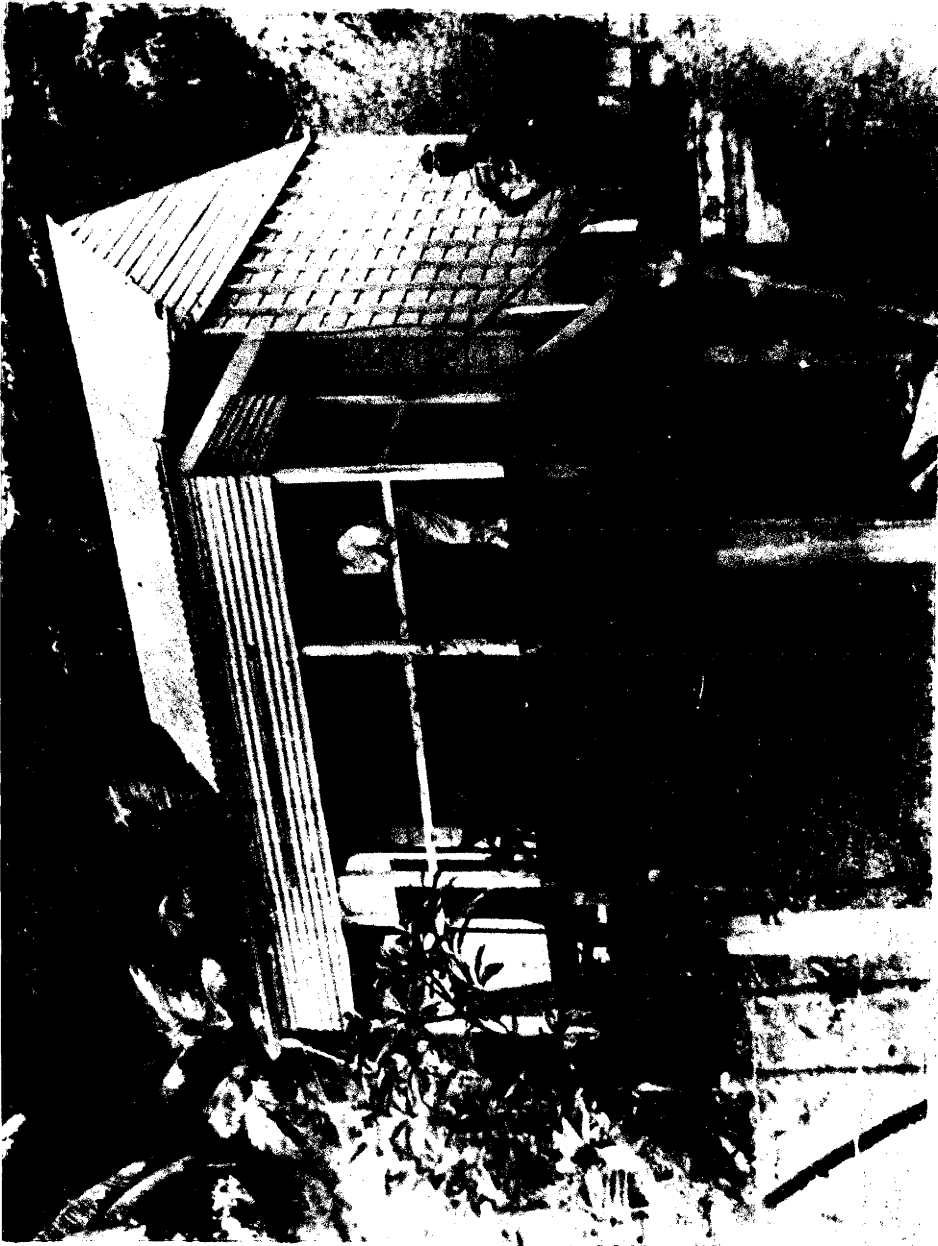
4 King to Hunt, 27 November 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/664.

5 Roseby to Hunt, 24 September 1909, ibid./718.

neighbours, G.H.L. Harris, who had bought land at Undine Bay in 1903 and 1907¹ found in 1910, when he had to leave the group for medical reasons, that he could not pay the £70 he owed his labourers.² And in 1908 a Queenslander trading on Tanna, W.H. Truss, who had been in the New Hebrides since 1890, had died virtually penniless.³ The executive of the New Hebrides British Association, founded in 1907 to promote the interests of British planters and traders,⁴ declared in 1908 that it:

...does not yet feel justified in taking steps to encourage further settlement until the conditions under which we are labouring are still further improved. Unless intending settlers possess some capital, it is not possible for them to successfully establish themselves by planting alone. It is also inadvisable for newcomers to expect to combine trading with planting operations, inasmuch as trading is already much overdone.⁵

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- 1 Harris to King, 28 February 1908, N.H.B.S., 54/08. J.C.N.H., Judgement no.151.
 - 2 Harris to King, 5 June 1910, N.H.B.S., 63/10.
 - 3 See N.H.B.S., file 19/09. For a photo of Truss and his residence on Tanna, probably taken shortly before his death, see over.
 - 4 For an account of this organisation see R.T.E. Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1928, ch. 6, pp.19-20.
 - 5 New Hebrides Magazine, August 1908, pp.5-6.



Residence of W. H. Inman, Lottabas, Lanna.

The over abundance of traders in some parts of the group was remarked upon by Arthur Mahaffy in 1913 when he was Acting British Resident Commissioner. He said of Tongoa that it was an island 'cursed with a number of traders in excess of that which the produce of the island can possibly support, and who are in consequence all poor'.¹

Some contemporaries claimed that one of the greatest difficulties confronting British settlers was the continuation of Australian protective tariffs on their main products other than copra, particularly on coffee and maize.² But the Commonwealth Government had taken action to correct this situation in 1906 by granting £500 per annum to guarantee a price of 5/- per bag of maize and £4 per ton of coffee sold in Australia by British settlers in the New Hebrides; in 1907 the guaranteed price for maize was raised to 6/-, and the following year the grant was increased to £750 to provide instead a rebate of half the duty paid on all British produced maize and coffee imports into Australia from

1 Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott, 12 February 1913, N.H.B.S., 76/13.

2 See, for example, interview with Commodore Glossop of H.M.S. Prometheus, S.M.H., 9 September 1909, p.9.

the group.¹

Of this grant, Edward Jacomb, an independent British lawyer in the New Hebrides, wrote in 1914:

...this amount divided amongst the 100 odd British families residing in the Group at the time can have done little more than pay for the annual supply of matches, and indeed might fairly be compared to the offering of a match, instead of a lifebuoy, to a drowning man.²

However Merton King was confident in 1909 that the Australian Government's subsidy for New Hebrides planters was 'of value...in lightening the burden of cost on the producer' and went 'far to protect him against loss on the produce exported - a contingency which he had often to face before the concession was granted,' though he was doubtful whether the subsidy had any value in encouraging increased British settlement in the group or even in stimulating existing planters to increase cultivation.³

1 Deakin to Churchill, 16 July 1907, C.A.O. A1 07/6850. E.L. Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides', 8 May 1922, C.P.M.F.S., Printed Papers Relating to the Islands of the Pacific, XXIII, C.D.E.A.

2 Edward Jacomb, France and England in the New Hebrides, Melbourne [1914], p.13.

3 King to Sir C. Major, 19 December 1908, in C.O. to F.O., 9 March 1909, F.O.C.P., 9660/12.

His comment on the growth of settlement is born out by the relatively small addition to the British population in the islands between 1906 and 1910. However British land under cultivation increased from about 7,000 acres in 1906 to about 9,000 acres in 1910,¹ and this probably was mostly influenced by a rise in the number of growers of maize, the only product to show any marked increase in the amount of exports from the New Hebrides to Australia in this period.² The best explanation for this increase is the granting of the Australian subsidy. In the first year of its operation maize imports from the New Hebrides did not increase, but this was because planters were not confident enough of its likely permanency to clear extra land for greater production.³ The following year, 1908, maize imports rose from 7,324 to 30,008 bushels.⁴ And an increase in the number of British growers of maize is indicated by the fact that between the financial years 1906-7 and 1909-10 the number of planters claiming a share of the subsidy for maize exports increased

1 King, Report on the New Hebrides, 1908-10.

2 See Appendix B (iii) (c).

3 A.S. Thomas, Secretary of the New Hebrides British Association to Deakin, 28 September 1908, C.A.O., A1108, X.

4 See Appendix B (iii) (c).

from 20 to 37.¹ In subsequent years such planters declined in number - 20 in 1911 and 27 in 1913² - but this possibly was partly due to the fact that after 1909 the coconut trees planted by those new settlers who had arrived in 1902 and 1903 and who had stayed in the group would have started producing; from 1910 to 1914 copra and maize exports to Australia fluctuated in value and quantity in inverse proportions.³

Despite the Australian subsidy for their produce, British coffee growers did not increase in number in the period 1906-1914, and there was no significant increase in the amount exported to Australia by them.⁴ This was probably due to the large amount of labour needed to produce this product, the expensive machinery needed to prepare it for export, the smallness of demand for it in Australia, and perhaps an insufficient

1 Rason to Hunt, 28 August 1907, C.A.O., A1, 07/8731.
E.L. Batchelor to W.G. Higgs, 29 November 1910,
C.A.O., A63, A10/7581.

2 See certificates for coffee and maize shipments to Australia in N.H.B.S., 27/11, 8/13.

3 See Appendix B (iii) (b) and (c).

4 See Appendix B (iii) (c). There were only two British coffee growers in the group in this period.

subsidy.¹

The British New Hebrides Association loudly complained that its members also were handicapped by excessive freight rates charged by Burns, Philp.² In 1905 the Commonwealth Government, when agreeing to a new contract with that company for its Pacific shipping services, had provided money to allow Burns, Philp to reduce the freight on maize from £2 per ton to the relatively nominal figure of 7/6 per ton.³ But rates for copra and imports from Australia were unchanged and British settlers thought they were still being victimised by the company because Presbyterian missionaries, whom they freely accused of competing with them as traders, paid smaller rates for freight than they.⁴ However the charge against this alleged trading by missionaries

1 Jacomb, France and England in the New Hebrides, p.50.

2 Thomas to Deakin, 26 November 1907, C.A.O., A1, 07/11828. Report of the Executive Committee of the New Hebrides British Association, 12 May 1908, New Hebrides Magazine, August 1908, p.5.

3 Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand interests', Printed Papers, XXIII, C.D.E.A.

4 Report of the Executive Committee, New Hebrides Magazine, August 1908, p.5.

was generally spurious.¹ Burns, Philp defended its favourable treatment of missionaries:

...it was owing to the support accorded in the early days by the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission that an Ocean steam service was ever possible, and we have always acknowledged that support by giving them most liberal terms. They, on the other hand, have given us a 'quid pro quo' by guaranteeing the whole of their business to our steamers, the total amount reaching a very substantial sum. This is an entirely different position to that of the ordinary small settler, who frequently plays off the French steamer against the British and sells his produce to the highest bidder.²

Walter Lucas, the manager of the Islands Department of Burns, Philp, was contemptuous of the agitation against its freight rates and accused A.S. Thomas, the secretary of the British New Hebrides Association, of deliberately inciting it:

1 See above, p.395. Arthur Mahaffy who toured the group in 1909 and Sir Francis May, the High Commissioner for the New Hebrides, who made a thorough investigation into charges against missionaries on a visit to the group in 1911, reported that they could find no evidence for this accusation; (Mahaffy to im Thurn, 21 November 1909, C.A.O., A1108, XIV. May to Harcourt, 30 November 1911, C.O. 225/79). And King also refused to believe it; (King to Thomas, 2 November 1910, N.H.B.S., 74/09).

2 Lucas to Hunt, 17 September 1909, C.A.O., A1, 09/11203.

It is only natural that, if an agitator of Mr. Thomas' type holds out to the settlers promises to secure them lower rates of freight, men who were previously quite satisfied with a fair thing should reach out for all the concessions they can get.¹

Lucas was unconcerned about any need to reduce freight rates to compete successfully with French steamers, he being confident that his company was holding its own and that its best 'weapon of offence and defence' was its 'old system of buying for bright British gold on the spot' - a reflection on the frequent inability of the S.F.N.H. to pay for goods in cash.²

Burns, Philp, however, did make a concession in 1908 by reducing the rate on copra from £2.10.-. per ton to £2. But what it offered with one hand it took with the other by doubling the rate for maize,³ a move it could carry out with the assurance that all British settlers who wished to claim the Commonwealth subsidy for maize exports had to use its ships, since a condition of the subsidy was that it was to be given only for goods carried in British bottoms, and Burns, Philp owned the only British ships regularly plying between the New

1 Lucas to Hunt, 31 August 1908, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1608.

2 Ibid.

3 Burns, Philp and Company to Hunt, 29 August 1908, C.A.O., A1, 08/9007.

Hebrides and Australia. And, whether deliberately or by accident, Thomas was victimised by overcharging for the maize he exported.¹ Felix Speiser, a Swiss anthropologist who spent two years in the New Hebrides, wrote of the company in 1913: 'Being practically without serious competitors they can set any price they please on commodities...; all the more so as many planters are dependent on them for large loans.'²

Nevertheless, as Jacomb observed, Burns, Philp had been 'the salvation of British interests in the New Hebrides;'³ for it alone was able to successfully compete with the French trading companies, the S.F.N.H. and Ballande's Comptoire Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides. Kerr Brothers, the only other British shipping company involved with the group,⁴ had ambitions of taking over the role of Burns, Philp as the major British carrier of goods between the islands and Australia; but this firm never ran more than an occasional schooner on this route, preferring

1 See C.A.O., file A1, 09/15829.

2 Felix Speiser, Two Years with the Natives in the Western Pacific, London, 1913, p.18.

3 Jacomb, France and England, p.13.

4 For a photo of Kerr Brothers' store in Vila, probably taken in 1912, see over.



Main Street at Kila, Hawaii
Person in center

mostly to use the services of the French Vila-Sydney vessel.¹ It made frequent representations to the Australian Government about the unfair competition it faced as a trading firm from the fact that Burns, Philp received government money to assist its trading activities,² and it finally persuaded the Government to call for tenders before it renewed the contract for Pacific Islands services in 1910;³ but then it did not submit any offer for the Government to consider, so that the contract was again given to Burns, Philp, the only tenderer.⁴

Despite the fact that the French Messageries Maritimes Company's Pacifique made the Sydney-Vila trip 'in half the time of the Burns, Philp boat,'⁵ which

1 Lucas to Hunt, 22 May 1908, C.A.O., A1, 08/354. Lucas to Hunt, 17 September 1909, ibid., 09/11203.

2 See, for example, Kerr Brothers to Barton, 18 July 1902, (C.A.O., A8, A02/58/1); G.S. Kerr to Acting Prime Minister, 20 August 1907, (C.A.O., A1108, I); J.W. Kerr to L.E. Groom, 14 December 1909, (ibid.).

3 Hunt to Kerr Brothers, 14 December 1909, ibid., III.

4 Statement by E.L. Batchelor, Minister for External Affairs, C.P.D., LIX, 23 November 1910, p.6647.

5 Roseby to Hunt, 30 May 1909, in C.O. to F.O., 24 August 1909, F.O.C.P., 9660/49.

travellers complained was small and uncomfortable,¹ Burns, Philp was able to increase its probable share of the import trade from Australia to the group from about 56% in 1908 to about 66% in 1910.² During the period 1906 to 1914 the value of exports from the New Hebrides to Australia was generally higher than in the first half of the 1900s, but, dependent as it was on price fluctuations and the vagaries of seasons and the supply of labour in the group, this trade was variable.³ Accurate figures unfortunately are unavailable for the export trade from the New Hebrides to New Caledonia, though King estimated that in 1910 it was worth £27,590, or over £3,000 more than exports to Australia.⁴ But in the period 1908-1910 Australian imports were growing at a much faster rate than imports from New Caledonia,⁵ so that, largely because

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- 1 See, for example, Dr D. Crombie to Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, 2 November 1908, P.V.F.M.C., Correspondence Book; and G. Alexander, From the Middle Temple to the South Seas, London, 1927, p.1
 - 2 British ships carried £27,533 worth of goods in 1908, £45,180 in 1909, and £50,837 in 1910. Report on the New Hebrides 1908-1910, in Mahaffy to C.O., 27 November 1911, C.O. 225/97.
 - 3 See Appendix B (iii) (a).
 - 4 Report on the New Hebrides 1908-1910.
 - 5 The latter were worth £27,899 in 1908, £35,283 in 1909, and £35,633 in 1910. Ibid.

of the efforts of Burns, Philp, by 1910 Australia provided about two-thirds of the imports of the New Hebrides and probably controlled over 60% of the total commerce of the group.¹

British settlers in the New Hebrides were definitely handicapped, in comparison with their French competitors, by the respective attitudes of their Resident Commissioners. Merton King, as Dr Scarr has shown, was not inclined to push British interests in the group any more than a natural inertia or his excessive concern with conciliating his French colleagues allowed.² Walter Lucas told Hunt in 1908 that King was living 'the life of a recluse, apparently, taking not the slightest interest in the social or commercial concerns of the Colony, confining himself strictly to official duties.' This, he said, was in 'striking contrast' to the way the French Resident Commissioner was encouraging French trading firms and settlers.³ Of Charles Noufflard, who was French Resident Commissioner from March 1908 to November 1909, the first to hold that position for any appreciable length of time after the signing of the New Hebrides Convention, Roseby wrote:

1 C.f. ibid. and Appendix B (iii) (a).

2 Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.229.

3 Lucas to Hunt, 31 August 1908, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1608.

The administration of the convention, which I do not say that he in any way infringes, is only one side of his work. He is constantly in touch with the interests of his nationals in every department - consolidating, conciliating, lifting, and pushing along the progress of the French everywhere.... No trouble is too great, no trifle is too small for him.¹

Those who followed Noufflard in the period 1910-1914 even more blatantly worked to further French interests in the group.²

One positive action of the British administration in the New Hebrides which provoked opposition from settlers was the edict banning the recruitment of female labourers first imposed in 1909. This policy originated from representations made in London to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Elgin, by a deputation from the John G. Paton Mission Committee, which included three New Hebrides missionaries home on furlough. Its members claimed that female labourers would undoubtedly be used for 'immoral purposes', and they urged the total prohibition of the recruiting of native women by British

1 Roseby to Hunt, 30 May 1909, F.O.C.P., 9660/49.

2 See Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.230-5, 238-41.

settlers.¹ Elgin thereupon recommended such a move to the High Commissioner for the New Hebrides.²

Complaints against this edict were not widely voiced until 1912 because, as King pointed out, the New Hebrides Convention permitted the recruitment of women and therefore any court of law in the group was likely to overrule the ban on British subjects.³ Though no female recruits were officially registered by the British administration after 1908, it was obvious by 1911 that British planters, recognising the inability of the administration to enforce the prohibition, were recruiting all the women they wanted. King's only response to this situation was, through his Labour Inspector, to inform such recruits that they were free to leave their masters when they pleased; in 1912 he reported that only a few had availed themselves of this opportunity.⁴

Realising this anomaly the Colonial Office acted to tighten the regulation, and a new Order in Council

1 Notes of deputation from the John G. Paton Mission Committee, 31 May 1907, C.O. 225/80.

2 Elgin to im Thurn, 17 June 1907, C.O. 881/11/187.

3 King to Major, 18 February 1909, in C.O. to F.O., 12 June 1909, F.O.C.P., 9660/28.

4 King to Sweet-Escott, 9 July 1912 [copy], C.O. 225/108.

was passed in 1911 to give the British Government power to enforce laws upon its subjects in the New Hebrides apart from regulations of the Convention.¹ The result was the proclamation of King's Regulation No. 1 of 1912, which allowed native women to be employed only as domestic servants on short term contracts, though it did not interfere with the right of wives to accompany their husbands who became indentured labourers.² Arthur Mahaffy, as Acting Resident Commissioner, wrote that when he attended the 1912 meeting of the New Hebrides British Association he was besieged with questions about this regulation and the members of the association, who claimed that male labourers could not be recruited in any large numbers if there were no female recruits, pledged themselves to resist it with all their might.³ Partly in response to the edict, and resulting from a general feeling that their interests were not being looked after by the British administration, some British settlers petitioned the following year for French annexation of the group;⁴ but

1 Harcourt to Sir F. May, 19 October 1911, C.O. 881/12/201.

2 May to Harcourt, 2 February 1912, ibid./203.

3 Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott, 8 September 1912 [copy], C.O. 225/108.

4 For a full discussion of this petition, see Latham, 'The New Hebrides', ch. 6, pp.19-20.

according to Roseby, many of the 21 who signed the petition were in French employment;¹ and their action prompted a counter-blast from 63 British residents in the islands who petitioned for British annexation.²

In actual fact fears that the supply of male labourers would be adversely affected by King's Regulation No. 1 of 1912 were unjustified. In the years 1908 to 1910 British subjects had recruited 967 male New Hebrideans, which, though considerably less than the 1,793 males recruited by Frenchmen in this period, represented approximately 16 labourers per annual licence issued to British recruiters, compared with about 11 for each of their French rivals;³ whereas in the years 1912 to 1914 British recruits increased to 1,304 or approximately 18 per licence in comparison with a smaller increase in the number of French male recruits to 2,071 or about 12 per licence.⁴ The ability of British recruiters to more than hold their own against their French competitors

1 Roseby to Hunt, 8 August 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/740.

2 F.E. Wallace to King, 22 August 1913, and enclosure, N.H.B.S., 137/13.

3 Report on the New Hebrides, 1908-1910 in Mahaffy to C.O., 27 November 1911, C.O. 225/97. Licences issued = 58 British and 169 French.

4 N.H.B.S., file 44/13. Licences = 70 British and 167 French.

was almost certainly, as Felix Speiser suggested, because of their much greater observance of Condominium regulations for the recruitment and treatment of labourers.¹

Nevertheless British planters complained that there was insufficient available labour in the New Hebrides.² Many of them blamed the Presbyterian missionaries for actively hindering recruiting;³ but King replied that, after an investigation into the situation by himself and a British naval officer, 'in only one or two minor instances could any direct evidence be produced - and that only involving a 'Teacher' - in support of the charges so freely directed against the missionary body.'⁴ It is probable, however, as Dr Scarr has suggested, that the society organised by the missionaries discouraged their converts from offering their services as indentured labourers.⁵ Mahaffy reported in 1912 'that it is true

1 Speiser, Two Years with the Natives, p.15. See also below, pp.525-6.

2 Mahaffy to im Thurn, 21 November 1909, in C.A.O., A1108, XIV. Thomas to King, 10 September 1910, N.H.B.S., 174/08.

3 Ibid.

4 King to Thomas, 2 November 1910, ibid.

5 Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.236-7.

that large numbers of men and boys who would otherwise be available and procurable as labourers prefer the... dignity of the mission schools to the rough labour of plantations.'¹ King in 1910 suggested that another and, to him, more important reason for the scarcity of labour was:

...the great prosperity that the native is now enjoying. With copra at its present figure - a price which has ruled for a long period - and traders competing against each other for the natives' custom, it is, I think, little wonder that so long as these conditions last, the hard life of an indentured labourer has little attraction for them. That this is the case has been admitted by many old settlers in the Group.²

Since copra prices remained over £15 per ton in the period 1911-1914, reaching as high as £20 in 1913,³ there was no diminishing of the prosperity of New Hebrideans in this period to encourage them to work on plantations.

Such native prosperity plus the spread of the

1 Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott, 18 September 1912, N.H.B.S., 174/08.

2 King to Thomas, 2 November 1910, ibid.

3 Average prices for New Hebrides copra were: 1911, £15.10.-.; 1912, £17; 1913, £20; 1914, £15.10.-. About 80% of all copra exported from the group was native grown. R.J. Etheridge of Burns, Philp and Company to King, 12 April 1915, N.H.B.S., 68/13.

civilising influences of mission and government in the group made the New Hebrides a generally safer place for European settlers in the period following the establishment of the Condominium than in previous years. King assured intending settlers that life and property in the group were secure.¹ The Rev. R.M. Fraser on Epi wrote in 1912 that Roxburgh did not bother to shut the doors of his house at night and asserted that in this respect New Hebrideans were 'far ahead of the dwellers in boasted civilisation.'² When, in 1910, on the southern coast of Santo there was a dispute between the Watson family, who were Burns, Philp settlers, and local natives about rights to the produce of gardens on the land the Watsons leased, the Rev. F.G. Bowie told King: 'I am sure the natives will not take any steps themselves to assert their rights although had it been ten years earlier they would have done something.'³ Only two years previously,

1 For example, King to W.L. Luyer, 7 April 1910, N.H.B.S., 19/07.

2 R.M. Fraser, *Journal of a Residence on Epi, New Hebrides, June-September 1912*, entry for 21 July 1912, Aborigines and Overseas Missions Office, Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

3 Bowie to King, 1 March 1910, N.H.B.S., 114/09.

however, neighbours of the Watsons, Peter Greig and his two teenage daughters had been murdered by bush people, most probably for plunder;¹ and in 1911 the Hog Harbour district of northeastern Santo was rudely disturbed by a war between European settlers and the followers of a local chieftain, in which A.S. Thomas' brother was wounded.² These violent events on Santo received prominent publicity in the Sydney Morning Herald,³ which would not have encouraged prospective emigrants from Australia to view the New Hebrides as a safe place for their persons or property.

The other major problem confronting British settlers in the group was New Hebrideans' predilection for alcoholic drinks such as 'trade' gin. The New Hebrides Magazine remarked in 1907 that, despite the decision of the British and French Governments to ban the sale of alcohol to the natives of the islands, French

1 See Case no. 16, Minutes of the Joint Naval Commission, 5 June 1909, N.H.B.S., 71/09; and im Thurn to the Earl of Crewe, 28 November 1908, and enclosures, C.O. 225/82.

2 See N.H.B.S., file 8/11; Diary of Maurice M. Witts, 1911, passim, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, MSS, no. 1; and Robert Langdon, 'Wily New Hebridean Outlaw Led Condominium Police on Many a Fruitless Chase', Pacific Islands Monthly, 39 (January, 1968), pp.81-5.

3 S.M.H., 24 October 1908, p.12; 17 April 1911, p.10.

traders were still importing large quantities of liquor for this purpose to the detriment of the interests of their British rivals.¹ Commander R.W. Bentinck reported that year: 'The majority of the natives, in the northern islands at least, prefer to deal with those planters [and traders] who can and will make part payment to them in gin. Hence British interests are suffering considerably.'² The proclamation of the Condominium at the end of 1907 did not rectify this situation, and in 1910 abuses of the Convention's liquor regulations coupled with abuses of the recruiting and labour regulations were the basis of an agitation against the state of the Condominium launched by the Presbyterian mission.

(b) The State of the Condominium

Prior to 1910 Anglo-French relations under the new regime of the Condominium were generally good. There were some disputes over land between British planters and the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides,³ understandable in the light of the vast acreage of yet

1 New Hebrides Magazine, April 1907, p.6.

2 Bentinck to Admiral Sir W. Fawkes, 10 October 1907, in Admiralty to F.O., 28 December 1907, F.O.C.P., 9257/157.

3 See N.H.B.S., files 37/08, 54/08, 170/08.

untouched land the company claimed.¹ Presbyterian missionaries had welcomed the advent of the Condominium as a hoped for beginning of orderly government. 'There are none of the residents of the New Hebrides who welcome the change with greater satisfaction than the missionaries,' said their journal.² In June 1908 their Synod expressed congratulations to the British and French Resident Commissioners for 'the measure of success' attending their efforts to improve the status of affairs in the group,³ a resolution reindorsed at Synod's 1909 meeting.⁴ And Sir Everard im Thurn, the British High Commissioner for the New Hebrides, reported in 1909 that Mahaffy, who was visiting the islands, had written to him that Noufflard and King were working well together and that 'both Residents seem marked by an almost exaggerated sense of scrupulous fairness towards each other'. But he warned that if Noufflard were to be transferred 'the just equilibrium which at present keeps the joint administrative

1 Roseby wrote in 1910 that except for properties on Efate, Epi and the shore of the Segond channel, Santo, the company's lands were still 'for the most part in a state of nature.' Roseby to im Thurn, 28 May 1910, N.H.B.S., 57/10.

2 New Hebrides Magazine, January 1908, p.1.

3 N.H.M., 30 June 1908.

4 N.H.M., 16 June 1909.

system at work may be very rudely disturbed.'¹

As im Thurn predicted, Noufflard's departure from the group at the end of 1909 ushered in a profoundly troubled era of Anglo-French relations in the group in the period 1910-1914.² His departure was at least partly caused by his efforts to secure the adherence of his nationals to the regulations of the Anglo-French Convention, which, though not as successful as the Presbyterian mission had publicly acclaimed, were a definite step towards controlling a situation that was threatening to get out of hand. Letters complaining of French abuses of the liquor and recruiting regulations of the Convention were growing ominously large in number in the files at the British Residency.³ And in 1909 the Clerk of the Presbyterian Synod privately told King that, though members of Synod did not wish to announce it publicly,

1 Im Thurn to Crewe, 23 October 1909, C.O. 225/86.

2 Except for the outbreak of animosity in 1910, Anglo-French relations in the group are not further dealt with below. For discussions of this subject, see Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.231-44; and Latham, 'The New Hebrides', chs. 6 & 7.

3 See N.H.B.S., files 11/07, 7/08, 12/08, 16/08, 66/08, 112/08, 31/09.

'so far as is known to us the only offenders, with one exception, are French citizens.'¹ However in 1909 Noufflard started action to regulate the way native labourers were treated on French plantations, which prompted a howl of protest from his fellow citizens.² In November that year Mahaffy reported from Vila: 'Noufflard is the best hated man here, his own people particularly never leave an opportunity to abuse him. I hear he is anxious to go away.'³ Both Mahaffy and King attributed his resignation at the end of that month to the opposition he had aroused on the labour question.⁴

The anti-Noufflard faction in the French community had launched a monthly newspaper, Le Néo-Hébridais, to publicise their campaign. Mahaffy pungently assessed the quality of this journal in 1913: 'Never believe the Néo Hébridais, 'tis a rag the yellowness of which is to

1 The Rev. W. Watt to King, 17 June 1909, N.H.B.S., 175/08.

2 See Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.231, note.

3 Mahaffy to im Thurn, 13 November 1909, in im Thurn to Crewe, 22 December 1909, C.O. 225/87.

4 Mahaffy to im Thurn, 6 December 1909, in ibid. King to Sir C. Lucas, 14 February 1910, F.O.C.P., 9872/32.

the yellowness of the most yellow Yankee rag as sunlight is to starlight.'¹ By the time its first edition was published in December 1909 Noufflard had been ousted and, after vigorously vilifying its departed enemy, in 1910 it shifted its glare of slanderous publicity onto the Presbyterian mission. Roseby told Hunt in April that year that the journal had:

...turned its attacks against the missionaries for the obstruction which they are alleged to make to French recruiting (the difficulties of plantation labour being now really acute here). It looks as if the international tension - after a period when all parties were on their best behaviour - is beginning to gather heat again.²

Charges against missionaries ranged from forcibly preventing natives from recruiting³ to an accusation that Dr Henry Bolton had been forced to resign his position at the John G. Paton Memorial Hospital at Vila for 'gross immorality'.⁴ The anti-missionary campaign also received prominent support from Jean-Martin Colonna, Acting French Resident Commissioner after Noufflard resigned, who, when welcoming the new Resident Commissioner in

1 Mahaffy to Hunt, 13 June 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/756.

2 Roseby to Hunt, 12 April 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/720.

3 For example, Le Néo-Hébridais, April 1910, pp.5-6.

4 Ibid., August 1910, p.6.

July 1910, called for a 'holy war' against the Presbyterian missionaries.¹

While such invective was the background of the mission's campaign against French abuses of Convention regulations, the British Resident Commissioner was responsible for the timing of the outbreak of the agitation. Prompted by complaints from British settlers about the mission's alleged hostility to the recruitment of labour, King, who was later to find that such charges were mostly groundless,² wrote to the New Hebrides Mission in a manner that suggested he believed most of the complaints he had received.³ Synod's reaction, when it considered this letter on 21 June 1910, was savage. At its sederunt three days earlier it had reiterated its congratulatory assessment of the state of the Condominium, resolving that there had been less abuses than in previous years.⁴ However at a later sederunt this resolution was deleted from the minutes.⁵ It is

1 Ibid., September 1910, pp.3-4.

2 See above, p.512.

3 N.H.M., 21 June 1910.

4 N.H.M., 18 June 1910.

5 The date of this order is not indicated.

probable that King's letter provoked this action which was necessary to prevent the obvious contradiction between the deleted statement and the new resolution repudiating the charge of hindering 'legitimate recruiting' but maintaining a right to speak out against the frequent violations of the Convention's recruiting regulations. Synod observed:

Notwithstanding certain benefits that have accrued from the establishment of civil government in the Islands, the pity is that in so many irregularities reported against French citizens it seems impossible to obtain any real satisfaction or to have the offenders adequately punished, if they are punished at all. The [Resident] commissioners have been informed of cases of kidnapping, of the recruitment of married women without their husbands' consent and the recruitment of single girls without the consent of their chiefs, all contrary to the regulations.

And in the same resolution the Church raised its voice against 'the persistent disregard of the regulations affecting the supply of alcoholic liquor by certain French citizens to natives'.¹

The sudden reversal in 1910 of the Presbyterian mission's attitude to the state of affairs in the

1 N.H.M., 21 June 1910.

Condominium raises the question whether the attack on abuses of regulations it launched that year was justified. In 1913 King accused them of 'flogging dead horses all the time'.¹ But the evidence accumulated by Dr Scarr of abuses of Condominium regulations and the failure of the French Administration to punish French offenders² suggests that King's accusation was a petulant reaction to the collapse of the good Anglo-French relations in the New Hebrides he had wanted to preserve. G.W. Johnson at the Colonial Office remarked that year: 'Mr. King's fault I think has always been too great a desire to live at peace with his French colleague & to let sleeping dogs lie.'³ King himself in a private letter to Sir Charles Lucas of the Colonial Office wrote in February 1910:

I took occasion recently to make strong representations to the French Commissioner regarding the continued and increasing sale of liquor and ammunition by Frenchmen to the natives. I urged that the matter had now become a crying scandal; that the Frenchmen concerned defied the convention, the administration, their national court, and everything in the way of authority. I added that I believed

1 King to Hunt, 13 August 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/681.

2 See Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.231-5.

3 Minute by Johnson, 12 August 1913, on King to Sweet-Escott, 19 May 1913 [copy], C.O. 225/119.

many of the offenders had been heavily fined, but that not a sou of the fines imposed had been paid; that, in fact, those fined laughed at what they called 'the farce' of it. M. Colonna admitted that such was the case.... If the French will not take exceptional measures the evil will continue and the scandal will become greater than it is now. The Presbyterian missionaries are dying to make a demonstration of some kind about it, but I have dissuaded them from doing so thus far.¹

Succeeding French Resident Commissioners, however, failed to take sufficient action to improve the situation. Jules Martin, who took over from Colonna, was the captive of those who had forced Noufflard to resign. A British naval officer serving in the group reported in 1911:

The French resident commissioner himself meets with much difficulty in controlling his own nationals. Their service is so intermixed with politics and there is so much slandering that if he makes an enemy that enemy at once commences backbiting, which is often effective.²

Jules Repiquet, who succeeded Martin in 1911 and held

1 King to Lucas, 14 February 1910, F.O.C.P., 9872/32.

2 Commander P.H. Warleigh to Admiralty, 26 August 1911, in Admiralty to F.O., 23 October 1911, F.O.C.P., 10121/92.

the post until 1914, openly sided with French subjects who flouted Condominium regulations about the sale of liquor and the recruitment of labour; he acted to deprive the Joint Court of every vestige of its powers over French citizens on these matters; and he utilised the French warship Kersaint, which represented the Joint Naval Commission, to attack the power of the Presbyterian mission, and the efforts of Edward Jacomb to organise natives to defend their claims to land, by arbitrarily imprisoning native leaders, many of whom were Christian teachers.¹

Under the regimes of Martin and Repiquet abuses committed by Frenchmen flourished. British subjects generally were not guilty of participating in breaches of Condominium regulations. Few of them were brought before the Joint Court for selling arms or liquor to New Hebrideans or for illegally recruiting labourers.² King wrote in February 1911 that such activity by British residents:

1 See Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.234-5, 238-42.

2 In 66 such cases in 1911 only 10 of the accused were British subjects or foreigners who had opted for British jurisdiction. Enclosure in Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott, 6 December 1912, N.H.B.S., 84/12.

...would be denounced as eagerly by the missionaries, who could not fail to be aware of it, as by the French if it came to their notice; and as but two cases, and those of no great gravity, have been reported to me since my arrival in the group more than three years ago, I think I am justified in claiming that the British are cleanhanded in both respects.¹

In 1913 a neutral observer commented that, in marked contrast to French plantations, there was 'but little brutality' on British plantations 'owing to the Government's careful supervision of the planters and the higher social and moral standing of the [British] settlers in general.'² One proviso, however, which should be mentioned, was that there were a number of British subjects working on French owned plantations and for French traders in order, as Fletcher expressed it, 'to profit from the criminal idiocy of the French officials.'³

On the other hand French subjects, who, said Roseby, included 'a...large percentage of "mauvais sujets"- "libérés", low-class adventurers, half-castes, Maré boys, etc.',⁴ were responsible for practically all

1 King to Harcourt, 16 February 1911, C.O. 225/98.

2 Speiser, Two Years with the Natives, p.42.

3 Lynch (ed.), Isles of Illusion, p.57.

4 Roseby to Hunt, 9 November 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/726.

the breaches of Article LIX prohibiting the sale of liquor to natives brought before the Joint Court. Such cases increased from 47 in the two years 1910 and 1911 to 71 in 1912.¹ Yet the fines imposed by that Court upon convicted offenders were trifling;² and even then, of £65.13.6. imposed by the Court on French citizens in 1910-11, only 10/- had been collected by the French administration by December 1912.³

At the beginning of the following year the Spanish President of the Joint Court lamented the frequency of cases of irregular recruiting of labour brought before the court. 'The incidences surrounding these cases of irregular recruiting,' he told the British Colonial Secretary, 'produce a most painful impression on the mind of the Court. Sometimes it is necessary to refer to the cruellest periods of the slave trade to discern a parallel.'⁴ King claimed that this reference

1 E. Harrowell to King, 6 December 1911, N.H.B.S., 200/08. Count de Buena Esperanza to Harcourt, 2 January 1913, in C.O. to F.O., 3 March 1913, F.O.C.P., 10945/5.

2 Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.233.

3 Harrowell to King, 6 December 1911, N.H.B.S., 200/08.

4 Buena Esperanza to Harcourt, 2 January 1913, in C.O. to F.O., 3 March 1913, F.O.C.P., 10945/5.

to the slave trade should 'be taken as a bit of poetic licence.'¹ But there is plentiful evidence, apart from the numerous cases cited by missionaries, to contradict King's claim. W. Wilkes, the Condominium Government Agent on Tanna, who was a bitter opponent of the local missionaries, told King in 1913 that some of the French recruiters who visited his island 'deserve the condemnation of any decent man. Their methods are base.'² In 1911 the British High Commissioner was told by a naturalised Frenchman on Ambrym who had been in the group since the 1880s:

Many recruiters can't get men honestly so they steal them. Kidnapping has increased because the difficulty of getting labourers has increased.... You may say that there are no laws here, and if there are, they are a dead letter, there is no one to see that they are carried out.³

Speiser, after his two years living in and travelling round the group, wrote of some of the methods commonly used by recruiters:

They intoxicate men and women, and make them enlist in that condition; young

1 King to Hunt, 16 October 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/683.

2 Wilkes to King, 14 December 1913, N.H.B.S., 87/13.

3 May to Harcourt, 30 November 1911, C.O. 225/79.

men are shown pretty women, and promised all the joys of Paradise in the plantations. If these tricks fail, the recruiters simply kidnap men and women while bathing.... As a rule they do not use fair means to find hands....¹

Yet the Commandant of the British police reported that crimes against natives brought before the French National Court in 1911 under headings such as 'Threats to murder', 'Firing upon natives' and 'Landing an armed party and by threats attempting to force natives to recruit as indentured labourers' had not been heard by the end of 1912.²

Conditions on many French plantations justified accusations of slavery. Jacomb wrote in May 1913:

During the past year I have received, on an average, one complaint per diem from natives employed by French subjects round and about Vila and Mélé. The unending cry is: 'We can't get paid, we can't get repatriated, we are starved, some of us die, we are made to work in all weathers, sick or well, from dark in the morning to dark at night, flogged, cuffed, and generally treated not as human beings but as brute beasts.'³

1 Speiser, Two Years Among the Natives, p.55.

2 Harrowell to Mahaffy, 20 September 1912, N.H.B.S., 35/12.

3 Jacomb to King, 19 May 1913, N.H.B.S., 3/13.

Such conditions were starkly revealed to the British administration in 1913 on the plantation near Vila taken over from French owners by the Pacific Isles Investment Company.¹ When he read the report on the plantation by the British Labour Inspector, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Colonies exclaimed that it was: 'the worst I have read since I came to the C.O. & almost approximates to Congo & Putumayo horrors.'² Mahaffy commented:

If such a state of affairs can exist...upon a plantation four miles from the seat of Government, which has always been considered as a model by the French, what must be the conditions existing upon plantations in remote northern islands, and from which nothing but an occasional rumour reaches Vila?³

Fletcher, on one of those islands, provided an answer in 1912:

People howl about Chinese slavery. I could tell them things about the recruitment and treatment of Kanakas that would open their eyes a bit. Imagine a poor wretch tied up

1 See Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.252.

2 Minute by Lord Emmott, 5 May 1913, on Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott, 26 February 1913, and enclosures [copy], C.O. 225/119.

3 Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott, 26 February 1913 [copy], ibid.

to a post to be flogged by his own wife and friends because half-fed he had dared to eat one coconut found by him in the bush, his own land stolen from him by these cursed money-grubbers. That I heard yesterday, and it was told as a huge jest.¹

And Speiser wrote of the habit of French planters of inducing their labourers to drink themselves so far into their master's debt that they were bonded to him for life, a practice that was rampant because there was 'hardly any supervision over French plantations outside Port Vila.' In many French plantations, he said, 'conditions exist which are an insult to our modern views on humane treatment.'² 'Slavery under the British flag', the title of a pamphlet written by the Rev. F.H.L. Paton in 1913,³ was a reasonable epithet for labour conditions under the Anglo-French Condominium in the period 1910-1914.

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- 1 Lynch (ed.), Isles of Illusion, p.49. Fletcher was writing from one of the offshore islands of Malekula (see p.48). It is not clear whether the incident he related occurred on a French plantation, but, while in the same context he mentions brutality by an Australian, he later implied that at least some of his Australian neighbours were working for Frenchmen (see p.57).
 - 2 Speiser, Two Years with the Natives, p.42.
 - 3 Paton, Slavery Under the British Flag, Melbourne, 1913.

II

Australian Policy and Opinion 1907-August 1914(a) The Deakin and Fisher Governments
1907-April 1910

The decision to establish an Anglo-French Condominium did not allay Australian fears that, if French economic interests in the New Hebrides continued to grow at a faster rate than British interests, French annexation could become a reality. Therefore, though in the period 1907 to early 1910 Anglo-French relations in the group were relatively harmonious, the Australian Government continued efforts to promote British interests in the islands and closely watched French activities there.

Early in 1907 Deakin's Government complained that French sales of liquor to natives in the New Hebrides were continuing despite the intention of the 1906 Convention to prohibit this trade.¹ Hunt revealed to King in November that year the distrust of French intentions in Australian government circles:

1 Governor General Lord Northcote to the Earl of Elgin, 6 April 1907, C.O. 418/52.

The French have not played quite straight with us. They undertook 12 months ago to stop the export of trade gin, and have not yet done so; the consequence is that their ships have been getting all the trade. I fancy that they are desirous of continuing that state of things so long as they can find any colourable excuse for deferring the proclamation of the new law.¹

The increasing influx of French immigrants to the group in the years 1908 and 1909 that was reported by Roseby to Hunt, therefore seemed to the Deakin Government part of a French plot to swamp British interests. Deakin promptly despatched Roseby's report to the Colonial Office and cabled one of his ministers, Colonel J.F.G. Foxton, who was in London attending an Imperial Conference on Naval and Military Defence, requesting him to inform the Secretary of State for Colonies that the position in the group was going 'from bad to worse' because, he suggested, of 'a very carefully planned campaign' on the part of the French.²

A solution to the problem of growing French influence in the New Hebrides, which Deakin expressed in his cable to Foxton in 1909, was to appoint a separate

1 Hunt to King, 8 November 1907, Hunt Papers, MS 52/638.

2 Deakin to Foxton, 2 August 1909, C.A.O., A1, 09/16017.

High Commissioner for the group residing in Australia. He blamed the lack of progress of British interests partly on the fact that Fiji was too remote, communications from Vila to Suva having to pass through Sydney.¹ Deakin previously had raised this idea in 1904 and 1907 in the context of transferring the headquarters of the High Commission for the Western Pacific from Fiji to Australia.² But as Dr Scarr has pointed out, there was no hope of the British Government agreeing to such a proposal.³

During its two periods of office in the years 1907 to 1910 Deakin's Government continued to directly support British interests in the New Hebrides by continuing its subsidy to Burns, Philp for shipping services to the group and by providing money for surveying and legal assistance for British settlers. The appointment of a surveyor to help settlers prepare land claims for registration by the Joint Court had been suggested by

1 Ibid.

2 Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.285-6. Deakin to Northcote, 5 January 1907, C.A.O., A1, 07/103. See also Helen M. Davies, 'The Administrative Career of Atlee Hunt, 1901-1910', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1968, pp.175-6.

3 Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.286-7.

Rason in 1905 at the time the British and French Governments were considering the establishment of a lands commission.¹ As a result the Government had authorised the payment of £300 per annum to Burns, Philp for the employment of a surveyor in the group.² In 1909 the annual vote for this purpose was increased to £1,000 to provide extra assistance.³ The suggestion that the Government should support a solicitor in the islands to assist settlers in preparing their land claims came from the Presbyterian Church in 1908.⁴ After experiencing difficulty in finding an interested lawyer with a sufficient knowledge of the French language, in November 1909 the Government approved of the appointment at £750 per annum, again under the cover of Burns, Philp, of L.S. Woolcott,⁵

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- 1 Rason to im Thurn, 7 June 1905, in im Thurn to Northcote, 3 July 1905, C.A.O., A1108, IV.
 - 2 Lucas to H.E. Lewis, Department of External Affairs, 21 August 1905, ibid., VI. J.A. La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, Melbourne, 1965, p.442.
 - 3 Hunt to Vance, 23 August 1909, C.A.O., A1108, VI. Hunt to Lucas, 30 October 1909, ibid., VIII.
 - 4 Lucas to Hunt, 4 April 1908, C.A.O., A1, 08/354.
 - 5 Hunt to Woolcott, 1 November 1909, C.A.O., A1108, VI. Latham, 'The New Hebrides', ch. 6, p.7.

who was recommended by Sir Edmund Barton.¹ The Deakin Government also agreed to guarantee prices for British grown coffee and maize imported into Australia from the New Hebrides, which in 1907 was converted to a grant of £750 for a rebate of half the duties paid on these products.² Deakin informed Parliament in 1908 that his Government proposed to give further tariff assistance by giving preference for New Hebrides imports;³ however political instability and Deakin's lack of a clear majority in Parliament probably prevented his going ahead with this proposal. Deakin, in the Morning Post in 1906, had admitted that assistance for New Hebrides imports was not a popular policy 'because we have so much idle territory of our own upon which we are anxious to plant white farmers.'⁴ And at the beginning of 1910 George Reid told Arthur Mahaffy that while he himself favoured extra tariff relief for New Hebrides residents:

1 Barton to L.E. Groom, 15 September 1909, Groom Papers, MS 236/1, folder 9.

2 See above, pp.496-7.

3 C.P.D., XLVIII, 6 November 1908, p.2112.

4 Morning Post article [published 8 May 1906], Papers of Alfred Deakin, MS 1540/51/2, no. 272, N.L.A.

...any practical steps on the part of the Government of the Commonwealth would be delayed until after the general election in next April, since Mr. Deakin would certainly hesitate to introduce any debatable policy until his political position was perfectly assured.¹

But the general election resulted in the defeat of Deakin's Government.

In November 1908 there had also been a change of Government with the Labour Party under Andrew Fisher assuming power for the ensuing seven months. As in 1904 the advent of a Labour Government did not result in any fundamental change in Australia's New Hebrides policy. Fisher firmly believed in an Australian empire in the Pacific,² and only two members of his Cabinet, Hugh Mahon and Frank Tudor, are known to have previously expressed isolationist opinions.³ Hunt's experience of this Government was that, although its members 'were not well versed in the [New Hebrides] question and needed much enlightenment,...when informed they always took a very

1 Mahaffy to im Thurn, 25 January 1910, in C.O. to F.O., 6 September 1910, F.O.C.P., 9872/90.

2 See above, p.458.

3 See Appendix E (ii) (a).

sound view.'¹ This assessment is supported by the Fisher Government's retention of the policies of subsidising Burns, Philp's shipping service, paying for a surveyor in the group and providing tariff relief for New Hebrides settlers.

The limitations of Australia's encouragement of British settlement in the New Hebrides depended much less upon the political persuasion of the government in power than upon the fact that there were more important Australian interests which seemed to conflict with it. In October 1909 when Deakin was in power, in reply to a suggestion from Roseby that the Government should take positive steps to promote emigration of Australians to the group, Hunt wrote:

The Commonwealth is doing all it can to induce immigrants to come to this country, and at the same time to hold out inducements to people to leave this country for the New Hebrides would appear most contradictory, more especially when you remember that we have the interests of our own tropical territory of Papua to consider.²

Another example of the clash of interests was the Deakin Government's opposition to Mahaffy's suggestion that

1 Hunt to im Thurn, 20 April 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1340.

2 Hunt to Roseby, 12 October 1909, Hunt Papers, MS 52/717.

indentured Indian labourers would solve the problem of shortage of labour in the group. Though Hunt claimed that on this subject the Government was mainly concerned with the welfare of New Hebrideans,¹ in a private conversation with Mahaffy, Littleton Groom, the Minister for External Affairs, in giving his principal reason for opposing the idea, said that:

A step of this kind...would be difficult to justify to the maize growers and agriculturalists of tropical Australia who must now employ white labour at high rates of wages, and who in many cases must face as heavy charges on their produce as their competitors in the New Hebrides...²

The Government's fear that its New Hebrides policy would be attacked as inimical to the interests of tropical Australia and New Guinea plus the demands of an under-developed country were important restrictions on its freedom of action to prevent French economic domination of the group.

1 Hunt to im Thurn, 31 December 1909, ibid./1347.
See also Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p.295.

2 Mahaffy to im Thurn, 14 January 1910, in C.O. to F.O., 6 September 1910, F.O.C.P., 9872/90.

(b) Opinion 1907-August 1914

After expressions of disappointment at the results of the Anglo-French Conference in 1906 died down in Australia, less public interest was shown in New Hebrides affairs than in the first half of the 1900s. In the three year period July 1907 to June 1910 the Argus published only three editorials commenting about the New Hebrides compared with 19 such editorials in 1901-1906.¹ The Sydney Morning Herald retained a much more lively interest in the group in the 1907-1910 period, probably because Sydney was the centre of communications and trade between Australia and these and all Pacific islands. But the New Hebrides proportion of Pacific editorials declined from about 41% in 1901-1906 to 19% in the later period, and Papua supplanted the group as the Pacific area most frequently dealt with.²

Both these newspapers expressed concern at the failure of British economic interests in the New Hebrides to grow as much as those of the French. The Herald's

1 Argus, 14 November 1907, 18 November, 29 December 1909.

2 There were 15 Papuan and nine New Hebrides editorials. For the latter, see S.M.H., 16 July, 19, 30 October, 20 November 1907, 1 May, 1 September, 6 November 1908, 7 July, 9 September 1909.

concern was part of a wider dismay at the alleged decline of Australia's position in the foreign trade of Pacific islands.¹ The growth of French interests in the New Hebrides, it said in 1908, was 'not consoling to the Commonwealth, which has a preponderating trade interest in all the islands of the Pacific.'² It also foresaw the day when, despite the existence of the Condominium, there would be further negotiations about the group's political status and maintained that to prepare for this occasion it was necessary to strengthen Australia's economic position in the islands.³ The Argus agreed that the Condominium was but a temporary arrangement and that 'in the natural course of events the islands will pass to the power which has gained the strongest foothold there.'⁴

In the fourth Parliament from 1907 to 1909 Johnson maintained his keen interest in New Hebrides affairs, keeping before the House of Representatives at question time problems such as the slowness to convene the

1 See, for example, S.M.H., 14 January 1907.

2 S.M.H., 1 May 1908.

3 S.M.H., 9 September 1909.

4 Argus, 18 November 1909.

Joint Court and complaints from British settlers that their welfare was being ignored by Australia's tariff policy and the indifference of the British authorities; of 22 questions about the group in this Parliament, 12 were asked by or on behalf of Johnson.¹ He also introduced an abortive motion asking the Government to refund all tariffs on New Hebrides produce.² In the Senate the role of chief spokesman for the New Hebrides cause passed to James Walker from Staniforth Smith, who had departed for a tropical home of his own in New Guinea.³

Some parliamentary opposition to the Government's policies of providing shipping subsidies and tariff relief for the group was voiced in short debates on the estimates. Despite his previous support for an interventionist policy and his enterprise in visiting the islands in 1907, the eccentric physician William Maloney opposed moves to increase financial assistance, arguing that extra money would be better spent at home.⁴ But besides a few who

1 C.P.D., XXXVI, pp.26, 470, 647; XXXVII, pp.1378, 1413, 1596; XXXVIII, p.2121; XLIV, p.8818; XLVI, p.10877; XLVII, p.265; LI, pp.2860, 3049.

2 C.P.D., LI, 2 September 1909, pp.2948-55.

3 C.P.D., XL, pp.4245, 47-8; XLI, p.5886; XLVII, pp.63-4, 325-6.

4 C.P.D., XLIV, 20 March 1908, pp.9413-4; LIV, 6 December 1909, pp.7075-6.

offered interjections, Hugh Mahon was the only other who spoke in opposition to these policies.¹ And on no occasion was either House forced to divide over these measures, which is an indication that isolationist sentiment was not strong in this Parliament.

Outside Parliament, from 1907 to mid-1910, the Presbyterian Church and Burns, Philp were the only public bodies making representations to the Government about the New Hebrides. The Church forwarded sporadic complaints about French aggression in land disputes and ill-treatment of natives.² Burns, Philp was in constant touch with the Government about the shipping subsidy and legal and surveying assistance for settlers. The company also kept a watchful eye on political affairs relating to the group. In 1907 it arranged for the publication and distribution of a series of articles in the Sydney Morning Herald entitled 'British Mismanagement in the Pacific Islands' which dealt in part with the New Hebrides.³ But the company had confidence that the Government was equally as vigilant. In 1911 at the

1 C.P.D., XLIV, 20 March 1908, p.9416, 24 March 1908, p.9511.

2 See C.A.O., A1, files 07/8353, 08/1184.

3 J. Burns to Hunt, 2 November 1907, Hunt Papers, 52/1567.

time of the prevailing Morocco crisis Walter Lucas told the Acting Secretary of the Department of External Affairs:

I was nearly ringing you up last week to know if the present re-arrangement of positions might not be a favourable one for making another effort to get France to cede the New Hebrides to us.... On second thought I decided that the matter would in all probability have been attended to and there was no necessity for me to 'butt in'.¹

For the Government's efforts to promote British interests in the New Hebrides Burns, Philp and Company was of vital importance, not only as the major representative of those interests, but also as a cover for moves about which the Government wished to avoid publicity. Joseph Cook, who was deputy leader of Deakin's 1909-1910 Government and who showed in Parliament an active interest in New Hebrides affairs,² considered that Burns, Philp had 'laid out money in the islands from purely patriotic considerations in an endeavour to keep them under British control' and that 'no company deserves better of Australia' than it.³ The Deakin Government,

1 Lucas to F.J. Quinlan, 5 August 1911, ibid., 52/1681.

2 C.P.D., XXXVI, p.470; XXXIX, pp.3268, 3301; XLIV, pp.9513-4.

3 C.P.D., LV, 9 August 1910, p.1269; LIX, 23 November 1910, p.6647.

however was not dominated by the company in its dealings with it. It agreed to representations from Kerr Brothers for the calling of tenders for the Pacific mail contract in 1910;¹ and in March that year it rejected a plea from Burns, Philp that payment of the subsidy should not be reduced following the disruption of the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands services because of a coal strike.²

Burns, Philp's pamphlet British Mismanagement in the Pacific was written by the Times Australian correspondent A.W. Jose.³ He kept the New Hebrides question in front of his English readers in 1909 and 1910.⁴ In another pamphlet published in 1908, Our Empire in the Pacific, C. Carty Salmon, M.H.R., counselled Australians, with reference to the 'unsatisfactory' state of the New Hebrides situation, to patiently 'await the psychological moment when international exigencies may give us all that we desire.'⁵

There were, then, Australians who were still

1 See above, p.505.

2 Lucas to Hunt, 16 February 1910; Hunt to Burns, Philp & Co., 10 March 1910, C.A.O., A63, A10/1220.

3 Papers of A.W. Jose, Uncat MSS, set 266/4, M.L.

4 Times articles [published 23 August 1909, 30 November 1910], ibid./1.

5 C. Carty Salmon, Our Empire in the Pacific, Melbourne, 1908.

actively interested in the New Hebrides other than those with direct religious or economic interests there. The Government, however, was still trying to minimise public discussion of the question. Hunt told King in August 1910: 'We have done our best to keep New Hebrides matters out of the press, and have succeeded fairly well for the last two or three years.' But he warned that this relative lack of comment might not continue if the French in the group continued to disregard Condominium regulations.¹

In the latter half of 1910 complaints in Australia about abuses in the New Hebrides were indeed beginning to grow as reports from the group, released under the stimulus of the Presbyterian Mission's agitation about the state of the Condominium, reached Australia. In August the Argus published a letter from Dr John Bowie of the Ambrym Presbyterian hospital, released by the Victorian Church, which it headed: 'South Sea Scandals'.² In November the arrival in Sydney of the fiery Rev. Dr Campbell Nicholson of Tanna resulted in an interview given prominent space in the Sydney Morning Herald,³

1 Hunt to King, 10 August 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/660.

2 Argus, 5 August 1910, p.6.

3 S.M.H., 23 November 1910, p.12.

which prompted that paper to call for an enquiry into the 'abominable atrocities' occurring in the group.¹ Other Presbyterian missionaries spending the summer of 1910-1911 in Australia reiterated tales of abuses in interviews in Sydney,² and in July 1911 Bishop Wilson of the Melanesian Mission confirmed the truth of such reports in an article which the Sydney Morning Herald headed: 'The Reign of Terror: Horrors in the New Hebrides'.³ The Condominium, said that paper, was obviously 'a ghastly failure'; British annexation was the only solution.⁴

Presbyterian complaints about the state of affairs in the New Hebrides were submitted to the Australian Government in a private deputation to Egerton Batchelor, the Minister for External Affairs, in December 1910.⁵ In September and November 1911 other deputations from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria publicly reiterated the Church's great dissatisfaction with the situation in

1 Ibid., editorial.

2 Ibid., p.10; S.M.H., 21 January 1911, p.10.

3 S.M.H., 27 July 1911, p.10.

4 S.M.H., 28 July 1911.

5 Report of Private Deputation, 7 December 1910, C.A.O., All08, XI. Latham, 'The New Hebrides', ch. 8, p.1.

the group,¹ and the Presbyterians were supported that year by letters on the subject from Bishop Wilson,² the Secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church of Christ in Australia, which had recently sent missionaries to the islands,³ and the Women's Liberal League of New South Wales, which dwelt upon the kidnapping of women in the group.⁴

In the fifth Parliament which sat from 1910 to 1912 Johnson's elevation to the Speaker's Chair of the House of Representatives meant that there were fewer questions asked about the New Hebrides than in the previous Parliament,⁵ but a number of members from both sides of the House kept New Hebrides affairs in front of their colleagues at question time and in debates on supply and the estimates. Joseph Cook, in August 1910, was the first to raise the issue of abuses in the group,

1 Reports of Deputations, 19 September, 1 November 1911, C.A.O., All08, XI; Governor-General Lord Denman to Harcourt, 1 December 1911, C.O. 881/13/203.

2 Wilson to W. Hughes, 12 August 1911, C.A.O., All08, XI.

3 T.B. Fisher to Batchelor, 6 October 1911, ibid.

4 Hunt to Secretary of the Women's Liberal League of New South Wales, 4 January 1911, ibid.

5 There were ten such questions in the fifth Parliament.

emphasising its importance for Australia's defence.¹ William Higgs, now a member of the lower House, reminded members of the vast under-developed areas in Australia and attacked those who 'not satisfied with our enormous territory, embracing about 3,000,000 square miles...are reaching out for a few hundred thousand acres more in the New Hebrides'.² Bruce Smith, a New South Wales member of the Liberal Opposition, retorted that in all the speeches he had heard from Higgs 'he has not shown that he has an eye or a mind for anything outside Australia.'³ Thomas Brown, one of Higgs' colleagues on the Government benches, disavowed Higgs' isolationist views as corresponding with his own;⁴ and no other member supported Higgs in this short debate. He remained an obstinate but lone isolationist throughout the fifth Parliament,⁵ whereas three other Labour members, Ernest Carr, Alfred Ozanne and John West spoke for the interventionist viewpoint. Carr added a new

1 C.P.D., LV, 9 August 1910, pp.1269-70.

2 Ibid., p.1271.

3 Ibid., p.1272.

4 Ibid., p.1277.

5 See also C.P.D., LVIII, pp.4341, 4423; LIX, pp.6582, 6645-6; LX, p.961; LXVIII, pp.5599.

and prescient argument to those which had encouraged Australians in the past to regard the New Hebrides as an important part of their defences when he spoke of the need for British annexation of the group to forestall Japan which was 'likely to be the enemy of Australia in the future.'¹

The Government in 1911 assured the Presbyterians that their complaints about the state of the Condominium would be forwarded to the British Government,² which was probably why their Church ceased making representations to it on the subject during 1912.³ That year there were also fewer public accusations in Australia about abuses in the group.⁴ But 1912 passed without any publicly announced British action to rectify the situation, and early the following year the Victorian Presbyterian Church sent its Foreign Missions Secretary, Frank Paton, to the New Hebrides to collect information about the problem. While Paton was in the group his committee

1 C.P.D., LXIII, 19 December 1911, pp.4742-3. For Ozanne, see C.P.D., LX, pp.385, 538. For West, see C.P.D., LXVIII, p.5456.

2 See below, pp.563-4.

3 There is no relevant evidence in C.A.O., All08, XI, where all such correspondence is filed.

4 Compare, for example, items under 'New Hebrides' in Index to 'The Argus', 1911, 1912.

reported to the General Assembly of the Church that private advice from Britain indicated that: 'it is quite impossible to stir up the Authorities at home to anything like an adequate action in view of the grave situation that exists in the islands,' and the Assembly therefore resolved to renew representations on the subject to the Commonwealth Government.¹

The stage was thus set for a revitalized public agitation in Australia on the New Hebrides question in the latter half of 1913. Before taking action the Foreign Missions Committee awaited the return of Paton, who came back loaded with ammunition to fire at the Condominium, which he put into the pamphlet Slavery Under the British Flag. He proposed a course of action to put pressure upon the British Government, which was approved by his Committee in September 1913. It involved publishing the pamphlet and distributing it to members of parliament, newspaper editors and other leading men throughout the British empire; a deputation to the Minister for External Affairs and an interview with Lord Emmott, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Colonies, who was visiting Australia; utilising the press; and holding public meetings in

1 G.A.P.V., 15 May 1913.

Melbourne and other cities.¹

In England the Victorian Church received the support of the John G. Paton Mission Fund,² and in Australia it enlisted the support of other Churches. The New South Wales Presbyterian Church and the Australian Church of Christ joined it in a deputation in September 1913 to Patrick McMahon Glynn, the Minister for External Affairs in the newly elected Cook Government.³ The Victorian Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches cooperated in another deputation to Glynn the following December.⁴

In November that year Paton announced to the press that he had received from a confidential but thoroughly reliable British source news that the British Government was contemplating handing over the New Hebrides to France.⁵ He also received the cooperation of the

1 P.V.F.M.C., 9, 17 September 1913.

2 See the Mission Fund's pamphlet: F.H.L. Paton & A.K. Langridge, Britain and France in the New Hebrides Islands, S.W. Pacific, Bournemouth, 1914. The Fund had been founded in 1893 by A.K. Langridge to support Presbyterian missionaries in the New Hebrides.

3 Notes of Deputation, 18 September 1913, C.A.O., A1108, XI.

4 Notes of Deputation, 11 December 1913, ibid.

5 Argus, 10 November 1913, p.8.

Argus which published two lengthy articles by him condemning the treatment of natives under the Condominium;¹ and that paper gave generous publicity for a public meeting held in the Melbourne Auditorium in December.² According to the Argus, the meeting attracted 'a large attendance'; it was chaired by a veteran Presbyterian supporter of the cause of the New Hebrides Mission, Robert Harper, M.H.R.; and as well as Presbyterian speakers, the meeting was addressed by G.A. Moir, an official of the Australian Natives' Association, who had visited the New Hebrides. Moir was acclaimed when he called for the buying out of French interests in the group, and he raised the Japanese bogey in a hyperbolic manner by claiming that there were more Japanese than Frenchmen in New Caledonia and that, though ostensibly coolies, they were in reality 'Japanese soldiers, engineers, and bridge-builders.'³ The Mirboo North branch of the A.N.A. passed a resolution urging the Commonwealth Government to oppose any cession of New Hebrides territory to France,⁴ and a motion to this effect was carried at the Annual

1 Argus, 13 September 1913, p.6; 20 September 1913, p.6.

2 See Argus, 11 December 1913, p.7 and editorial.

3 Argus, 12 December 1913, p.11.

4 Argus, 11 December 1913, p.7.

Conference of Victorian branches of the association in March 1914.¹

In Adelaide a deputation representing the South Australian Presbyterian and Anglican Churches and Church of Christ saw Glynn on his home ground,² and the Adelaide Diocesan Missionary Association joined the Presbyterian Church in expressing 'deep concern' at the report about Britain's alleged intention to hand the New Hebrides over to France, pointing out the ill-treatment of natives by Frenchmen in the group and the fact that the Church of England had spent much money on missionary work in the islands.³

In Sydney the Presbyterian Church organised no public meetings, but in May 1913, it had sent its own representative to the New Hebrides to report on conditions there;⁴ its Foreign Missions Committee circulated Paton's

1 A.N.A.R., 24-26 March 1914.

2 Notes of Deputation, 17 November 1913, C.A.O., A1108, XI.

3 Very Rev. G.E. Young and Rt. Rev. C. Wilson to Cook, 12 November 1913; Rev. T. Shanks to Glynn, 17 November 1913, ibid.

4 Minutes of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, 5 May 1913, Aborigines and Overseas Missions Office of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, Sydney.

pamphlet;¹ and the Convenor of the Committee fed information about atrocities in the group to the Sydney press.² The Sydney Methodist and Australian Christian World supported the agitation.³ In Sydney the veteran Methodist missionary, the Rev. George Brown, wrote of abuses in the islands in the London Contemporary Review.⁴ And the Sydney based Association for the Protection of Native Races in Australasia and Polynesia, an organisation formed in 1911 originally to protect the interests of Australian Aborigines which boasted vice-Presidents as important as the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, took up the cause of New Hebrideans being ill-treated by French recruiters and planters.⁵

In the sixth Parliament, in November 1913, James Fenton moved that the Government 'draw the attention of the British Government to the state of affairs existing

1 Ibid., 25 November 1913.

2 See, for example, S.M.H., 8 October 1913, p.13; 9 December 1913, p.8; 26 December 1913, p.7.

3 Methodist, 16 May 1914. Australian Christian World, 21 November, 5 December 1913.

4 George Brown, 'The Trouble in the New Hebrides', Contemporary Review, CV (April 1914), pp.526-32.

5 Association for the Protection of Native Races in Australasia and Polynesia to Glynn, 28 February 1914, C.A.O., A1108, XVI.

in the New Hebrides' and talked of the strategic importance of the group for routes connecting with the imminent Panama Canal as well as conditions there which were 'a standing disgrace to civilized nations'; British annexation was the only solution to the problem.¹ Higgs vigorously opposed this solution, but he sympathised with Fenton's desire to stop oppression of New Hebrideans and said that he would join him 'in any agitation he may take in hand in connection with this matter'.² Maloney, while opposing British annexation of the islands, also expressed his willingness to join any such agitation.³ But Higgs' and Maloney's leader, Fisher, supported the annexationist solution.⁴ Glynn closed the debate by declaring that the motion was unnecessary because the Government was well aware of the problem and had been in touch with Britain about it, and that there soon would be an Anglo-French conference about the New Hebrides.⁵ The motion was thereupon negatived.⁶

1 C.P.D., LXXI, 12 November 1913, pp.3067-71.

2 Ibid., pp.3071-3.

3 Ibid., pp.3074-5.

4 Ibid., p.3075. For what he said, see below, p.562.

5 Ibid., pp.3076-7.

6 Ibid., p.3077.

A fortnight later Higgs read a letter from Graham Kerr of Kerr Brothers criticising Fenton's motion by claiming that there were few cases of ill-treatment of New Hebrideans and that 'conditions of life on plantations' in the group were 'very good'.¹ Fenton showed that he had done some homework on the subject by pointing out that Kerr had signed the petition from British settlers for French annexation of the islands.² Glynn used this occasion to reiterate that the Government was well in touch with the problem, and he was cheered³ when he assured the House that Britain would consult Australia before agreeing to any alteration to the political status of the group.⁴ These were the only debates on the New Hebrides question in this Parliament.

The relative lack of discussion about the New Hebrides in the sixth Parliament was not necessarily a sign of lack of parliamentary interest in the problems associated with the group, for Glynn clearly indicated that such discussion was unnecessary. But it is clear that outside Parliament there was no great public interest

1 C.P.D., LXXII, 26 November 1913, pp.3477-8.

2 Ibid., p.3452.

3 S.M.H., 27 November 1913, p.9.

4 C.P.D., LXXII, pp.3468-73.

in the New Hebrides question in 1913 and 1914, though there was little disagreement among those who expressed an opinion on the subject that British annexation was the most desirable solution of the group's problems. All ten morning daily newspapers in each of the capital cities of the Commonwealth that have been consulted gave some attention to the agitation about abuses in the islands. All agreed with the West Australian that the Condominium was 'a ghastly failure';¹ and all but one considered, with the Age, that because of their strategic importance 'no solution to the problem except exclusive British control of the New Hebrides will permanently content us.'² The Hobart Mercury was the dissenter, on the grounds that, though the islands were of strategic value, Australia was not strong enough to carry out her aspirations in the Pacific; she had to rely upon British protection and therefore it would be better to indulge in 'less tall talk' about the group and look at the problem 'from the point of view of London rather than of Melbourne.'³

These metropolitan newspapers, however, commented

1 West Australian, 11 June 1914.

2 Age, 18 June 1914.

3 Mercury, 15 November 1913.

less frequently about the New Hebrides in 1913 and 1914 than they had in 1906. In the months November to December 1913 and March to June 1914¹ they published together 29 New Hebrides editorials compared with 56 in the six month survey period in 1906. Whereas in 1906 the Adelaide papers commented on the subject less frequently than their Melbourne and Sydney contemporaries in 1913-14 they published a similar number of editorials, which was possibly a reflection of the Church activity on the question in that city in 1913.² A decline in newspaper interest in the New Hebrides between 1906 and 1913 is further demonstrated by the facts that only three of the six leading Victorian country newspapers mentioned the question in the 1913-14 survey period and that the total number of New Hebrides editorials in this group of papers was less than half the number in them in the 1906 period.³

Catholic journals in Melbourne and Sydney were

1 This period covers the time of greatest public activity in 1913, the news of the intention to convene the Anglo-French Conference in 1914 and the news that it had commenced its deliberations. The period was chosen after consulting the four Sydney and Melbourne papers for the whole of 1913 and 1914.

2 See Appendices C (iii) and C (iv).

3 See ibid.

silent about the New Hebrides agitation;¹ and from June 1913 to July 1914 there was no reported mention of the subject at any meeting of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce or at the tenth and eleventh annual congresses of the Associated Chambers of Commerce.² These indications of the lack of a wide range of public interest in the issue are reinforced by the complete absence of any reference to the islands in speeches reported in the Argus in the 1913 and 1914 general election campaigns.³ The above analysis suggests that there was less public interest in the group in 1913 and 1914 than there had been in the years 1901 to 1906 when there had been no organised efforts to arouse public opinion. The Daily Telegraph offered a good reason for this. It was true, it said in June 1914, that Australians had long advocated:

...British ownership of as many Pacific Islands as possible, preferably under Australian wardship. That sentiment, however, may have been tempered by the course of international events during the last few years, which has tended to make French possession and neighbourship much more tolerable....

1 Advocate, 1913-1914. Catholic Press, 1913-1914.

2 Journal of Commerce, June 1913-July 1914.

3 Argus, 4 March-31 May 1913, 8 June-5 September 1914.

It suggested that it was mainly the new issue of the scandalous treatment of natives in the group that was motivating Australian opinion about the islands.¹ Though even isolationists such as Higgs were willing to denounce this situation, concern for New Hebrideans had never been a strong point in Australians' opinions about the group, and being altruistic rather than a case of self interest, it had not the same emotive appeal as had threats to Australia from the French, particularly from French convicts, in previous years. And people raising the spectre of a new threat from Japan that was relevant to the New Hebrides were too few, and their fears were too vaguely connected with the group, for them to have any significant influence.²

(c) The Fisher and Cook Governments,
1910-August 1914

The Labour victory at the 1910 elections resulted in no basic change in Australia's New Hebrides policy. Andrew Fisher, the Prime Minister, was to

1 Daily Telegraph, 3 June 1914.

2 It has been claimed that after 1907 fear of Japan was strong in Australia; see D.C.S. Sissons, 'Attitudes to Japan and Defence, 1890-1923', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1956, pp.51-3, 67-73. But the only expressions of this fear with specific reference to the New Hebrides that I have discovered between 1907 and 1914 were the remarks of Carr and Moir cited above.

reaffirm his belief that Australia's destiny was to rule the islands in 1913, by declaring: 'I do not wish to be counted amongst those...who think we have enough possessions, and ought not to extend our lands in any way.'¹ His Minister for External Affairs, Egerton Batchelor, confidentially told a Presbyterian deputation in December 1910: 'It need hardly be said that the [Government's] policy at present being carried out is to urge that the control of the New Hebrides should wherever possible be vested in the Commonwealth.'² In 1911 the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific suggested that France should be offered the group in return for Tahiti and the Society Islands, which was supported by the Admiralty because the latter would be important for the future Panama Canal, whereas 'practically no route from Panama passes near the New Hebrides, and the routes in their vicinity are dominated by other islands.'³ But the new Australian Minister for External Affairs, Josiah Thomas, who replaced Batchelor after the latter's death

1 C.P.D., LXXI, 12 November 1913, p.3075.

2 Report of Private Deputation, 7 December 1910, C.A.O., A1108, XI.

3 Sir Francis May to Harcourt, 23 August 1911; Admiralty to C.O., 23 November 1911; in Harcourt to Denman, 5 January 1912, C.A.O., A1, 12/4893.

in October 1911, rejected this proposal out of hand, despite the fact that it exploded a myth Australians cited when talking of the strategic importance of the New Hebrides.¹

At first, however, the Government treated the Presbyterian agitation about the group with reservation. After the Presbyterian deputation raised the subject in December 1910, Hunt told King: 'Dr. Nicholson and his colleagues talked to Mr. Batchelor for a very long time, and bored him, but he did not promise to do anything.'² Batchelor told the deputation that he first wanted to see how the newly convened Joint Court would deal with the problem.³ However the Government decided to present the Presbyterian complaints to the British Government when its delegation attended the 1911 Imperial Conference.⁴ And when they saw the later deputations of September and November 1911 both Batchelor and Thomas promised to forward to Britain the representations being made to them. Batchelor remarked that he would send anything 'which would help us in making representations so as to

1 Minute by Thomas, 11 March 1912, ibid.

2 Hunt to King, 17 January 1911, Hunt Papers, MS 52/665.

3 Report of Private Deputation, 7 December 1910, C.A.O., A1108, XI.

4 Hunt to King, 27 March 1911, Hunt Papers, MS 52/669.

terminate if possible the present method of Government' in the group;¹ and Thomas expressed his sympathy with the complaints laid before him.²

The Fisher Government also maintained the financial support for British economic interests in the group in the forms of the shipping subsidy, tariff rebates and legal and surveying assistance. Its active willingness to help promote these interests was indicated by a memorandum by Batchelor in February 1911: 'we will provide the necessary £500 for two Ass[istan]t Surveyors. The Treasurer says he hasn't got the money but is in favor of the suggestion and we'll have to grub along somehow.'³

There were, however, limitations to the Fisher Government's willingness to provide money to promote its imperialistic ambitions in the New Hebrides. When Cook suggested in the House of Representatives in 1910 that the Government should pay for a visit by members of

1 Report of Deputation, 19 September 1911, C.A.O., A1108, XI.

2 Report of Deputation, 1 November 1911, in Denman to Harcourt, 1 December 1911, C.O. 881/13/203.

3 Batchelor to Hunt, ? February 1911, C.A.O., A1108, VIII.

Parliament to the group,¹ which Hunt considered 'would have been a good thing, because knowledge of the Pacific is very limited in our Parliament,' the Government refused because it was already committed to financing other overseas expeditions during the parliamentary recess.² Hunt was also realistically pessimistic about his chances of persuading the Government to implement Deakin's proposal to give preference to imports from the New Hebrides. 'If...Mr. Batchelor had his way, it certainly would happen this year,' he told King in July 1910, but the majority of Batchelor's colleagues were more interested in matters 'which appear to promise a more immediate benefit for their constituents.'³ When the Colonial Office submitted critical observations from Sir Everard im Thurn about Australia's New Hebrides policies, the Government used the same arguments as had its predecessor; the interests of tropical Australia and New Guinea came first in matters such as the free admission of all imports from the New Hebrides and the encouragement of the

1 C.P.D., IV, 9 August 1910, p.1270.

2 Hunt to King, 17 January 1911, Hunt Papers, MS 52/665.

3 Hunt to King, 19 July 1910, Hunt Papers, MS 52/657.

emigration of Australians.¹

Like the Barton Government in the early 1900s, Fisher's administration also balked at providing a large sum of money to buy out French interests in the New Hebrides. In 1912 the Colonial Office suggested that a controlling interest in the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides might be purchasable,² whereupon Fisher asked Sir George Reid, Australia's High Commissioner in London, to investigate the cost of such a deal and whether purchasing a majority of the company's shares would give the buyer the right to control its operations and what were the company's obligations to the French Government.³ Reid's cabled reply mentioned only the cost; £400,000 would definitely buy all the shares in the company belonging to the Higginson family.⁴ This amount was a far cry from the extra £500 the Government was willing to extract from a hard pressed Treasury for assistant surveyors in the islands, and Australia's interest

1 F.G. Tudor, for the Prime Minister, to Lord Dudley, 6 March 1911, in Dudley to Crewe, 10 March 1911, C.O. 881/12/199.

2 Harcourt to Denman, 18 April 1912, C.A.O., A1108, XIV.

3 Fisher to Reid, 24 April 1912, ibid.

4 Reid to Fisher, 29 April 1912, ibid.

in the New Hebrides was probably not considered worth it. But the Government's suspicions about the proposal had not been relieved by Reid's failure to inform it about the right of control over the company and its relations with the French Government, which were justifiable suspicions in view of the controlling nature of the shares held by that Government in the company.¹ The Fisher Government therefore had sound reasons for rejecting, as it did, the provision of any money for the project.²

The evidence of the Labour Government's policy in 1910-1913 towards the New Hebrides, added to that for Labour policies in 1904 and 1908-1909, indicates that a recent claim that Labour Governments were markedly less enthusiastic than the Governments of Barton and Deakin on the New Hebrides question³ is unjustified. One possible reason for the continuity of Australian policy towards the group under governments of different political persuasions in the first 13 years of the Commonwealth was the presence throughout this period of Atlee Hunt as Secretary of the Department of External Affairs. His

1 See above, p.358.

2 Memorandum by Fisher, 2 May 1912, C.A.O., A1108, XIV.

3 Helen M. Davies, 'The Administrative Career of Atlee Hunt, 1901-1910', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1968, p.168.

lively interest in the New Hebrides has been discussed by Helen Davies,¹ but she gives Hunt too much credit for initiating Australian action about the group; he was not, for example, the source of the idea of appointing a Commonwealth solicitor for the islands in 1909,² which originated with the Presbyterian Church.³ Nevertheless his sedulously cultivated correspondence with people connected with the group such as King, Roseby and W.H. Lucas plus his acquaintance from the beginning with Commonwealth Government correspondence about the islands put him in an excellent position to advise the Ministers he served under. Examples of important uses he made of his information were his memorandum for Hughes in 1904 and his submission of Roseby's report about French immigration into the islands in 1909.⁴ His concern for educating his superiors was indicated by his letter to Batchelor, who at the time was in New Zealand, in January 1911:

Judge Roseby from the New Hebrides is in Sydney, and talks of coming over here. I have suggested to him that it will be well

1 Ibid., chs. 7 & 17.

2 Ibid., p.172.

3 See above, p.535.

4 See above, pp.417-8, 533.

if he can defer his visit to Melbourne until you come back, as we are certain to talk New Hebrides [at the Imperial Conference]...and it will be important for you to have first-hand trustworthy information as to the position in the Group.¹

However available evidence allows no firm answer as to exactly how important Hunt was in the making of the New Hebrides policy of Australian Governments.

With the downfall of the Labour Government in 1913 a previously vigorous upholder of Australia's interests in the New Hebrides, Joseph Cook,² became Prime Minister of Australia. A recent political biography of Cook offers no clue as to why he had shown a strong interest in the New Hebrides question other than the fact that, as a devout Methodist, he saw public events with religious eyes³ and was therefore possibly in sympathy with the efforts of Protestant missionaries to evangelise the group. In a press interview in November 1913 he explained that he considered the islands important for the defence of Australia, and he also pointed to the traditional nature

1 See Hunt to Batchelor, 13 January 1911, Hunt Papers, MS 52/1292.

2 See above, pp.544, 548-9.

3 John R.M. Murdoch, 'Joseph Cook: A Political Biography', Ph.D. thesis, University of New South Wales, 1968, pp.13-8. Murdoch does not mention Cook's interest in the New Hebrides.

of Australia's interest in them:

Our object has been for many years to develop them as far as possible, and to establish our hold on them on as firm a basis as possible. It would, therefore, be a great blow to find that they had passed over to some foreign Power. It would upset all our traditions and aspirations in that respect.¹

As Hunt observed at the time, the New Hebrides question was 'one of amour propre...with us'.²

Cook, however, was a firm believer in refraining from interference with the administrative work of his ministerial colleagues,³ and Patrick McMahon Glynn, his Minister for External Affairs, who was an Irish Catholic, had not the kind of personal background which encouraged support for Australian imperialism in the New Hebrides. Glynn's biographer suggests that he found it difficult to make up his mind about the truth of Presbyterian allegations of abuses in the group.⁴ Hunt, in October 1913, explained an extra difficulty Glynn's background

1 S.M.H., 18 November 1913, p.10.

2 Hunt to Roseby, 29 November 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/741.

3 Murdoch, 'Joseph Cook', p.251.

4 Gerald O'Collins, Patrick McMahon Glynn, Melbourne, 1965, pp.239-40.

created for him on this question in a letter to King which, however, indicates that Glynn nevertheless did make up his mind about the problem of abuses:

For the [French] nation generally he has a very high regard. He was brought up at a school in Dublin where the priest teachers were all French and he preserves the happiest recollections of his time under their control. He is moreover a fairly extensive reader of French literature (of the serious order) and finds it hard to believe that all [the Presbyterians']...assertions can be true. But that many of them are he is convinced from a long talk which he had with the Count of Buena Esperanza who passed through here recently on his way to Europe.¹

Glynn's diary reveals that he diligently sought all the information he could about the New Hebrides; he was particularly impressed by Speiser's Two Years With the Natives of the New Hebrides.² In 12 months after his assumption of office in June 1913 over half the space in his diary is taken up with comments about the group, which indicates the great importance of this question

1 Hunt to King, 3 October 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/682.

2 Diaries of P.M. Glynn, MS 558, 15 February 1913-18 July 1914, pp.69-83, entry for 3 January 1914, N.L.A.

among those he dealt with as Minister for External Affairs.¹ His research into the subject convinced him that the islands were strategically important for Australia,² and it enabled him to give a very well informed statement to Parliament about the history of and existing situation in them.³

Just as the renewed Presbyterian inspired agitation in Australia about the New Hebrides was getting under way in 1913, the Commonwealth Government was informed by the Colonial Office of amendments to the Condominium which were to be proposed to France and was invited to comment on them.⁴ The cabled reply was that the Condominium had proved so unsatisfactory that patching it up was unlikely to permanently solve its problems and that therefore the French government 'should be invited to name pecuniary or other terms on which they would be prepared to transfer France's interest in paramount rights or sovereignty of the group to the United Kingdom'; if this should prove impossible, the Australian Government would approve of the suggested

1 Ibid., pp.52, 69-90, 93-6, 102-14, 119-22, 124, 126-7, 130-8, 142-4, 146.

2 C.P.D., LXXII, 26 November 1913, p.3469.

3 Ibid., pp.3468-73.

4 Harcourt to Denman, 18 July 1913, C.A.O., A1108, XVI.

amendments, with the proviso that those on a reserved list to be left out of the first submission to France which sought more control over recruiting, joint inspection of plantations, prohibition of recruitment of women and the banning of recruiting for areas outside the group were of vital importance and should be included in any negotiations.¹ In the despatch that followed the Government said it did not wish to press for Australian representation at such negotiations but urged that it should be consulted before any agreement was reached.² The problem of governing with a majority of one in the House of Representatives probably deterred the Government from sending a minister to Europe for this purpose; and Hunt explained that although the 1906 Conference was held without Australia being consulted, 'the relations of the Dominions to the Mother-country...have advanced since that date and I do not think for a moment that the experience of that year is likely to be repeated.'³ The result was that when a New Hebrides Conference did meet in 1914 and proposed the revision of the Condominium there were no angry protests from Australia that Britain had

1 Denman to Harcourt, 29 September 1913, ibid.

2 Denman to Harcourt, 9 October 1913, ibid.

3 Hunt to King, 29 November 1913, Hunt Papers, 52/686.

neglected to consult the Australian Government.

III

British Policy, 1907-August 1914,
and the Conference of 1914

(a) British Policy

Australian efforts after 1906 to combat French influence in the New Hebrides received little sympathy at the Colonial Office. Deakin did not help by vigorously castigating Britain's handling of the New Hebrides question in 1906 at the 1907 Imperial Conference.¹ Hunt returned from the Conference with the feeling that 'the C.O. do not love Mr. Deakin or Australia, and tell us very little indeed about the Hebrides.'² That year the Consul-General at Dakar in Senegal reopened the old question of exchanging Gambia for French rights in the New Hebrides, which prompted a tentatively favourable response from Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who saw the

1 See C.P.P., 1907-8, III, no. 11, pp.548-56. The discussion of the New Hebrides question at the Conference has been dealt with in B.E. Mansfield, 'Studies in External Relations and the Growth of National Sentiment in Australia, 1901-12', B.A. hon. thesis, University of Sydney, 1948, pp.156-7; J.A. La Nauze, Alfred Deakin, Melbourne, 1965, p.451; and Ronald Hyam, Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905-1908, London, 1968, pp.310-11.

2 Hunt to King, 8 November 1907, Hunt Papers, MS 52/638.

possibility of also abrogating French treaty rights in Zanzibar in such a deal. But the Colonial Office promptly rejected the idea.¹ Nor was the British Government moved by Australia's fear that French immigration into the New Hebrides was a plan to achieve French control of the group. Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State for Colonies in 1909, merely told Foxton when he was informed of this apprehension that his Government could give no assistance to promote British settlement in the group since it was already spending £35,000 per annum on little more than a handful of British subjects there.²

In keeping with its lack of any strong desire to promote British economic interests in the New Hebrides, the British Government opposed suggestions that Asian

1 Consul-General C.F. Cromie to Grey, 20 February 1907; F.O. to C.O., 19 March 1907; C.O. to F.O., 24 May 1907, F.O.C.P., 9257/38, 44, 74. E.H.J. Leslie, 'Memorandum Respecting the New Hebrides', 29 February 1908, F.O.C.P., 9198. The reasons the Colonial Office offered for its refusal are cited in Hyam, Elgin and Churchill, p.202; but Hyam's statement that 'the French proposed' the idea could create the wrong impression that it emanated from Paris, whereas Cromie's letter makes it clear that its source was only the French Governor of Senegal.

2 Foxton to Deakin, 14 August 1909, C.A.O., A1, 09/16017.

labour should be imported for British planters there.¹ Though the likely objections of the Indian and Australian Governments to such a scheme were also reasons for this opposition, a lack of sympathy with the problem of shortage of labour in the group underlay the policy. Lewis Harcourt, who succeeded Lord Crewe as Colonial Secretary, endorsed G.W. Johnston's remark: 'If [the] New Hebrides cannot be developed fast enough to satisfy the few whites by its own natives, then let it [sic] develop slowly.'² This lack of sympathy was also highlighted by the decision to prohibit the recruitment of female labourers in the group which was insisted upon in the face of the Foreign Office's objection that this was an abrogation of one of the principal British objects in agreeing to a Condominium, namely that British and French subjects in the islands should have equal rights.³

The Colonial Office also refused to endorse King's ill-considered attempt in 1910 to put pressure on

1 See, for example, Crewe to im Thurn, 16 November 1908, C.O. 881/12/199; Harcourt to May, 26 July 1911, ibid./201.

2 Minute by Johnston, 18 September 1912, and marginal note by Harcourt, on Mahaffy to Sweet-Escott [copy], 18 September 1912, C.O. 225/108.

3 F.O. to C.O., 16, 31 July 1911, F.O.C.P., 10121/50, 63. C.O. to F.O., 17 July, 15 August 1911, ibid./60, 67.

Presbyterian missionaries to stop interfering with the recruitment of labour in the New Hebrides. Harcourt ruled 'that no British official should attempt to prevent Missionaries or others giving advice to the Natives as to the character of the places for which they are being recruited.'¹

The Colonial Office, however, acquiesced to pressure from the High Commissioners for the New Hebrides for some extra financial support for British settlers in the group. It had refused a request in 1909 from Im Thurn for extra surveyors,² but when Sir Francis May in 1911 offered to forego a projected salary increase to pay for extra surveying and legal assistance for the settlers, the Colonial Office approved an annual grant of £1,000 for this purpose to be distributed as the High Commissioner thought fit.³

By 1910 the British Government was aware that the terms of the 1906 Convention with respect to the

1 Minute by Harcourt, 15 November 1910, on King to May, 28 August 1910 [copy], C.O. 225/93.

2 Im Thurn to Crewe, 21 October 1909, 23 October 1909, C.O. 225/86.

3 May to Harcourt, 28 February 1911, and minutes, C.O. 225/95.

sale of arms and liquor to natives were being disregarded. King's private letter to Sir Charles Lucas that year resulted in representations on the subject to the French Government.¹ In April 1911, after being questioned in Parliament about abuses of Condominium regulations,² but before the Australian Government presented Presbyterian complaints to him at the Imperial Conference, Harcourt requested May to visit the group and investigate the problems.³ May reported the following November that there was plenty of evidence that recruiting and arms and liquor regulations were being flagrantly disregarded by French citizens in the group. The Condominium, he said, was an obvious failure; partition was the only sensible solution.⁴

Partition was ruled out at the Colonial Office since it would be difficult to delimit distinct spheres of predominant British and French influence in the islands and because it was thought that Australia would probably oppose

1 Grey to Cambon, 19 April, 15 November 1910, F.O.C.P., 9872/35, 122.

2 Great Britain House of Commons Debates, 5th series, XXI, 15 February 1911, cols. 1037-8; XXIV, 20 April 1911, col. 1022, 25 April 1911, col. 1576.

3 Harcourt to May, 28 April 1911, C.O. 881/12/199.

4 May to Harcourt, 30 November 1911, C.O. 225/97.

it.¹ The result of May's report was the decision in February 1912 that the Foreign Office should be approached about the possibility of Anglo-French negotiations to amend the 1906 Convention.²

The Foreign Office replied that the Government should only propose amendments with which France was likely to agree, otherwise the French Government would probably refuse to join any negotiations about the New Hebrides. Grey pointed out that, while in minor matters such as the supply of Condominium postage stamps the French Government had cooperated, 'in the more important matters of labour and liquor abuses they have proved the reverse,' British representations to France on these subjects having fallen upon deaf ears.³

Australian Presbyterians' accusations that the British Government was dilatory about the problem of abuses in the New Hebrides were partly justified, for it was not until March 1913 that a conference of representatives from the Foreign and Colonial Offices - at which King, on

1 Minutes on ibid. and on F.O. to C.O., 3 February 1912, C.O. 225/110.

2 Minutes by Lord Emmott and Harcourt, 21 February 1912, on ibid.

3 F.O. to C.O., 2 October 1912, F.O.C.P., 10238/73.

furlough in England, was present - drew up a draft proposal of desired amendments.¹ The delay was probably due to the minor position of the New Hebrides on the list of problems confronting the Foreign Office. As King later explained to Hunt: 'The Colonial Office can only suggest in such matters, but the Foreign Office decides.'² The result was that the Colonial Office had to bow to the pressure of the latter to place only the more palatable of the desired amendments in the request for negotiations, which was forwarded to France in July 1913. Proposals such as giving the Joint Court power to execute its own judgements, to issue warrants for arrest and the right to impose increased penalties were included in this request; but equally important matters such as improving recruiting regulations and joint Anglo-French inspection of plantations were relegated to a list of reserved amendments possibly to be advocated at a later date,³ though some of them, such as joint inspection of

1 Minute by Vernon, 7 March 1913, on F.O. to C.O., 1 January 1913, C.O. 225/121.

2 King to Hunt, 16 October 1913, Hunt Papers, MS 52/683.

3 Grey to Bertie, 9 July 1913, and enclosures, F.O.C.P., 10945/33. C.O. to F.O., 2 July 1913, ibid./32.

plantations, had been considered vital at the Colonial Office.¹

Australia and New Zealand were promptly informed of these suggested amendments.² The reply from the New Zealand Government suggested that it would be better to hand the New Hebrides over to France and seek the Society Islands and Rapa in return.³ But there was no hope of the British Government considering this in face of the Australian Government's view that British annexation was the most desirable solution of the group's problems and, as the only acceptable alternative, the implementation of all the suggested amendments to the Condominium, including those to be held in reserve.⁴ Harcourt did not agree to Australia's request that Britain should seek a way to assume full control of the islands; he did not consider that France would agree to this without some sacrifice of British territory which he would not be prepared to make.⁵

1 Minutes by E.B. Denham and Harcourt, 1, 13 May 1913, on F.O. to C.O., 23 April 1913, C.O. 225/121.

2 Harcourt to Denman, 18 July 1913, C.A.O., A1108, XVI.

3 Governor-General Lord Islington to Harcourt, 27 September 1913 (Telegram), in C.O. to F.O., 4 October 1913, F.O.C.P., 10945/63.

4 See above, pp.572-3.

5 Harcourt to Denman, 26 December 1913, C.A.O., A1108, XVI.

But he welcomed Australia's emphasis that the reserved amendments were as important as the others.¹ Lord Emmott, his Parliamentary Under Secretary, in Australia at the time, assisted the Colonial Office's case for a change in the attitude of the Foreign Office towards such amendments by submitting his view of the situation after he received a deputation in Melbourne from the Presbyterian Church in September 1913:

My general view is that the missionaries are very much in earnest, and have good reasons (from their point of view) for urging that something effective ought to be done. So far as I am concerned, I should like Mr. Harcourt to put as much pressure on the Foreign Office as possible.²

And Harcourt agreed in November 1913 with Sir John Anderson's statement:

I hope the Australians will go on with their campaign.... Nothing but the public opinion of Europe will rouse Fr[ance] to the iniquities that are being perpetrated in her name. The kid glove methods of the F.O. are absolutely futile, and I fail to see why we as a dept. should assume responsibility for them.³

1 C.O. to F.O., 4 October 1913, F.O.C.P., 10945/63.

2 Memorandum by Emmott, 23 September 1913, in C.O. to F.O., 25 November 1913, ibid./70.

3 Minutes by Anderson and Harcourt, 14, 15 November 1913, on Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to Harcourt, 6 November 1913, C.O. 225/122.

The Foreign Office finally bowed to pressure from the Colonial Office to seek a more widespread revision of Condominium regulations than was suggested to France in the request for negotiations. Grey explained that he had been convinced that since this request was made 'the proceedings of the French authorities [in the group] have been of such a nature as to excite increased attention in this country and Australia' and that 'public opinion would not be satisfied unless the whole system of the administration in the New Hebrides was brought under discussion.'¹

Before this new suggestion was put to it, the French Government, after a long delay in replying to the original British request, agreed in March 1914 to the convening of an Anglo-French conference to consider amending the 1906 Convention.² The idea of widening the scope of the conference did not upset this approval, though a further delay was caused by the need of that Government to receive a report from its High Commissioner in New Caledonia. Finally it was agreed that the conference should meet in London on 10 June 1914.

The above discussion of the background of this

1 F.O. to C.O., 2 March 1914, C.O. 881/14/219.

2 Bertie to Grey, 7 March 1914, in F.O. to C.O., 16 March 1914, ibid.

conference reveals that the British Government's decision to approach France about amending Condominium regulations resulted primarily from information received by its own officials connected with the New Hebrides rather than from agitation in Australia; May's report had started action in this direction, though the request for that report was prompted by questions in the British Parliament. The agitation in Australia in late 1913 was conceived in ignorance of the fact that the British Government was moving, albeit ponderously, towards the holding of the conference; but the agitation, which was also designed to influence public opinion in Britain, and Australian Government support for it were influential in providing ammunition for the Colonial Office to fire at the Foreign Office in order to achieve a widening of the scope of the conference.

(b) The Conference of 1914

Whereas in 1906 the British Government made no attempt to use anyone with first-hand knowledge of the New Hebrides in its negotiations with France about the group, in 1914 Arthur Mahaffy was called to England to join Lord Emmott, whose recent trip to Australia had given him personal knowledge of Australian views about the islands, R.V. Vernon of the Dominion Division of the Colonial Office, R.A.C. Sperling, head of the Western Department of the Foreign Office, and C.B.L. Tennyson,

a legal assistant at the Colonial Office, on the British side of the conference table. It also arranged for the President of the Joint Court of the New Hebrides, who was on leave in Europe, to be present. There was no representative from Australia because its Government had not requested one. A later Foreign Office suggestion that one should be invited was rejected by the Colonial Office because it was thought most unlikely that domestic political affairs would allow the Commonwealth Government to send anybody of ministerial status - any less influential person would be useless - and because it was not thought that Australian public men had 'any real local knowledge of the N. Hebrides.'¹

The result of the Conference, the Protocol of 1914, which was a complete revision of the Convention of 1906, has been discussed by other historians, and Deryck Scarr has written a brief survey of the Conference's proceedings.² The most contentious issues centred around the regulations controlling the recruitment and treatment

1 F.O. to C.O., 19 December 1913, and minutes, C.O. 225/121.

2 See Latham, 'The New Hebrides', ch. 8, pp.3-8; Linden A. Mander, 'The New Hebrides Condominium: 1906 to the Present', Pacific Historical Review, 13 (1944), pp.158-60; and Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.248-9.

of plantation labour and around the powers of the Joint Court. After ten days of discussions Emmott reported that he and his British colleagues had made some headway on these issues; they had secured French agreement to the appointment of British and French Condominium Agents who would be instructed to supervise the recruitment and employment of labour by their respective nationals and, if both agreed, even joint inspection of plantations; and it had been agreed that the Native Advocate should be provided with opportunities to acquire information about native customs. But he admitted that the latter achievement was at the expense of an important British concession which virtually barred private lawyers, such as Edward Jacomb, from representing New Hebrideans in the Joint Court, which, he said, would 'probably provoke considerable criticism.' And he pointed out that the amendment relating to plantation inspection was only a compromise.¹ And since the Ministry for the Colonies had told Picanon, the leader of the French delegation, that it was very necessary that Condominium agents should be appointed to supervise the recruitment and employment of plantation labour,² the French negotiators conceded

1 [Emmott] to Grey, ? June 1914, Private Papers of Sir Edward Grey, F.O. 800/94.

2 Note envoyé à M. Picasson, 15 June 1914, Des Granges Papers.

on this matter no more than the French Government itself wanted to achieve.

Emmott admitted in his interim report:

We have secured the acceptance by the French of many improvements in detail without winning any large concessions on questions of principle.... We cannot say that we have secured, or that we see any prospect of securing the acceptance of the more important amendments which we were instructed to put forward.¹

His pessimism was partly justified for in the discussions that followed the French steadfastly resisted all British attempts to give the Joint Court any wider powers over the rights of French subjects.² Their Government wanted as little change as possible to existing Condominium regulations; from its point of view the 1906 Convention was the best arrangement that could have been made and the subsequent trouble was not because its regulations were faulty but because they had not been properly applied.³ But the French Government admitted that the working of

1 [Emmott] to Grey, ? June 1914, F.O. 800/94.

2 Proceedings of the New Hebrides Conference, held at the Foreign Office, London, June 10 to August 6, 1914, W.P.H.C., 2189/15, I, pp.20-31, 36-9, 44-50, 52, 75-7.

3 Note envoyé à Picasson, 15 June 1914, Des Granges Papers.

the Condominium needed improving, and it realised that Australian opinion precluded French annexation as a solution to the problem; partition was ruled out because of the predominance of French interests in most parts of the group;¹ therefore, in the face of a bombardment from the British delegation of details of abuses and the laxity of the French administration in the group, the French delegates conceded two major British objectives, namely that judgements of the Joint Court should be executed by the Resident Commissioners acting together and that the approval of both Commissioners would be necessary before more than half the penalty imposed by the Court could be waived. They also agreed to an increase in such penalties and to the right of the Public Prosecutor to act, if necessary, without the prior approval of the administration with jurisdiction over the accused party.²

The upshot was that the Protocol of 1914 allowed less room for the French administration in the New Hebrides to disregard the Joint Court, but there was no other decrease in its sole control over its nationals. Merton King gave an accurate assessment of the relationship of

1 Ibid.

2 Proceedings of the New Hebrides Conference, W.P.H.C., 2189/15, I, pp.48-50, 52, 56, 59-60, 62-3, 65, 71, 75-7. Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.248-9.

the Protocol to the situation in the group: 'If the new Convention ever comes into operation its success or failure in attaining the object for which it is designed will depend entirely upon the spirit in which it is received and worked by our partners.'¹

1 King to Sir Bickham Sweet-Escott, 16 January 1915, N.H.B.S., 116/13.

PART SIX

I

Policy, Opinion, Trade and Settlement
September 1914-1922

(a) Policy and Opinion during World War I

The advent of World War I diverted the attention of Australian newspaper editorial writers from the drafting of the Protocol of 1914, news of which reached Australia in September 1914.¹ The Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, however, resolved that month to ask the Government for details of the agreement and, unless it was thoroughly satisfactory, to urge that its implementation should be postponed until the end of the war, when a general re-arrangement of colonial territories of the European powers might facilitate the achievement of the Church's long sought goal of British annexation of the New Hebrides.²

1 There were no editorials on the subject in the Argus, Age, Sydney Morning Herald or Daily Telegraph.

2 P.V.F.M.C., 8 September 1914.

When they were allowed to inspect the Protocol, the Presbyterians regarded the improvements in it insufficient to outweigh the prospect that after the war the New Hebrides question might be settled in the way it desired.¹ As the Convenor of the Foreign Missions Committee of the New South Wales Church expressed it, the new agreement was still too favourable for the French and did not adequately protect the natives of the group.² And the Association for the Protection of Native Races in Australasia and Polynesia, which also received permission to consult the Protocol, submitted a long list of amendments it considered necessary if New Hebrideans were to be properly protected.³

Atlee Hunt, who drafted a reply for the Australian Government, regarded the Protocol 'a substantial improvement', though he considered that the French had 'rather overdone... their very obvious effort to make it impossible for Jacomb to live.'⁴ His draft reply emphasised that unless private

1 Report of the Foreign Missions Committee, G.A.P.V., 19 May 1915.

2 Rev. J.H. McGowan to H. Mahon, 11 February 1915, C.A.O., A1108, XVII.

3 B. Smith to Hunt, 22 January 1915, ibid.

4 Hunt to King, 26 January 1915, Papers of Atlee Hunt, MS 52/694, N.L.A.

lawyers were allowed to act unfettered on behalf of natives the Protocol should be rejected. He also urged that the decisions not to prohibit the recruitment of women in the group or of New Hebrideans for New Caledonia should be reconsidered; and he protested that the agreement still left opportunities for the French to ill-treat natives. Overall, a far better solution to the New Hebrides problem would be sole British control; the best way to achieve this would be to use his suggested amendments as subjects for continued negotiations until the end of the war 'when the proposal for transfer to British control can again be discussed in the light of the new circumstances which will [then] arise'.¹

The Government to which Hunt submitted this draft reply was a new Labour administration led by Andrew Fisher, which had been elected in September 1914. With the death of J.A. Arthur in December 1914, a self-confessed isolationist, Hugh Mahon, became Minister for External Affairs. But his predecessors, whatever

1 Hunt to Mahon, 3 March 1915, forwarding Draft Despatch, Prime Minister to Governor General, C.A.O., All08, XVII. See also R.T.E. Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1928, ch. 8, p.8.

their views prior to achieving this portfolio, had been unwilling to discontinue the New Hebrides policy of preceding governments, and Mahon followed suit. He endorsed Hunt's draft,¹ which was approved by Cabinet, though it was decided to await further developments in the war before submitting it to Britain.² The draft remained pigeon-holed throughout the war.

Harcourt, still the British Colonial Secretary, also realised that the outcome of the war could make the Protocol of 1914 redundant. He recognised that Australia's long standing ambitions might force Britain to seek undivided control of the New Hebrides at the end of the war.³ But he was unwilling to submit to such pressure without first taking steps to alter Australian opinion on the subject by utilising the new situation the war had created. In March 1915 he wrote to Australia's Governor General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, that because it would probably be 'very difficult and costly in the counter of exchange' to acquire the New Hebrides he would

1 Memorandum by Hunt, approved by Mahon, for submission to Cabinet, n.d., C.A.O., A1108, XVII.

2 Minute by Mahon, 19 April 1915, on ibid.

3 Harcourt to Ferguson, 24 March 1915, Papers of Lord Novar, MS 696/1321, N.L.A.

be glad if Ferguson could persuade the Government to accept control of all eastern New Guinea and of the Solomons, including captured German territory, in return for the surrender of the British share of the group to France, with guarantees protecting the rights of Protestant missionaries and Australian traders.¹

It was a tempting proposition; when it was considered by Cabinet Australian control of New Guinea and the Solomons was regarded very favourably, but it was also decided that retention of British rights in the New Hebrides would be valuable should France and Japan ever combine to annoy Australia, and therefore the group should not be handed over to sole French control.² In the light of later relations between Vichy France and Japan in a war in which the New Hebrides provided important naval bases, this was not an unrealistic attitude.

In March 1915, before acting on Harcourt's intention to influence Australian opinion, Ferguson wrote:

1 Harcourt to Ferguson, 27 March 1915, ibid./1325. See also W.R. Louis, Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919, Oxford, 1967, p.47.

2 Ferguson to Harcourt, 19 May 1915, Novar Papers, MS 696/692.

There have been so many lamentations over the loss to Australia caused by the French occupation of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides - as if they were the equivalent of Heligoland, Ceylon and Ireland - that it was a relief to find that no one except an odd trader or shipper seems really now to care a jot about them.¹

His 'odd trader or shipper' probably referred to Burns, Philp and Company, since correspondence had passed through his hands about an article Sir James Burns intended publishing in the press which, as well as calling for the annexation of the German Pacific islands, asked for an end to the 'absurd dual control' in the New Hebrides by handing them over to Australia.² But Ferguson was ill-informed about the opinions of other important groups in the community, particularly the Presbyterian Church. At the 1915 meetings of the General Assemblies of the Church in Victoria and in New South Wales resolutions were passed urging the Government to utilise the outcome of the war to achieve British annexation of the group,³ and both Assemblies reiterated this plea at their meetings

1 Ferguson to Harcourt, 17 March 1915, ibid./669.

2 Burns to Hunt, 5 November 1914, in Ferguson to Mahon, 23 January 1915, ibid./6642-51.

3 G.A.P.V., 19 May 1915, G.A.P.N., 11 May 1915.

the following year.¹ The Australian Natives' Association was also still interested in the New Hebrides question. At the annual conference of the Victorian branches of the association the Melbourne branch moved a resolution urging the British Government to open up negotiations with France for British acquisition of the group, which was withdrawn not because the meeting disagreed with it, but because it was thought inadvisable to publicly discuss such a question.²

The A.N.A.'s opinion about public discussion of the New Hebrides issue was indicative of an important effect of the war upon public activity on the question. The Commonwealth Government since its beginning had continuously frowned upon public agitations about the political status of the group, and it strongly emphasised this policy during the war. Hunt told Burns in November 1914 to refrain from publishing his intended article urging annexations of the New Hebrides and the German Pacific islands because:

We do not want any spurs to urge us on to take action and seeing that we shall make

1 G.A.P.V., 9 May 1916. G.A.P.N., 11 May 1916.

2 A.N.A.R., 23-25 May 1915.

it our aim to get control of everything we can I do not think any public expressions of opinion could strengthen our hands.¹

In April 1915 Fisher acted to stifle debates in Parliament on the subject when Cook suggested that after the war Australia should be prepared to assume control of the New Hebrides and any other Pacific islands she could acquire.² He said in the House of Representatives: 'In regard to territorial acquisitions in the Pacific Ocean, I would ask honourable members not to discuss that question at the present time. It will come up for consideration later on.'³ And in 1916 the Government, when it heard of a pamphlet about the New Hebrides the Presbyterian Church intended to circulate, asked the Church to refrain from making any public statements about the political status of the group.⁴

The Government's efforts to stop public discussion about the New Hebrides question, added to the fact that the progress of the war dominated Australia's attention

1 Hunt to Burns, 10 November 1914, in Ferguson to Mahon, 23 January 1915, Novar Papers, 696/6652.

2 C.P.D., LXXVI, 15 April 1915, p.2367.

3 Ibid., p.2371.

4 P.V.F.M.C., 12 December 1916.

to overseas affairs, meant that the question did largely disappear as a topic for public discussion during the war. No editorials dealt with it in the Argus or the Sydney Morning Herald during this period, and after Fisher's statement in April 1915 the political status of the group was not further mentioned in the sixth Parliament, which sat until 1917.

However two members of Parliament, Frederick Bamford, a prominent Labour member, and William Johnson, the ^{former and future} Speaker of the lower House and former leader of spokesmen in Parliament for the New Hebrides cause, in their capacity as Royal Commissioners inquiring into mail services and trade between Australia and the group, submitted, in 1915, a confidential report urging the Government to press for British annexation of the islands at the end of the war because of their vital strategic importance.¹ Events of the war had served to enhance the importance of the group in Australian eyes; for as the Minister for Defence, George Foster Pearce, observed in January 1916, though in French hands the islands were unlikely to present any foreseeable threat to Australia, there was 'always the possibility of France by arrangement

1 Confidential Report of the Royal Commission on Mail Services and Trade Development between Australia and the New Hebrides, 16 July 1915, C.A.O., A1108, XV.

transferring them to some other Power which, at some future date, might be hostile to us;' and this could be disastrous, because they formed part of a protective shield of islands around northern Australia and because they contained some 'excellent harbours, making ideal Naval Bases.'¹ Fisher's reply to Harcourt's proposal about the group in 1915 indicated how the expansion of Japanese power in the Pacific in the early months of the war had made a threat from Japan the prospect that now loomed large in the vision of Australians as they looked at the New Hebrides and other islands of the southwestern Pacific.²

(b) Trade and Settlement, September 1914-1921

The period from the outbreak of World War I to 1921, the year in which the Australian Government agreed to abandon its efforts to achieve British annexation

1 Pearce to Hughes, 14 January 1916, in Peter Heydon, Quiet Decision, Melbourne, 1965, appendix no. 7, p.231.

2 For Australia's apprehensions about Japan during the war see especially: D.C.S. Sissons, 'Attitudes to Japan and Defence, 1890-1923', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1956, vol. 1, W.R. Louis, 'Australia and the German Colonies in the Pacific 1914-1919', Journal of Modern History, 38 (1966), pp.407-21; and L.F. Fitzhardinge, 'Australia, Japan and Great Britain, 1914-18: A Study in Triangular Diplomacy', Historical Studies, 14 (1970), pp.250-9.

of the New Hebrides in favour of the ratification of the Protocol of 1914, saw an advancement in the predominance of French economic interests in the group. By 1920 the number of resident Europeans who were French subjects had increased to 656, compared with 566 in 1910. In contrast the British population had declined from 288 in 1910 to 272; and although the British decline was due to a reduction in the number of Presbyterian missionaries and their families in the group - influenced by the impact of motor launches on the freedom of movement of missionaries as well as by shortage of money and available manpower in Australian and New Zealand Presbyterian Churches - these figures indicate a stagnation in the growth of British economic interests compared with those of the French.¹ There is no evidence that the war directly influenced this situation by withdrawing more British than French subjects to fight overseas, though King ghoulishly commented in September 1914:

I did hope that the [French] general mobilisation would have taken away most of our Gallic undesirables to help manure the pastoral lands of Eastern France or Belgium,

1 M. King, Report on the New Hebrides for 1920, in King to Lord Forster, Governor General of Australia, 16 December 1920, C.P.M.F.S., External Relations, XIX, C.D.E.A. Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 6.

but only three were called, and they were of the respectable variety.¹

Probably the most important reason for the lack of growth of the British population of the New Hebrides was that Australia, the main source of British immigration prior to the war, was supplying few new settlers. In 1921 E.L. Piesse, head of the Pacific Branch of the Australian Prime Minister's Department, who had made a very thorough study of the New Hebrides question, noted this fact, which he attributed to the opening of new areas, for tropical settlement under Australian control taken over from Germany.²

Shortage of labour was also a problem making the New Hebrides a less attractive area for settlement than islands to the north. The American photographer, Martin Johnson, wrote, after conversations with planters on his visit in 1919 to the New Hebrides:

Each year, the number of available recruits is growing fewer, for the native population is dwindling rapidly. As a result, the cost of labor is high. In the Solomons, one may secure a native for a three years' term at five or six pounds a year in the

1 King to Hunt, 26 September 1914, Hunt Papers, MS 52/689.

2 Piesse to M.L. Shepherd, 17 March 1921, C.P.M.F.S., External Relations, XIX.

case of inexperienced workmen, or at nine pounds a year in the case of natives who have already served for three years. In the New Hebrides, planter bids against planter, and the native benefits, receiving from twelve to fifteen pounds a year for his work.¹

In 1920 James Johnston, a planter on Mai, complained of the great difficulty he had in recruiting labour though he paid recruits £18 per annum plus £2 when they signed on.² In 1920, however, French settlers started introducing a solution to this problem that was not available to their British rivals in the form of a ship-load of 140 labourers from French Indo-China.³

In terms of economic production the French were definitely predominant. In the period 1915-19 French settlers exported goods worth an average of £153,896 per annum, compared with British exports worth an average of £47,493.⁴

1 Martin Johnson, Cannibal Land: adventures with a camera in the New Hebrides, [1922], London, n.d., p.169.

2 Johnston to King, 5 April 1920, N.H.B.S., 2/16A.

3 King to Sir C.H. Rodwell, High Commissioner for the New Hebrides, 6 September 1920 [copy], C.O. 881/15/125.

4 Colonial Office Memorandum, 23 June 1921, in Lord Devonshire to Forster, 25 June 1923, ibid. See also Appendix B (iv).

Australia's share of the New Hebrides trade also declined during the war. Although the different yearly bases for Australian and New Hebrides trade statistics after 1913 make accurate calculations of the Australian proportion of the commerce of the group impossible, a comparison of these statistics suggests that it was probably less than 25% of the export trade in 1915 and even lower by 1918. One reason for this was that there was no market in Australia for the increasing amount of cotton being exported from the islands. Australia's share of New Hebrides imports, however, maintained the high level of between 70% and 80% in this period. But since rises in copra prices and the export of two new valuable products, cocoa and cotton, made the group's exports worth nearly twice as much as its imports by 1918, Australia's share of the total commerce of the islands, which had been over 60% in 1910, was probably considerably less than 50% by 1918.¹ Unfortunately the depreciation of the French franc after the war and the maintenance in the New

1 See Appendices B (iii) (a) and (iv).

Hebrides of the pre-war conversion rate¹ make it impossible to calculate a realistic estimate of Australia's share of the trade in the period 1919 to 1921.

A considerable proportion of Australia's trade with the New Hebrides was also carried in French bottoms, for the Messageries Maritimes Company maintained a vigorous competition with Burns, Philp and Company, which was still the only British shipping company trading between Australia and the group.

In 1915 the operations of Burns, Philp, in connection with its contract with the Commonwealth Government, came under fire from a two man deputation, allegedly representing settlers in the New Hebrides, which laid complaints before Mahon such as: 'Traders have their goods shut out by the company.'² It consisted of H.S. Carr, a former labour recruiter in the group, and Ivan Nelson, who had recently visited the islands. They admitted under interrogation that they formed a self-constituted

1 The value of the franc started to fall rapidly in 1919. By the end of that year, though fluctuations made a precise figure impossible, it was worth about 50 to the pound sterling, compared with 25 to the pound before the war. See King to Ferguson, 16 February 1920 [copy], C.O. 881/115/125.

2 Report of deputation, 29 January 1915, C.P.P., 1914-17, V, pp.689-91.

deputation unauthorised by any New Hebrides settlers;¹ and since Carr's relative, E.S. Carr, the Labour member of Parliament, introduced them to Mahon, it is possible that the deputation was the tool of anti-Burns, Philp members of the Labour Party. Mahon decided to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the complaints but, if they were an anti-Burns, Philp plot, the instigators probably would have been disappointed with the choice of Johnson as one of the Commissioners, considering his long standing championship of British interests in the group. Frederick Bamford, the other member of the Commission, who was the chairman and had a casting vote, was a Labour member of Parliament and a North Queensland journalist, who was probably appointed because of his previous experience as a Royal Commissioner investigating the Torres Strait pearling industry. He had previously declared himself an enemy of Burns, Philp, but he had supported the subsidy for that company's New Hebrides service because of the strategic importance of the group.²

The report of the Commissioners, after a month's tour through the islands in a Burns, Philp steamer, during which they interviewed 63 British residents, cleared the company of all charges of discrimination against traders

1 Ibid., p.691.

2 C.P.D., XXIII, 28 October 1904, p.6306.

or of other unreasonable treatment of settlers under the terms of their contract with the Government. They found that the great majority of New Hebrides residents who had loudly complained about the company in previous years had recanted their views because, they said, increasing French competition had forced it to improve its treatment of New Hebrides clients. But the Commissioners criticised the slowness and smallness of the company's ships, which compared unfavourably with the Maritime Messageries Company's Pacifique. They also wrote that insufficient time made their investigation less thorough than the situation demanded; and, needless to say, they did not admit that the fact that Burns, Philp was their host throughout their trip may have influenced both their own views and what settlers were willing to say to them.¹

The increasing French competition faced by Burns, Philp in their New Hebrides trade helped a growing disenchantment with that trade at the company's headquarters. The company was also faced with the fact that the wages of the European seamen it was forced to use under the terms of its Australian Government contract had risen considerably with the acute shortage of manpower caused

1 Report of the Royal Commission, C.P.P., 1914-17, V, pp.665-95. For a more detailed discussion of the findings and recommendations of the Commission, see Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 6, pp.20-1.

by the war. In December 1916 its Board of Directors decided that the subsidy it received did not cover the expense of running its Pacific steamers under the Australian flag and that the best solution would be to minimise as far as possible the number of its ships based on Australian ports and to employ auxiliary vessels using coloured crews in the various Pacific island groups. By reducing its nine Australian steamers to six it was hoped that profits on the Gilbert, Ellice and Marshall Islands trade would be raised from £6,000 to £15,000 per annum, though it was considered: 'The New Hebrides, Solomon Island and Papua trades do not give promise of as good returns'.¹

In keeping with this decision, Burns, Philp, when re-negotiating its contract with the Government in 1920, reduced its Australia-New Hebrides service from once a month to once every two months. The contract, on the other hand, provided for a service every three weeks to New Guinea and to the Solomons, which indicated that even in the less profitable sector of the company's Pacific trade the New Hebrides business had become a

1 Decision of the Board Meeting of Burns, Philp and Company, Ltd., held on 8 December 1916, in Sir J. Burns to Ferguson, 20 December 1916, Novar Papers, MS 696/7122-7.

poor relative.¹ The lack of interest thus shown by the company in the New Hebrides was the subject of complaints in 1921 from the Presbyterian Church,² and a correspondent from the Age who visited the islands.³ It was further indicated by the complaint of Frank Wallace, the Commonwealth solicitor in the New Hebrides, who wrote to Piesse in 1922:

The [Burns, Philp] inter-island service at present is not helping our interests here.... We cannot understand if the French can serve their people so well why ours cannot be better looked after from a business point of view than they are now.⁴

Furthermore the company, since the beginning of the war, had ceased to lease any further areas of its land in the group to new settlers, a policy which it announced in 1920

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- 1 E.L. Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides', revised to 8 May 1922, C.P.M.F.S., Printed Papers Relating to the Islands of the Pacific, XXIII, C.D.E.A.
 - 2 Public Questions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Memorandum on the present situation in the Condominium of the New Hebrides..., 27 April 1921, Files relating to the New Hebrides, representations made by various outside bodies and individuals, Part 1, no. 4, C.D.E.A.
 - 3 Age, 21 May 1921, p.22.
 - 4 Wallace to Piesse, 21 November 1922, Papers of E.L. Piesse, MS 882/3144, N.L.A.

was not likely to be changed 'in the near future.'¹

To Piesse, who was responsible for the gathering of information on Pacific affairs for the Australian Government, the state of Australia's interests in the New Hebrides in 1921 was distinctly unpromising. His investigation of all material about the group he could find² convinced him that the future of British emigration to the islands was bleak because of the counter-attraction of Australia's expanded territory in the Pacific, and that, though Australia was likely to retain the largest share of the import trade of the group, her share of

1 W.H. Lucas to R.J. Aldington, 19 March 1920, in A.S. Thomas to King, 20 December 1920, N.H.B.S., 26/14.

2 This included all the Commonwealth Government correspondence about the New Hebrides he could locate including reports King forwarded to the Governor General, correspondence and conversations with New Hebrides residents such as Jacomb and Wallace, and a search through relevant published sources. The thoroughness of his investigation is testified by the many volumes of government correspondence he collected, which are now filed under C.A.O., All08, and by the following letter from an assistant after a search through New Hebrides material in the Mitchell Library: 'I...find that none of [the books]...told us anything that we did not already know. In fact from my observation it seems to me that your recent Treatise on the New Hebrides question contains an amount of information that is not likely to be equalled by any Library.' Longfield Lloyd to Piesse, 23 December 1920, Piesse Papers, MS 882/1194-5.

exports was likely to decrease further given the obvious lack of interest in Australia's trade with the islands being shown by Burns, Philp. To him the victory of the French in the long standing contest for economic control of the group was all but complete.¹ This was a reasonable judgement.

(c) Policy and Opinion, 1918-1922

When World War I ended, Australia joined in the scramble for the spoils of Germany's former colonies, a subject which diverted attention from the New Hebrides as a vigorous campaign was launched to persuade Britain and the rest of her victorious allies that she should be given at least the German territory in New Guinea, in the Bismarck Archipelago and in the Solomon Islands.² The New Hebrides question was kept deliberately out of this agitation. The Foreign Missions Committee of the

1 Piesse to Shepherd, 17 March 1921, C.P.M.F.S., External Relations, XIX.

2 For this agitation, see Louis, 'Australia and the German Colonies', p.48, and Louis, Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, pp.142-3. Louis, however, does not give an adequate account of its extent, for it included action by State Parliaments and other public bodies; (see Papers of W.M. Hughes, MS 950/19-20, N.L.A.). For the policy of the Australian Government towards the German islands see the works listed above, p.600, note 2, and also L.F. Fitzhardinge, 'W.M. Hughes and the Treaty of Versailles, 1919', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, V (1967), pp.130-42.

Presbyterian Church of Victoria in October 1918 had contemplated stirring up a public campaign for sole British control of the group,¹ but it was decided that such action would be injudicious and that it would be better to ask the absent Foreign Missions Secretary, Frank Paton, now an army chaplain in France, to make representations on the subject to Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, who was in England.²

A note of urgency was added to the noise Paton set about making when he was informed that his home Church was alarmed at recent reports from its missionaries in the New Hebrides that French influence in the group was rapidly increasing, that British interests were declining, and that both British and French settlers were claiming that French annexation was imminent.³ The latter claim was mere rumour, but it had force because of the possible widespread changes in the colonial possessions of the European powers at the coming Peace Conference and the extreme sensitivity of the Presbyterian

1 P.V.F.M.C., 29 October 1918.

2 Ibid., 3 December 1918.

3 Langridge to Paton, 17 December 1918, Correspondence of F.H.L. Paton, Aboriginal and Overseas Missions Office, Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Melbourne. See also P.V.F.M.C., 3 December 1918.

Church to any possible threat to its missions, which was born of over 40 years' experience of the constant repetition of such threats, coupled with a nearly as long-standing distrust of the intentions of British Governments about the political status of the group. Paton, with the assistance of A.K. Langridge of the John G. Paton Mission Committee, embarked upon feverish action, which was characterised by the latter's exclamation: 'It is a matter of life and death for the work.'¹ In the first two months of 1919 Paton bombarded Hughes and the New Zealand Prime Minister, who was also in England, with further letters and telegrams urging their support for sole British control of the group.² Langridge and Paton together organised a campaign to put pressure on the British Government, for which they enlisted the assistance of humanitarian pressure groups such as the Anti-Slavery Society, Protestant Church dignitaries, public figures formerly associated with the group such as Lord Emmott, mission-minded members of Parliament, and a Presbyterian who was the Minister for Shipping.³ They decided, however, to refrain from

1 Ibid.

2 Paton to Hughes, n.d. [January 1919], 21 January, 17, 19 February 1919. Paton to W.F. Massey, 23 February 1919. Correspondence of F.H.L. Paton.

3 Langridge to Paton, 9, 21 January, 17 February 1919; Paton to the Rev. Dr Ogilvie, 18 February 1919; Paton to Lord Emmott and to Admiral King Hall, 19 February 1919; Paton to J.H. Oldham, Secretary of the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, 20 February 1919, ibid.

stirring up any public agitation either in Britain or Australia because to do so would necessitate publicly attacking the French administration in the group which prevailing good Anglo-French relations rendered undesirable.¹ Thus when two hastily prepared pamphlets supporting the campaign were published a note was attached to all copies released requesting: 'While friends are asked to place the pamphlet in the hands of influential people, it is earnestly hoped that no copies will be sent to the press'.²

Paton and Langridge also requested action in Australia to ensure, without publicity, that extra pressure would be placed upon the Australian Government to support their desired policy.³ To this end the Presbyterian Mission Committees in Victoria and New South Wales joined forces and approached for assistance the Anglican, Methodist, Congregational and Baptist Churches and the Church of Christ, the Association for the Protection

- 1 Paton to Oldham, 20 February 1919, ibid.
- 2 Note attached to copies of F.H.L. Paton, Australian Interests in the New Hebrides, n.d. [1919, London], and A.K. Langridge, Britain and France in the New Hebrides Islands, South West Pacific, n.d. [1919], London, in Files relating to the New Hebrides, Representations, Part 2.
- 3 P.V.F.M.C., 11 February 1919.

of the Native Races of Australasia and Polynesia, Chambers of Commerce and the Australian Natives' Association.¹ All these bodies made representations to the Commonwealth Government urging it to press for sole British control of the New Hebrides.² The Victorian Missions Committee also sent a statement of the Church's case for the policy to each member of the Commonwealth Cabinet.³

The Victorian Committee sought to keep this

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- 1 Ibid., 1 April 1919. Minutes of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, 8 April 1919, Aboriginal and Overseas Missions Office, Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, Sydney.
- 2 W. Morely, Secretary of the A.P.N.R.A.P. to W. Watt, Acting Prime Minister, 10 March 1919; J.N. Bell, Secretary of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, to Watt, 10 April 1919; S.H. Watson, General Secretary of the A.N.A., to Watt, 17 April 1919; Watt to Hughes, 28 April 1919, forwarding a cable signed by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, the Chairman of the Congregational Union of Victoria, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the President of the Council of Churches of Australia, the President of the Methodist Conference of Victoria, the President of the Baptist Union of Victoria, and the President of the Churches of Christ of Australia, C.A.O., A2, 19/1272. See also S.M.H., 16 April 1919, p.12, for a deputation to Watt consisting of the President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, the President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, and the President of the Methodist Conference of New South Wales.
- 3 The Revs. J.D. Ross and T. Watt Leggatt to Watt, 18 February 1919, C.A.O., A2, 19/1272. P.V.F.M.C., 11 February 1919.

pressure at a private level, telling readers of the local Presbyterian journal that they 'may rest assured that everything is being done to bring the needs of the situation before the authorities'.¹ But its New South Wales counterpart announced: 'As it was impossible to hold public meetings, we requested the press to give publicity to the matter'.² The result was that in the period of the agitation - February to April 1919 - the Melbourne Argus and Age did not publish any editorials about the New Hebrides, but the Sydney Daily Telegraph and the Sydney Morning Herald raised their voices in support of British annexation of the group. Both the latter papers agreed with the Sydney Chamber of Commerce that Australia had important commercial interests in the islands; the Telegraph spoke of the benefit of sole British control for New Hebrideans;³ and the Herald stressed the strategic importance of the group,⁴ which it considered was great because it was 'almost the nearest practicable "jumping-off

1 Presbyterian, Melbourne, 13 February 1919, p.126.
See also ibid., 8 May 1919, p.366.

2 Minutes of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, 8 April 1919.

3 Daily Telegraph, 17 April 1919.

4 S.M.H., 4 April 1919.

place" to Australia in the South Pacific.'¹

The Presbyterian efforts to put pressure upon the Australian Government to support a British take-over in the New Hebrides indicated that in 1919 this was still a policy which commanded the support of a significant number of religious, humanitarian, commercial and nationalistic bodies in Melbourne and Sydney and that, when approached, the major Sydney newspapers were willing to lend their support. Thus the extent of the interest-groups which could be activated to support an imperialistic New Hebrides policy still seemed as great as in the early 1900s and concern for Australia's security, her commerce, mission work and the welfare of New Hebrideans all happily, for the activators, correlated with the policy.

There was probably need for such a demonstration of the wide basis of support for the Presbyterian solution to the New Hebrides problem. Australia's external relations in the period 1918-1922 were firmly controlled by Hughes.² He had become interested in Pacific affairs partly through

1 S.M.H., 20 May 1919.

2 J.R. Poynter, 'The Yo-Yo Variations: Initiative and Dependence in Australia's External Relations, 1918-1922', Historical Studies, 14 (1970), pp.239-40, 244.

his first acquaintance with the New Hebrides question as Minister for External Affairs in 1904.¹ But in 1918 and 1919 his great concern was to combat Japanese power in the Pacific, and with this in mind he was vitally interested in Australian acquisition of the former German islands in Melanesia.² He was probably willing in 1918 to barter the New Hebrides to achieve this aim, especially since he regarded France's presence in the South Pacific of potential value in the coming struggle he envisaged with Japan. It was later reported that, on a visit to Paris in July 1918, he had not concealed 'the fact that, in the eyes of the Australian Government, the New Hebrides had lost much of their importance since Australia was on the eve of taking over all German islands south of the equator' and that he had discussed the possibility of sole French control of the group with the French Minister

1 See above, pp.417-8, and L.F. Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes, vol. 1, Sydney, 1964, pp.165-6.

2 Poynter, 'The Yo-Yo Variations', pp.240-1. Fitzhardinge, 'Australia, Japan and Great Britain', p.259. Fitzhardinge, 'W.M. Hughes and the Treaty of Versailles', pp.135-7, 140.

for Colonies.¹ And the previous month he had announced in New York, on the day after his 'Monroe Doctrine' speech, that while Australia wished to prevent Germany retaining any of her colonies in the Pacific, 'France has New Caledonia in these waters. We are glad of it, and wish she had more.'²

Hughes' Cabinet in Australia forwarded all representations it received on the New Hebrides question to the Prime Minister, but he was informed by cable: 'Colleagues leaving matter entirely to your judgement.'³ Hughes' reply to Paton's representations was the ambiguous statement that 'no opportunity will be lost...[in] trying to secure a favourable settlement' of the question.⁴ He cabled to Watt that he thereupon discussed the matter with the British Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord

1 This was reported by Philippe Milet, Paris correspondent of the London Observer. See Argus, 14 October 1920, p.5; and Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides'. Its validity is possibly enhanced by the fact that Piesse saw fit to cite it in his memorandum on the New Hebrides compiled for the information of the Australian Government.

2 Argus, 13 July 1918, p.4.

3 Watt to Hughes, 20 March 1919, C.A.O., A2, 19/1272. See also Watt to Hughes, 28 April 1918, ibid.

4 Hughes to Paton, 27 January 1919, Correspondence of F.H.L. Paton.

Milner, but he did not reveal what he told Milner.¹ And, whatever Hughes urged, the Imperial War Cabinet decided not to raise the New Hebrides issue at the 1919 Peace Conference.² So the Presbyterian campaign failed to produce any British effort in 1919 to seek sole British control of the group, but it was possibly influential in stifling any British or Australian move to hand the group over to France.

The Presbyterian campaign was also probably influential in temporarily steering the Hughes Government back onto the path of an imperialistic New Hebrides policy. In 1920 the British Government, as a result of a suggestion from the Count de Buena Esperanza that the French Government might be willing to contemplate partition of the group, recommended this solution to Australia.³ Hughes, however, minuted in reply:

No. Condominium very bad, but only solution is unified control of group by Britain - or if more acceptable to France by Australia. Would His Majesty's Govt. consider question of

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- 1 Hughes to Watt, 25 June 1919, C.A.O., A2, 19/1272.
 - 2 A.J. Balfour to Lord Curzon, 17 March 1919, in F.O. to C.O., 25 March 1919, C.O. 881/15/232/II.
 - 3 F.O. to C.O., 5 July 1920, C.O. 881/15/232/II. Miher to Ferguson, 19 August 1920, C.P.M.F.S., External Relations, XIX.

making France offer of territory elsewhere
in compensation for New Hebrides?¹

To the accompanying British request whether, if the Australian Government rejected partition, it would approve of the ratification of the Protocol of 1914, the Government requested time before replying in order to collect information about the group since it had become 'somewhat out of touch during the War with conditions in the New Hebrides'.²

However Piesse, who conducted the resultant investigation,³ recommended that the New Hebrides would be of no value as an Australian possession because of their malarial climate and declining indigenous population, which would necessitate the introduction of Asian labour if there was to be any economic progress; because of the dominance of French economic interests; and because British naval authorities discounted their strategic value. He advocated negotiations with France for the withdrawal of British control of the group as soon as possible, before the continued decline of British economic interests there

1 Minute by Hughes, n.d., on ibid.

2 Forster to Milner, 15 October 1920, C.O. 881/15/232/II.

3 See above, p.610, note 2.

reduced the prospect of a good bargain.¹

Piesse's recommendation was too radical a departure from traditional policy to be acceptable. To adopt it was sure to bring down upon the Government the wrath of the Presbyterian Church and perhaps of the important allies it had shown its capability of procuring. Piesse wrote the following year that he was unable to gain acceptance of his policy because the Presbyterians 'become active at frequent intervals, and the Government always responds to their views. I see little prospect of raising a public opinion in favor of either selling British interests or partition.'²

The Government, however, in 1921 did depart to some extent from the Presbyterian viewpoint about the New Hebrides. Piesse's gloomy picture of the state of British economic interests in the group may have influenced Hughes when it was added to the extra financial responsibilities Australia had incurred in its new Pacific territory and his previously expressed opinion about the value of a French presence in the South Pacific. When the New Hebrides question was next discussed by Britain

1 Piesse to Shepherd, 17 March 1921, C.P.M.F.S., External Relations, XIX.

2 Piesse to T.R. Bavin, 10 October 1922, Piesse Papers, MS 882/79.

and Australia, at a secret meeting at the Colonial Office during the Imperial Conference in July 1921, at which Hughes and the New Zealand Prime Minister were present, it was announced that the British Government was unwilling to discuss an exchange of territory with France to achieve sole control of the group. The French victory in the economic contest in the islands had reinforced Britain's long standing opposition to such a move. A Colonial Office memorandum prepared for the meeting emphasised that statistics showed 'that French population and trade steadily advances while the British are stationary or decreasing.'¹ This memorandum also spoke of the likelihood of British expenses in the Condominium increasing, and Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for Colonies, took an unprecedented step at the meeting by offering to unload this unprofitable burden onto the Australian Government. Hughes' thoughts probably ran along the same lines, for he pleaded that Australia's responsibilities in the Pacific precluded adding to them; and he also refused to promise any contribution from the Australian Government should the British Government consider buying out French interests in the group, though he suggested that money might be raised in Australia

1 Colonial Office Memorandum, 23 June 1921, in Devonshire to Forster, 25 June 1923, C.O. 881/15/235.

privately for this purpose. But Churchill was not seriously suggesting that his Government was willing to spend money in buying out the French, and Hughes was left with no alternative but to agree to the perpetuation of the Condominium. Therefore he approved of the ratification of the Protocol of 1914, lacking even sufficient interest in the subject to raise any of the suggested amendments to the Protocol endorsed by the Australian Government in 1915.¹

When he returned from the Imperial Conference to Australia, Hughes was sufficiently concerned about the possible public reaction to his agreement to the continuance of the Condominium to spend time in Parliament defending it. He said he had even gone to Paris and interviewed the French Minister for Colonies, from whom he requested a written statement of the future attitude of the French Government if the Protocol did not improve the conditions before it was drawn up so that he 'could state [it] to this Parliament, and through this Parliament to the country'. He was able to cite a subsequent letter from the French Government in which it promised to examine new suggestions should the Protocol fail to

1 Notes of a Meeting at the Colonial Office, 8 July 1921, Minutes of Secret Imperial Meetings, 20 June-5 August 1921, II, pp.1-2, C.D.E.A.

improve the working of the Condominium.¹ This promise did not bind France to any specific action, but Hughes' defence of his New Hebrides policy was accepted without demur by Parliament. A month later Hughes also acted to protect himself from any accusation that he had ignored a prospect of buying out French interests in the group when he asked Parliament if it would accept an offer he had received while in Europe of the interests of the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides. This offer was an old hoax,² and Hughes rightly discounted it when he presented it to the House because, as he said, even if the claims of the S.F.N.H. were all confirmed there was no reason to believe that Australian ownership of its land would affect the political status of the group.³ No member expressed any enthusiasm for the offer in the brief debate that followed. After an adjournment the debate was later discontinued because the French Consul-General in Australia announced that the French Government would not permit such a sale.⁴

1 C.P.D., XCVII, 5 October 1921, pp.11680-1.

2 See above, pp.358-9.

3 C.P.D., XCVII, 4 November 1921, pp.12472-4.

4 Ibid., pp.12474-6; XCVIII, 22 November 1921, p.13013. See also Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 8, pp.10-11.

The Presbyterian Church had been active late in 1920 and earlier in 1921 in pressing its imperialistic viewpoint on Hughes, sending deputations to him before he left for the Imperial Conference¹ and cabling him while he was in England.² The Victorian Church greeted the news that the Condominium was to be continued with dismay,³ which turned to anger when it heard that Hughes opposed the offer to purchase the interests of the S.F.N.H.⁴ The upshot was the first attempt since 1913 to launch a public campaign about the New Hebrides. Paton, now in Australia, approached the editors of the Argus and the Age who, he reported, 'promised to give great publicity to the movement;'⁵ and a public meeting was called in December 1921 in the Presbyterian Assembly Hall in Melbourne, at which speakers representing the A.N.A. and the Church of England joined Presbyterians in denouncing the Condominium. They claimed that abuses of

1 See Files relating to the New Hebrides, Representations, Part 1, nos. 4 and 6.

2 Ibid., nos. 8-10.

3 P.V.F.M.C., 25 October 1921.

4 G.A.P.V., 10 November 1921.

5 P.V.F.M.C., 6 December 1921.

regulations were still prolific¹ and they raised the Japanese bogey; the Rev. Dr Ives, of the Anglican Church, claimed that French interests in China might easily lead to trouble with Japan resulting in the surrender of French rights in the New Hebrides to the Japanese which would be 'an unthinkable situation for Australia.'²

The Melbourne Presbyterian thought there were sufficient arguments to encourage a nation-wide agitation to force the Hughes Government to reconsider its New Hebrides policy:

The Church people can all be awakened to see the danger that threatens missionary effort. Philanthropists will respond to the claim of a dying race for justice and considerate treatment. Very many will recognise that Australia has some responsibility for these islands within her easy reach in the Pacific. And perhaps the widest appeal will be to those who fear for the safety of Australia.³

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- 1 At the Commission of the General Assembly of the Victorian Church the previous month the chairman of the meeting, the Rev. John Mackenzie, claimed that 'injustice, oppression, and thinly veiled slavery are everywhere rife, while an illegal traffic in drink and women is being openly carried on.' Argus, 11 November 1921, p.8.
 - 2 Argus, 9 December 1921, p.12.
 - 3 Presbyterian, 14 December 1921, p.1135.

The Argus responded to the last of these appeals; it claimed that a flood of Japanese, which would come to the South Pacific under French patronage, eventually would force the French to leave the New Hebrides and other French islands in the Pacific.¹ But, despite the alleged promise made to Paton, the Age did not mention the New Hebrides in any editorials in November and December 1921, the period of the Presbyterian outcry against the Government's policy. And the Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph, and Brisbane Daily Mail all ignored the group in their editorials in those months. Nor was there any further mention of the group in Parliament in 1921 after the day Hughes made his announcement about the S.F.N.H. offer. The campaign was a failure. Hughes refused to see a deputation from the public meeting,² and the 'disappointing' attendance at the meeting³ indicated the futility of further attempts to arouse public opinion on the question.

William Maloney in 1921 mentioned two reasons

1 Argus, 10 December 1921.

2 Secretary of the Prime Minister to Paton, 16 January 1922, Files relating to the New Hebrides, Representations, Part 1, no.18.

3 P.V.F.M.C., 14 December 1921.

why by that year there was no longer widespread opposition in Australia to the French presence in the New Hebrides, saying: 'The last war has removed many misunderstandings between' British and French subjects,¹ and suggesting that it might be 'wise that the French flag should be kept flying there on account of the danger from the north.'² The latter remark indicated how the Japanese threat could be used to justify the retention of the Condominium. Nor, as had been the case with the threat of French convicts in the 1880s, was there any obvious Japanese interest in the New Hebrides. At the end of 1920 the Government learnt that there were only 33 Japanese in the group;³ eighteen months later their number had hardly grown.⁴

Another important reason why the policy of adding the New Hebrides to the British empire had lost most of its popular appeal by 1921 was that after 1919

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- 1 C.P.D., XCV, 17 June 1921, p.9172. C. Brunsdon Fletcher wrote in 1918: 'France is our comrade and close friend', and he predicted that 'the strategic question probably will not arise in any further discussion of their [the New Hebrides] development or control', (C. Brunsdon Fletcher, The Problem of the Pacific, London, 1918, p.175).
 - 2 C.P.D., XCVII, 14 November 1921, p.12475.
 - 3 Report on the New Hebrides, in King to Forster, 16 December 1920, C.P.M.F.S., External Relations, XIX.
 - 4 Director of Naval Intelligence to Prime Minister's Department, 12 July 1922, ibid., XXVI.

Australian imperialistic ambitions had been sated with the acquisition of the former German territories in Melanesia. The Sydney Morning Herald expressed this feeling in July 1921: 'it is very doubtful whether Australia would care to undertake the administration of the New Hebrides.... We have sufficient "colonial" responsibilities as it is, and have no desire to add to them.'¹ And the acquisition of a larger Australian zone in the 'chain of islands' to the north coupled with the establishment of the League of Nations encouraged a growing complacency among Australians after the settlement of the war in 1919 about their security, which was reinforced by Britain's promise at the 1921 Imperial Conference to give Australia a share in the making of British foreign policy in the Pacific.² This complacency was, by the end of 1921, prompting large scale reductions in Australian expenditure on defence,³ and it was soon to be further reinforced by the agreements to limit navies and fortifications in the Pacific at the 1921-22 Washington Conference.

1 S.M.H., 1 July 1921.

2 D.K. Dignan, 'Australia and British Relations with Japan, 1914-1921', Australian Outlook, 21 (1967), pp.139-41. Sissons, 'Attitudes to Japan', vol. 1, p.131.

3 Poynter, 'The Yo-Yo Variations', p.247.

Furthermore, whereas there was solid evidence to support the agitation against the state of the Condominium in 1913, conditions in the group had improved considerably since that year. Roseby wrote in 1915 that it was obvious that instructions had been sent from Paris to improve the attitude of French officials in the group, for 'we have had the new & agreeable experience of having our [the Joint Court's] judgments enforced by the French Administration.'¹ King stressed in reports to his High Commissioner in the period 1915 to 1920 that his French colleagues were more cooperative about abuses of regulations than in the past, that regular inspection of French plantations had been introduced, and that not many cases of ill-treatment of labourers in French employment or irregularities in recruiting came to his ears.² And in 1923 Frank Wallace, who as Commonwealth solicitor had been in the group since 1912, wrote: 'Of course there are bound to be some cases of injustice & even cruelty in a place like this, but it is nothing as bad as when I came here.'³

1 Roseby to Hunt, 25 October 1915, Hunt Papers, MS 52/747.

2 King to High Commissioner [copies], 4 August 1915, 26 January 1916, 5 February 1920, C.O. 881/15/123/III.

3 Wallace to Piesse, 10 October 1923, Piesse Papers, MS 882/3125.

The lack of public interest in the New Hebrides was further demonstrated when the ratification of the Protocol of 1914 was announced in Parliament in July 1922.¹ The news provoked no debate in Parliament; neither the Argus nor the Sydney Morning Herald commented on it; and no public bodies other than the Presbyterian Church made representations about it to the Government.² Piesse commented in October that year: 'There is little public interest now in the New Hebrides except among the Presbyterians'.³

In the years after 1922 the Presbyterian Church tried to keep alive the dying flame of its hope that the Condominium would be ended in favour of sole British control,⁴ but no Australian Government in the decade after that year supported this policy.⁵ The imperialistic phase in Australia's relations with the New Hebrides had come to an end.

1 C.P.D., XCIX, 14 July 1922, p.469.

2 Files relating to the New Hebrides, Representations, Part 1.

3 Piesse to Bavin, 10 October 1922, Piesse Papers, MS 882/79.

4 See Files relating to the New Hebrides, Representations, Parts 1 & 2; and L.A. Mander, 'The New Hebrides Condominium: 1906 to the Present', Pacific Historical Review, XIII (1944), pp.160-7.

5 See Files relating to the New Hebrides, Memorandum of February 1935, 'The New Hebrides: Situation in 1935'.

II

Conclusion

Speaking at a banquet in 1886 to farewell James Service to England, Henry Gyles Turner, later the historian of Victoria, said that Service and his Government, in advocating British annexation of the New Hebrides and other Melanesian islands 'had given Australia, for the first time in its history, a distinctly independent national foreign policy.'¹ Recently we have been told by Dr T.B. Millar that Australia never had an independent foreign policy before World War II.² Millar, however, has been taken to task for ignoring Australia's aspirations in the Pacific in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,³ and his rejoinder dismissing these aspirations

1 Argus, 17 April 1886, p.13.

2 T.B. Millar, Australia's Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1968, p.3.

3 Neville Meaney, 'Australia's Foreign Policy: History and Myth', Australian Outlook, 23 (1969), pp.173-81. See also Meaney's criticism of the lack of attention given to these aspirations by historians in, 'A Proposition of the Highest International Importance: Alfred Deakin's Pacific Agreement Proposal and its Significance for Australian-Imperial Relations', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, 5 (1967), pp.200-1.

as attitudes rather than forming a policy¹ can be answered by referring to the history of the policy of seeking the addition of the New Hebrides to the British empire. Before 1901, as Service remarked, this policy was 'almost a purely Victorian one',² but the Victorian Government secured approval for it by all Australian colonies at the 1883 Intercolonial Convention, and its consistent pursuit of the aim of the policy during the rest of the nineteenth century was continued by all Commonwealth Governments, of whatever political persuasion, in the years up to World War I. Australians relied upon Britain to carry out this policy, but they had no alternative. No colony was constitutionally competent to annex territory, as Queensland found out in 1883. And after the establishment of the Commonwealth the management of Australia's relations with other countries was still in British hands, and even if they had not been, independent Australian action to annex the New Hebrides was precluded by Anglo-French agreements about their political status. The fact that Australia could not implement its policy about the group does not detract

1 T.B. Millar, 'A Rejoinder', Australian Outlook, 23 (1969), pp.182-4.

2 Service to Berry, 6 June 1892, V.P.I.C., 92/1462.

from its reality.¹ It was certainly an independent policy, and one constantly in conflict with British wishes.

The advocates of annexation of the New Hebrides usually talked about British annexation and spoke much less about wanting Australia to rule the group. This was partly because of their own inability to unilaterally annex it. Furthermore they were aiming to incorporate the group into the empire of which they themselves were pleased to form a part.² In this context Australians as much as Englishmen were 'British'. And because, as is discussed below, their main object was to prevent French annexation, it was of secondary importance who ruled the islands once their aspiration became reality. But those who did express an opinion on this subject until World War I indicated that they either wished or expected that Australia would control the islands after British annexation. This was Service's viewpoint; it was implicit in Barton's offer to pay for the expenses of administration; and Batchelor announced that the Fisher Government's policy was 'to urge that the control

1 C.f. Poynter, 'The Yo-Yo Variations', p.231.

2 Dr Meaney has pointed out that Australia's aspirations in the Pacific were not part of any anti-Imperial nationalism; (Meaney, 'A Proposition of the Highest International Importance', p.202). For further evidence to support this hypothesis, see below, pp.652-3.

of the New Hebrides should wherever possible be vested in the Commonwealth.'¹

There were limitations to the extent Australian Governments were willing to go to carry out their New Hebrides policy and there was a tendency to 'pass the buck' in efforts to get Britain to provide territory or money to tempt the French to abandon the group. Australia was not willing to contribute any large sum of money for this purpose. This was a reflection of the relatively minor place in Australian affairs occupied by the New Hebrides question. But critics of this refusal² tend to overlook the substantial sums expended on the subsidy for the shipping service between Australia and the islands, which was of real benefit in the Anglo-French contest for economic supremacy there, and the smaller amounts contributed for surveying, legal and tariff assistance for New Hebrides settlers. Hughes in 1921 was able to point out that in the previous 19 years the Commonwealth Government had spent £134,000 in this way, an average

1 Report of Private Deputation, 7 December 1910, C.A.O. A1108, XI.

2 See Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 3, p.10; S.H. Roberts, History of French Colonial Policy, London, 1929, p.538; and B.E. Mansfield, 'Studies in External Relations and the Growth of National Sentiment in Australia, 1901-1912', B.A. hons. thesis, University of Sydney, 1948, pp.141-2.

of just over £7,000 per annum.¹ This compares favourably with the British expenditure on the administration of the group, which in 1921 was £8,000 per annum.² As well as actual money contributed, the Victorian Government initially offered to pay for the expense of annexing the islands, and Barton offered to pay for administering them. Australia's reluctance to lift all duties on imports from the group, which was widely attacked by both contemporaries and later critics as proof of the hypocrisy of her New Hebrides policy,³ was not as harmful to the settlement scheme in the early 1900s as has been alleged, and it was virtually no hindrance to the progress of British settlers after tariff rebates were introduced, which were a greater concession for the Anglo-French New Hebrides than Australia was willing to give in this period to its own colony in New Guinea. Australia therefore

1 £108,000 on the shipping subsidy, £22,000 on surveying and legal assistance, and £4,000 on tariff relief. Notes of a Conference, 8 July 1921, Secret Imperial Meetings, II, p.1.

2 Colonial Office Memorandum, 23 June 1921, in Devonshire to Forster, 25 June 1923, C.O. 881/15/235.

3 For the later critics, see Latham, 'The New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century', ch. 3, p.11; and Mansfield, 'Studies in External Relations', pp.137, 141.

cannot be accused of being less willing than Britain to shoulder the financial burden of imperialism.

As has been suggested, however, the New Hebrides policy was subservient to other Australian interests. Even in the realm of the country's relations with Pacific islands, acquisition of eastern New Guinea was more important, and for men such as Griffith, Parkes and Hughes the New Hebrides policy could be sacrificed for this aim. Australian Governments were also concerned about foreign annexation of other Pacific island groups, notably Samoa;¹ but the Samoan question was primarily a concern of New Zealand,² and Australians did not dispute the claims of their cousins across the Tasman to Polynesian islands. Their imperialistic ambitions were confined to Melanesia and, once Fiji was annexed, were restricted almost exclusively to New Guinea and the New Hebrides. Even the Solomon Islands, originally included in the Victorian annexation programme, were not the subject of any significant Australian aspiration. The declaration of a protectorate over that group in 1893

1 See, for example, Gillies to Parkes, 26 October 1887, Parkes Correspondence, A888, pp.54-7, M.L.; and N.C.S.O., Treasury, Public Offices, file top numbered 99/4781.

2 See Angus Ross, New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, 1964, passim.

was not a result of any Australian request, but rather a British response to the re-opening of the Queensland labour trade and more particularly to British apprehension of French intentions.¹ In the five previous years, in the Argus, Sydney Morning Herald and Brisbane Courier, the Solomons were mentioned only once in editorials - by the Herald in 1889.² In 1893 only two of these papers paid what was but brief editorial attention to the declaration of the protectorate.³ The Argus ignored it.

Therefore after the Anglo-German partition of eastern New Guinea in 1884, until hopes of acquisition of the German portion were aroused during World War I, the New Hebrides were the only serious object of Australia's imperialistic ambition. The constant struggle in this period to combat and remove French influence from the group was the mortar that held together the bricks of Australia's wider opposition to any increase of foreign influence in the Pacific. The discussion of that policy in this thesis indicates that it also should be promoted from the footnote to which Professor

1 W.P. Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, Oxford, 1960, p.344. Deryck Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.254-5.

2 S.M.H., 16 November 1889.

3 S.M.H., 30 June, 7 August 1893. Brisbane Courier, 14 August 1893.

J.R. Poynter has relegated it to a place alongside immigration and New Guinea as the main concerns of the first Commonwealth Department of External Affairs,¹ with the proviso that if an order of rank is required it should be placed last.

It was because the majority of Australians who thought about the subject considered the ever present danger of a French take-over as being vital to their national interests that Australia was more concerned about the New Hebrides than any other Pacific islands, except New Guinea. In the 1880s it was primarily the threat of French convicts, which though expressed in hyperbolic terms had a real basis, given the facts that escaped and liberated convicts from New Caledonia came to Australia and that one of the French reasons for wanting to annex the group in the 1880s was to send convicts there, and also given the largeness of the number to be transported and the intended permissiveness of their treatment that were proposed initially in the French récidiviste bill.

The fear of French naval bases in the group was the most important secondary motive for the Australian

1 Poynter, 'The Yo-Yo Variations', p.245 and note 39.

New Hebrides policy in the 1880s. After fear of French convicts declined with the cessation of transportation to New Caledonia, and with a growing sense of vulnerability to the ambitions of European and Asiatic powers in the 1900s, fear of a foreign military presence in the group dominated Australian thoughts about the islands, until growing British amity with France cemented into a firm alliance in World War I. The history of European occupation of islands in the South Pacific before World War I indicates that Australians greatly exaggerated the likely interest of potential European enemies in spending money so far from home on naval bases. Otherwise, however, this fear was not unjustified. The New Hebrides are blessed with some excellent harbours, which the Americans found in World War II made good naval bases, though a difficulty in finding anchorages in Havannah Harbour had to be overcome. The islands were also closer to Sydney and Melbourne than was New Guinea; 'but 75 hours steam from Sydney in a twenty-knot vessel', as Bamford and Johnson expressed it in 1915.¹ And another, though less tenable, argument for the strategic significance of the group in the early 1900s was its alleged importance

1 Confidential Report of the Royal Commission on Mail Services and Trade Development, 16 July 1915, C.A.O., A1108, XV.

for trade routes between Australia and the future Panama Canal.

Economic factors were not predominant in this imperialistic policy, but they should not be ignored. In a minor way the prospect of France shutting out Australia's commerce and capital from the New Hebrides contributed to Victoria's advocacy of the policy in the 1880s. In New South Wales in that decade widely held free trade beliefs, which clearly had anti-imperialistic overtones,¹ and the reality of the colony's trade with New Caledonia meant that economic interests inhibited the acceptance of Victoria's New Hebrides policy. But the growth of protectionism in the outside world meant that from the latter years of that decade concern about the likely effect of French annexation of the New Hebrides upon Sydney's trade with the group was an important element in the acceptance of the imperialistic policy in New South Wales, which also was helped by the establishment of an interest in the group by an important Sydney firm, Burns, Philp and Company. From the late 1880s the Sydney, as well as the Melbourne, Chambers of

1 C.f. Oliver Macdonagh, 'The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade', Economic History Review, 2nd series, XIV (1962), pp.489-501.

Commerce supported an interventionist New Hebrides policy. Throughout the period covered by this thesis, until Burns, Philp and the Commonwealth Government became disillusioned about the economic value of the group, it was commonly believed that it had great economic potential. Service in 1890 expressed the typically exaggerated view of this: 'in all the vast Pacific there is no group of islands richer, more fertile, and more desirable in a commercial sense.'¹ History has not vindicated this opinion, and modern geographers discount the old view that anything will grow there in great abundance.² But some parts of the group, for example Tanna, are very fertile,³ and those who wrote about the islands in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided little evidence for contemporaries to doubt their potential economic value. A selection of 20 books published between 1860 and 1920, which mentioned the economic capacity or potential of the New Hebrides,

1 V.P.D., LXIV, 17 September 1890, p.1614.

2 J.S.G. Wilson, Economic Survey of the New Hebrides, London, 1966, p.8.

3 Ibid., p.142.

provides only one exception to a hymn of praise about the fertility of the soil and or the economic prospects.¹

Another factor encouraging acceptance of the New Hebrides policy was a feeling that Australia's destiny was to rule the islands of the southwestern Pacific. This idea was probably not as important as similar feelings in New Zealand,² for Australians lived in a continental rather than an island environment and had less reason to believe that an empire in the Pacific would benefit them. On the other hand the very largeness of Australia, which, particularly in Victoria in the 1880s, encouraged extravagant notions about the future wealth and population of the country, stimulated 'great power' aspirations. Prevailing imperialistic ideas in Britain probably encouraged such thoughts, and ideas imported from overseas, from America as well as Britain, prompted the use of terms such as 'manifest destiny' and Australia's 'Monroe Doctrine', but it was the peculiarly Australian phobia about foreign convicts and the distinctly Australian hypersensitivity about foreign powers in the Pacific that were the main forces behind the imperialistic rhetoric.

1 See Appendix F. The exception was Edward Jacomb, France and England in the New Hebrides, Melbourne [1914], pp.36, 46-8.

2 For New Zealand attitudes, see Ross, New Zealand Aspirations.

The typical Australian who looked at the Pacific was A.P. Thornton's 'frontiersman, living in a perpetual state of emergency...governed by atavisms of his own.'¹

Australians viewed the New Hebrides primarily through spectacles tinted by their own interests. Concern for New Hebrideans was usually of small importance. But a desire to suppress the labour trade in the group was a significant, if minor, motive in the 1870s and 1880s; there were some who were concerned about the harm to the islanders they thought would be wrought by French control; notions of the benefit of British rule for the indigenous population were expressed; and in two cases the welfare of New Hebrideans was definitely an important subject in the context of Australian policy, namely in Australian criticisms of the Convention of 1906 and the Protocol of 1914, and in the agitation about the state of the Condominium in 1913. It was also probably an important factor in the policy of the Griffith Government in Queensland towards the group in 1886.

One other important motive which activated representatives of one section of the community, Presbyterians in particular, was concern for mission work in the New Hebrides. This too was a response to fears about the consequences of French annexation, which

1 A.P. Thornton, Doctrines of Imperialism, London, 1965, p.57.

were justified in the light of French treatment of Protestant missions when other Pacific islands such as Tahiti and the Loyalties were annexed. The Presbyterian concern won support from fellow Protestants, particularly Wesleyans and Congregationalists who had missions in other parts of the South West Pacific. In the 1880s Anglicans, though there was an Anglican mission in the New Hebrides were less interested in the political status of the group, but probably because of increasing Australian involvement in their Melanesian Mission, they, with the Church of Christ which sent missionaries to the group in the 1900s, became important allies of the Presbyterians on the New Hebrides question in the years after 1900.

It is to the existence of the Presbyterian mission that Australia owed the origin of the imperialistic New Hebrides policy, and Presbyterian spokesmen, especially John G. and Frank Paton and Daniel Macdonald, aided by Presbyterian politicians such as James Balfour, Robert Harper, Dugald Thomson and William E. Johnson, were important and influential advocates of the policy. But equally as important support was given to it by non-Presbyterians such as Graham Berry, Duncan Gillies, Alfred Deakin, Staniforth Smith, Joseph Cook and Atlee Hunt, some of whom were not active Protestants. And the most important spokesman for the policy, James Service, belonged to the latter category. It was Service more than any other Australian who, in his vigorous advocacy

of the policy as Victoria's Premier in 1883 and his vital contribution to the public agitation in favour of it that year, established the policy in Victoria. And his efforts behind the scenes after he retired from office until his death in 1899 were important in making it a continuing Victorian policy in the 1890s. Edmund Barton told a Melbourne audience in 1901:

I cannot pass away from this subject of the New Hebrides without paying a tribute to the memory of one of your statesmen, who...was always vigilant and watchful in observing the progress of this question...and to whom, not only Victoria, but Australia, is very much indebted...in this matter...and that is Mr. James Service.¹

And the fact that Service's New Hebrides policy became a traditional one for Victorian and Commonwealth Governments was probably important in encouraging politicians of all persuasions to maintain the tradition when they were in power, even the avowed isolationists John Watson and Hugh Mahon, and the Roman Catholics Allan McLean and Patrick Glynn.

One other group played a significant part in the establishment of the New Hebrides policy in Victoria, the Australian Natives' Association. The support of this

1 Argus, 15 February 1901, p.5.

body indicated the wider appeal the policy had beyond groups with special interests in the islands. This organisation was chiefly responsible for the public agitation about the New Hebrides question in 1886 which strongly indicated that concern about the political status of the islands in Victoria had wide popular appeal. And the A.N.A. was an ever willing ally of the Presbyterian Church in later years in advocating British annexation of the group, which again helped give the impression that this was a policy subscribed to by an important part of the community.

Established public support for the New Hebrides policy was probably a factor in persuading Australian Governments that it was worthwhile pursuing it. Barton and Deakin, for example, both believed in its strong popularity. On the other hand both these and many other leaders of Australian Governments, such as Munro, Shiels, Turner and Fisher had their own firm beliefs in the worthwhileness of the policy. And the history of the relation of government and public opinion on the question indicates that more often the former manipulated the latter. Service and Gillies used public agitations to impress their views upon the British Government, whilst from the mid-1890s Victorian and Australian Governments deliberately discouraged public activity on the question, with the result that there was no significant public agitation on the issue between 1886 and 1913.

Government manipulation of public opinion was therefore an important factor in both the magnitude of public activity about the New Hebrides in 1883 and 1886 and the lack of it in subsequent years. In the 1880s it was evident that widespread public enthusiasm could be generated about the group, but this was mostly because convictism was a highly emotive issue. Even then in Victoria only some of the public meetings were crowded, not many letters were written to newspaper editors on the subject, a minor place was given to it in election campaigns, and some newspapers, most Roman Catholics, and not even all Presbyterians were moved by it. Outside Victoria, without enthusiastic newspaper support and leadership from politicians and dedicated agitators, there was no significant public enthusiasm for the annexation policy - a fact which supports recent revisionist views about the popularity of imperialism in Britain.¹ In the early 1900s lack of comment about it at election campaigns indicated that it was of little importance in the context of domestic issues, but ^{the} Government's suppression of efforts to stir up public opinion was also a reason for lack of comment. And while Victoria and New South Wales were the

1 See Henry Pelling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain, London, 1968, ch. 5; and Hugh Stretton, The Political Sciences, London, 1969, pp.132-3.

only major locations of public activity on the question, leading newspapers in all states kept the issue in mind and were almost unanimous in approving of the imperialistic policy. In the Commonwealth Parliament a clear majority favoured an interventionist policy towards the group. Parliamentarians and newspapers only lost interest in the islands after World War I, when there was a diminution of apparent threats to Australia of a French presence in the islands and a decline of Australians' sense of insecurity. Then the imperialist policy failed to arouse significant support apart from officials of the Presbyterian Church.

The New Hebrides issue did not have any significant effect on Australian political life. Only for a brief moment in New South Wales in 1886 was it an important political subject and then, as in South Australia in 1883, it did not influence political allegiance. With the New Guinea question it was a major reason for the convening of the Intercolonial Convention of 1883, which launched Australia on the road to federation.¹ But the New Hebrides question was not sufficiently in the public

1 Geoffrey Serle, 'The Victorian Government's Campaign for Federation, 1883-1889', in A.W. Martin (ed.), Essays in Australian Federation, Melbourne, 1969, pp.1-11.

eye to have any specific influence on the movement for federation in the 1890s.¹ Machinery existed then for a united voice on the issue from the majority of Australian colonies as a result of the 1883 Convention and there was close cooperation on the subject between Victoria and New South Wales.

Britain's failure to annex the New Hebrides, along with her initial refusal to annex any of New Guinea provoked a hostile reaction in Australia. Some republicans such as Thaddeus O'Kane of the Charters Towers Northern Miner and David Buchanan in New South Wales welcomed this hostility as strengthening their case

1 The New Hebrides were not mentioned, for example, by any pro-Federation speakers during the 1898 federal referendum campaign in Victoria whose speeches were reported by the Argus; (Argus, 1 April-3 June 1898). In New South Wales in 1894 when Parkes moved a resolution in Parliament urging prompt federation and spoke of the Pacific island groups when arguing in favour of his motion, none of the numerous speakers who followed mentioned any Pacific islands when advancing reasons why Australia should federate; (N.P.D., LXXIV, 13 November 1894, pp.2193-256). See also a recent conclusion that the defence of Australia played little part in the 1898 South Australian referendum campaign; (R. Norris, 'Economic Influences on the 1898 South Australian Federation Referendum', in Martin, Essays in Australian Federation, pp.138-9, 143-4).

against the British connection.¹ Their support for annexation indicates that the Bulletin's isolationism was not shared by all Republicans.² And in Victoria Walter Cooper created a sensation in the Legislative Assembly when he suggested that Britain's policy on the New Hebrides' question might lead to an Australian demand to 'cut the painter'.³ The United States Consul in Melbourne wrote: 'Although this declaration was received with exclamations of dissent and disapproval it is patent to the most casual observer that such feeling is not altogether foreign to the popular heart.'⁴ But Cooper revealed that he saw no political future in advocating such a policy when he disavowed any personal preference for it at a public meeting on the New Hebrides issue in his electorate.⁵ Other than convinced republicans nobody used the issue to argue for separation.

In the early 1900s the New Hebrides question was

1 For O'Kane's views see Northern Miner, 5 July 1883, 14 April, 8, 17 June 1886.

2 The Northern Miner specifically dissociated itself from the Bulletin's isolationism; see ibid., 23 June 1886.

3 V.P.D., XLIV, 19 September 1883, p.1079.

4 O.M. Spense to J. Davies, 1 October 1883, United States Department of State, Despatches from Consuls in Melbourne, Australian National University (microfilm).

5 [Melbourne] Daily Telegraph, 2 October 1883, p.3.

a subject for dispute between Britain and Australia and prompted bitter words from Deakin in 1906 and 1907. Chamberlain was even moved in 1901 to fear 'breaking with the Commonwealth' over it.¹ But when Barton privately vented exasperation with Britain's 'wretched pusillanimity' on the subject, he was thinking of retaliation by embarrassing the British Government rather than of the far more serious threat of secession from the empire.² Protagonists of the New Hebrides policy such as Deakin, Fisher and Cook firmly believed in the Imperial connection,³ as did earlier leaders such as Service.⁴ Their policy was not therefore nationalistic in the sense of being part of independent cultural or ideological aspirations but only in the 'narrower political sense' of the obligations of a government to protect its people from external threats.⁵

British Governments, however, generally were not

1 Minute by Chamberlain, 2 March 1901, on Admiralty to C.O., 18 February 1901, C.O. 225/61.

2 Barton to Hunt, 22 January 1904, Hunt Papers, MS 52/2112.

3 Meaney, 'A Proposal of the Highest International Importance', p.202.

4 Serle, 'The Victorian Government's Campaign', p.32.

5 Meaney, 'A Proposal', p.202.

keen on extending the British empire unless some vital interest demanded it.¹ The New Hebrides certainly did not fall into that category. To Salisbury they were 'as valueless as the South Pole'.² When a genuine enthusiast for imperialism, Joseph Chamberlain, took over the Colonial Office, Britain was hamstrung by the need to find territory or money to buy France out of the group. The islands or Australia's concern about them were still thought no more important than the tiny Isles de Los. Even Chamberlain's view was that: 'We have no interest in the Islands except Australia's & if Australia wants them...Australia must find the money.'³

Australia did, however, influence British policy, which before the 1883 agitation was that France could have the group if she wanted it. The promise of March 1885 to seek the approval of Australia before agreeing to allow France to annex the islands was the

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- 1 D.C.M. Platt, Finance, Trade and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815-1914, London, 1968, pp.353-9.
 - 2 J.E. Kendle, The Colonial and Imperial Conferences, 1887-1911, London, 1967, pp.10-11.
 - 3 Minute by Chamberlain, n.d. [July 1903], on Tennyson to Chamberlain, 1 June 1903, C.O. 418/26.

first time that Britain publicly allowed her hands to be tied by her Australian colonists on a matter of foreign policy. From 1886 onwards British freedom of action was restricted by that promise, so that when some form of organised government for the group became imperative an Anglo-French Condominium was the only alternative, given Australia's continued objection to either French annexation or partition.

Australia to some degree was helped by New Zealand in achieving this success. New Zealand subscribed to the resolutions of the 1883 Intercolonial Convention and a public agitation in that colony helped impress the majority Australian viewpoint upon Britain in 1886. But the only other occasion when New Zealand gave any significant support to Australia's New Hebrides policy was in the early 1900s when Seddon was Premier.¹ New Zealand was primarily interested in Polynesia,² and in 1913 her Government was willing to let France have the New Hebrides in return for cession of French territory in eastern Polynesia to Britain.

The desire of the French Government to annex the New Hebrides was initially influenced by a fear of

1 See Ross, New Zealand Aspirations, pp.284-6.

2 Ibid., passim.

British encirclement of New Caledonia and the value of the group as a source of labour for that colony and as a potential outlet for its convicts; and it preceded any agitation in Australia for British annexation of the islands. But the first small movement in favour of that policy in Australia, in 1877, induced France, because of a mistaken view of British policy, to limit her own freedom of action by agreeing with Britain to respect the group's independence. From this point France, unless she wished to risk a serious diplomatic dispute with Britain, was forced to secure her agreement before annexing the New Hebrides, which after 1885 Australian pressure did not allow Britain to give. Thus, as later French Governments recognised, Australia effectively controlled the political destiny of the islands.

Both France and Australia made efforts in the New Hebrides to convince the other party that their interests there were so predominant that it was only sensible to concede political control. The Australians, in the French view, started with the advantage of the Protestant missionaries who controlled mission work there. The French never succeeded in seriously weakening the position of British missions, despite government support for Catholic missionaries. But through the dedication of a former Englishman, John Higginson, and considerable financial support for the company he started, which ended in Government control of its operations, the French were

able to outstrip the British in the economic race to the extent that in terms of European population, production, landholding and even commerce they were by the 1920s clear masters. They were also greatly helped by the proximity of New Caledonia to the group. As a result of convict transportation there was a considerable European population in that colony for which, in times of economic stress such as the late 1900s, the New Hebrides were an easily accessible outlet.

On the other hand British economic interests, which in the 1870s had failed to combat the adversities of a collapse in cotton prices, natural hazards and British restrictions on the recruitment of labour, were initially too weak to withstand the onslaught of Higginson's company. The Australasian New Hebrides Company was an enterprising attempt to redress the resultant imbalance, but local problems and world wide economic depression led the company to abandon its colonisation scheme. It succeeded, however, in dominating the commerce of the group, a domination that was continued by Burns, Philp and Company but which was gradually eroded by French competition, restricted Australian markets and lack of sufficient profits for Burns, Philp to take sufficient steps to improve its position. Australian Governments' subsidy for the shipping service, which had drawn Burns, Philp to the group, helped allay this decline, but did not prevent it.

It took an unusually severe drought in Australia

in the early 1900s to encourage any significant emigration to the New Hebrides, and the second attempt to organise Australian colonisation in the islands initially benefited from it. But the unsettled political status of the group meant that few men with adequate capital were attracted and insufficient assistance was offered to the others, so that when confronted by shortage of labour and then by the effect of Australian tariffs on falling maize prices the scheme collapsed. Apart from the lack of an equivalent to the government-subsidised French New Hebrides Companies, British settlement in the group was fatally handicapped by the long-term British prohibition against the recruitment of inter-island labour, but probably most of all by the fact that Australia had empty spaces and resources enough for most of her citizens, other than those inspired by missionary zeal or a desire to flee from civilisation. Furthermore there were other nearby British territories to attract those who wished to find an island paradise.

Australia's New Hebrides policy therefore had a profound effect on the history of the New Hebrides, it being the chief cause of the establishment of the Condominium. This almost Gilbertian form of government, derisively known locally as the 'Pandemonium', has been the butt of much criticism, and has certainly had its ill effects ranging from gross inefficiency in government services to the fact that New Hebrideans are stateless

persons. But it is arguable whether the natives, who have the opportunity to choose between two masters and to use their choice for bargaining with them, are today in a worse position than if, say, France had been allowed to annex the group. They certainly suffered from the fact that Australian policy delayed the establishment of regular government in the group, which promoted an anarchical situation in which their rights were frequently abused. Nor did continuing French efforts to combat British interests help New Hebrideans in the early years of the Condominium when thinly disguised slavery was commonplace. The competition between French and Australian interests meant large scale land expropriation, as Dr Scarr has shown,¹ and it introduced too many Europeans into the group to compete for a dwindling labour supply, encouraging unethical methods of recruitment, widespread use of liquor for this and trading purposes, and bitter rivalry between French and British subjects. On the other hand, many indigenous inhabitants profited from the increased demands for their services resulting in high prices paid for the copra or labour they sold. The judgements of history are rarely conclusive.

1 Scarr, Fragments of Empire, pp.198-202, 249-51.

APPENDIX ABritish Settlers in the New Hebrides(i) Non-Missionary Adult Residents, 1873

<u>Place and Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Arrived from</u>	<u>Source</u>
ANEITYUM			
Underwood, John	1		
Underwood, William	2		
TANNA			
Jones	1		
Lewin, Henry Ross	2	Australia	3
Simmonds, Joe	1		
Tatchell, William E.	2		
ERROMANGO			
Grey	2		
Powell, Henry W.	1	Australia	4
Smith, Edward S.	2		
EFATE: HAVANNAH HARBOUR			
Aylmer, Edward	1		
Bartlet	1		
Bassett, William	2	Australia	5
Berwick, F.	2		

<u>Place and Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Arrived from</u>	<u>Source</u>
Bowers, James	2		
Craddock, William R.	1	Australia	6
Davis, Thomas W.	2		
Degman, Dion	1		
Eastbrook	1		
Elder	7	Australia	7
Gardiner	1		
Haddock	1		
Hall, George	1	Australia	8
Hay, Marshall	2		
Hebblewhite, Benjamin B.	2	Australia	9
Hebblewhite, Mrs B.B.	1	Australia	9
Hebblewhite, Samuel H.	2	Australia	9
Hebblewhite, William R.	1	Australia	9
Millard, Thomas	1		
Morrow, Charles Maxwell	2	Australia	10
Morrow, Charles Samuel	2	Australia	10
Richards, Charles	1		
Roth, John	1		
Row, James	2	Australia	11
Smith, William	1		
Stewart, William M.	1		
Suermont, G.	2	Australia	12
Young, John	2		

<u>Place and Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Arrived from</u>	<u>Source</u>
EFATE: UNDINE BAY			
Glissan, Robert	2	Australia	13
Glissan, Mrs R.	1	Australia	13
EFATE: VILA			
Thorpe, Phillip	2	Australia	14

There were possibly one or more other settlers on Aneityum, since Suckling wrote that the Europeans on that island consisted of one Underwood and 'others'.² And there may have been a few other settlers on the other islands who were not named by Craddock or Suckling.

Sources:

- 1 Diary of W.R. Craddock, Craddock Family Papers, MSS 1021, M.L.
- 2 Lieutenant-Commander T. Suckling to Commodore F.H. Stirling, 31 July 1873, R.N.A.S., XXXIII.
- 3 R. Towns to Lewin, 29 May 1863, Papers of Robert Towns, MSS 1279/24/6, M.L.
- 4 Powell to the Rev. B. Jabez, 29 September 1871, Doc. 1128, M.L.
- 5 Diary of W.G. Farquhar, Schooner Petrel, 24 December 1871, typescript copy in possession of Mrs B.D.B. May, Scotts Point, Queensland.

- 6 Craddock Family Papers.
- 7 J.C.N.H., Land Registration Judgement, no. 116.
- 8 S.M.H., 7 July 1873, p.4.
- 9 W.D.A. Campbell, 'Record of the Descendants of Rowland Hassall, 1789-1947', D391, M.L.
- 10 W.P.H.C., Land Register, Book A, folio 134.
- 11 Lieutenant-Commander S.F. Digby to Commodore A.H. Hoskins, 8 August 1876, R.N.A.S., XXXIII.
- 12 S.M.H., 25 October 1871, p.4.
- 13 R. Gray to Colonial Secretary of Queensland, 18 May 1876, Q.C.S.O., 76/1228.
- 14 S.M.H., 4 April 1871, p.4.

(ii) Settlers Who Died or were Forced to Leave
Because of Ill-Health, 1875-1879

<u>Place and Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Source</u>
EFATE		
Edelfsen, C.F.	Left 1878 or 1879	1
Giles, William E.	Left 1879	2
Giles, Brother of W.E.	Left 1879	2
Hebblewhite, Benjamin B.	Died 1877	3
Hebblewhite, Samuel H.	Died 1876	3
Morrow, Charles Maxwell	Left 1875	4
Morrow, Charles Samuel	Left 1875	4
Row, James	Died 1876	5
MAI		
Chubb, Walter	Died 1879	2
BANKS ISLANDS		
Fuller, Captain	Died 1877	6

Sources:

- 1 Deryck Scarr, Fragments of Empire, Canberra, 1967, p.181.
- 2 Deryck Scarr (ed.), A Cruize in a Queensland Labour Vessel to the South Seas, Canberra, 1968, pp.30-1.
- 3 W.R. Hebblewhite to E.K.H. Hebblewhite, 12 November 1965, Hebblewhite Papers, in possession of Mr E.K.H. Hebblewhite, Sydney.
- 4 W.P.H.C., Land Register, Book A, folio 134.

- 5 Lieutenant-Commander S.F. Digby to Commodore A.H. Hoskins, 8 August 1876, R.N.A.S., XXXIII.
- 6 R.B. Leefe to Sir A. Gordon, 10 March 1878, W.P.H.C., Inwards Correspondence General, 4/78.

(iii) Non-Missionary Adult Residents, 1882-1886

<u>Name</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>1882</u> (1)	<u>Arrivals</u> <u>1883-85</u>	<u>Death or</u> <u>Departure</u>	<u>1886</u>
Booth, Joseph	C	*		K 1884 (2)	
Boyne, Harry	C			D 1886 (3)	
Champion, Jack	C				* (4)
Collins, George	S				* (5)
Coyle, Peter	N	*		A 1885 (6)	
Craig, George	C	*		K 1885 (7)	
Craig, Mrs G.	C			L 1885 (7)	
Cronstadt, Mrs A.	C	*			?
Cullen, Peter	C	*		K 1885 (8)	
Dagmar	N	*			
Davey, Thomas	N	*			* (4)
Empson	E	*			
Ford, William	E&B	*			* (9)
Fraser, Louis	C				* (4)
Glissan, Robert	E	*		D 1886 (10)	
Glissan, Mrs R.	E	*			* (4)
Hammond, A.C.	E	*			
Henderson, Richard	C				* (4)
Holbine	N				* (4)
Hooker, Edward	C				* (11)
Hutton, Harry	C		1884 (12)		* (4)
Kenyon	E	*			
Keyes	E	*			
de Latour, George	N		1885 (13)		* (4)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>1882</u> (1)	<u>Arrivals</u> <u>1883-85</u>	<u>Death or</u> <u>Departure</u>	<u>1886</u>
McEwan, Edward	C	*		K 1883 (14)	
Macleod, Donald	E	*			* (4)
Morgan, Frank	C				* (4)
North	E		1884 (12)		
Salisbury, Samuel	E	*		L 1882 (1)	
Salisbury, Mrs E.	E	*		L 1882 (1)	
Taylor, Harry	E	*			* (4)
Thomas, John	N	*			
Willoughby, James	N		1885 (15)		
Young, John	E	*		L 1882 (1)	

In 1882 there was one other unnamed British resident on Efate (1). Two settlers listed as Englishmen in (4) have been omitted because they were respectively German [F. Freeman (16)] and American [J. Wilbur (1)]. It is not known whether Mrs Cronstadt, a British wife of a Swede was in the group in 1886; her husband was (4).

Key:

Area

- B Banks Islands
- C Central Islands (Epi, Ambrym, Malekula)
- E Efate
- N Northern Islands (Malo, Aore, Santo, Aoba)
- S Southern Islands (Tanna)

Death or Departure

- A Accidental death
- D Death from illness
- K Killed by natives
- L Left the group

Sources:

- 1 Bridge to des Voeux, 27 July 1882, W.P.H.C., Inwards Correspondence General, 136/82.
- 2 Case no. 1, Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1885, R.N.A.S., XXXIV.
- 3 Cross to Tryon, 28 May 1886, R.N.A.S., XXXIV.
- 4 Brooke to Tryon, 23 July 1886, in Admiralty to F.O., 22 September 1886, F.O.C.P., 5522/59.
- 5 Signature of George Collins witnessing E.J. Suraskj to Ross, 10 June 1886, Case re firing of natives on boats of Forest King, R.N.A.S., XXXIV.
- 6 Cross to Tryon, 9 December 1885, R.N.A.S., XXXIV.
- 7 Case no. 10, Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1885, ibid.
- 8 Case no. 3, ibid.
- 9 Reports on the Banks Islands, 1886, R.N.A.S., XVII.
- 10 Grave of Robert Glissan, Presbyterian Church grounds, Nguna.
- 11 Age, 20 August 1886, p.5.
- 12 Douglas Rannie, My Adventures Among South Sea Cannibals, London, 1912, p.97.
- 13 Dubuisson to Le Boucher, 13 April 1885, Des Granges Papers, Australian National University (microfilm).
- 14 Proceedings of H.M.S. Dart, 1883, Lieutenant-Commander W.U. Moore to Commodore J. Erskine, 5 October 1883, R.N.A.S., XVI.

- 15 J.B. Jones to Immigration Agent, Brisbane, 19 May 1885, case no. 4, Australian Station: New Hebrides, 1885, R.N.A.S., XXXIV.
- 16 Proceedings of Nowell in Goodenough to Admiralty, 16 November 1874, R.N.A.S., XXXIII.

APPENDIX BTrade(i) Victoria, New South Wales and the Pacific,
1883-1886(a) Victoria, 1883 (£)

	<u>Fiji</u>	<u>New Caledonia</u>	<u>South Sea Islands*</u>
Exports	44,583	215	27
Imports	13,192	-	-

*Islands not owned by a European power

Source:

Statistical Register of the Colony of Victoria, 1883

(b) New South Wales (£)

	EXPORTS			
	<u>1883</u>	<u>1884</u>	<u>1885</u>	<u>1886</u>
Fiji	248,340	210,552	128,643	111,901
New Caledonia	212,528	211,023	153,094	111,332
South Sea Islands*	84,328	80,611	68,854	50,261
Other Islands	63,831	11,664	11,651	18,708
TOTAL	609,027	513,850	362,242	292,102

	IMPORTS			
	<u>1883</u>	<u>1884</u>	<u>1885</u>	<u>1886</u>
Fiji	128,253	107,509	192,540	176,661
New Caledonia	152,096	175,016	82,181	64,952
South Sea Islands*	39,347	41,537	36,929	36,491
Other Islands	303	478	1,204	149
TOTAL	319,999	324,450	312,854	278,253

*Islands not owned by a European power, with the exception of Hawaii

Source:

Statistical Register of New South Wales, 1883-1886

(ii) Victoria, New South Wales and the New Hebrides, 1888-1893(a) Victoria, Total Trade, 1888-1893 (£)

<u>1888</u>	<u>1889</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1892</u>	<u>1893</u>
13	44	-	-	-	4

Source:

Statistical Register of Victoria, 1888-1893(b) New South Wales, Imports, 1893-1900* (£)

	<u>1893</u>	<u>1894</u>	<u>1895</u>	<u>1896</u>
Bananas	-	1,500	8,211	7,971
Copra	6,762	7,057	16,009	10,727
Coffee	768	1,068	2,618	5,131
Maize	10	448	75	781
Others	209	458	1,558	2,266
TOTAL	7,749	10,531	28,471	28,876

	<u>1897</u>	<u>1898</u>	<u>1899</u>	<u>1900</u>
Bananas	9,659	1,710	1,404	831
Copra	6,133	11,637	15,427	10,950
Coffee	3,151	3,804	2,310	4,251
Maize	1,023	1,696	3,376	4,270
Others	766	1,499	697*	928*
TOTAL	20,732	20,346	23,214*	21,130*

*There are no available statistics for any exports to the New Hebrides or for imports from the group before 1893. No figures for total imports were issued for 1899 or 1900, but imports of separate items from the New Hebrides were listed.

Source:

Statistical Register of New South Wales, 1893-1900

(iii) Australia and the New Hebrides, 1901-1921(a) The value of Imports and Exports (£)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports</u>
1901	16,116	*
1902	20,099	*
1903	18,678	*
1904	17,155	30,245
1905	25,923	33,575
1906	15,564	36,958
1907	19,918	43,109
1908	30,951	49,088
1909	21,689	72,406
1910	24,121	76,668
1911	35,512	83,930
1912	23,282	91,795
1913	23,897	96,354
1914 to 30 June	[16,674]	[33,661]
1914/15	19,893	50,051
1915/16	31,349	51,946
1916/17	6,722	66,062
1917/18	37,479	78,037
1918/19	145,713	95,333
1919/20	136,716	94,928
1920/21	46,888	108,800

* No statistics available

Source:

E.L. Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides', revised to 8 May 1922, C.P.M.F.S., Printed Papers Relating to the Islands of the Pacific, XXIII, C.D.E.A. These and following figures for Australia's trade with the group were extracted by Piesse from Australian customs records.

(b) The Value of Principal Products Imported (£)

	<u>1901</u>	<u>1902</u>	<u>1903</u>	<u>1904</u>	
Coffee	2,223	390	287	242	
Copra	8,094	13,798	9,252	13,941	
Bananas	722	243	41	21	
Maize	3,886	4,680	8,434	2,482	
	<u>1905</u>	<u>1906</u>	<u>1907</u>	<u>1908</u>	
Coffee	4,537	659	1,237	738	
Copra	19,215	12,490	15,350	14,957	
Bananas	-	-	10	3,236	
Maize	1,729	1,967	2,237	10,977	
	<u>1909</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1913</u>
Coffee	884	1,560	557	60	455
Copra	9,007	14,212	31,035	16,787	5,589
Bananas	10	3,236	164	1,134	158
Maize	10,164	5,076	2,664	5,341	16,483
	<u>1914 to</u>	<u>1914/15</u>	<u>1915/16</u>	<u>1916/17</u>	
	<u>30 June</u>				
Copra	[11,036]	13,166	8,239	136	
Maize	[5,266]	4,526	18,110	3,767	
	<u>1917/18</u>	<u>1918/19</u>	<u>1919/20</u>	<u>1920/21</u>	
Copra	19,925	49,972	59,271	23,068	
Maize	369	1,484	1,534	9,883	
Cocoa Beans	17,175	79,763	69,273	9,830	

Source:

Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides'.

(c) Quantities of Imports, 1901-1913

	<u>1901</u>	<u>1902</u>	<u>1903</u>	<u>1904</u>	
Coffee (lbs.)	120,127	17,674	19,704	17,174	
Copra (cwt.)	15,977	23,261	15,954	23,936	
Maize (bushels)	34,785	21,760	40,839	17,053	
	<u>1905</u>	<u>1906</u>	<u>1907</u>	<u>1908</u>	
Coffee (lbs.)	123,462	35,652	57,007	37,200	
Copra (cwt.)	32,481	13,954	16,675	20,279	
Maize (bushels)	4,934	8,270	7,324	30,008	
	<u>1909</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1913</u>
Coffee (lbs.)	44,454	74,036	22,123	2,392	18,138
Copra (cwt.)	11,045	14,054	30,813	15,852	4,688
Maize (bushels)	33,673	22,556	10,798	14,879	46,287

Source:

Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides', 1st edition, 20 October 1920, C.A.O., A1108, XIV.

(iv) New Hebrides, 1915-1920
 (£ unless otherwise indicated)

	IMPORTS		
	<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>
British	40,460	35,855	37,375
French	38,961	50,732	82,414
	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1920</u>
British	50,703	47,511	58,174
French	77,966	F2,883,395*	F4,633,210*

	EXPORTS		
	<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>
British	36,993	36,225	50,131
French	99,220	116,720	163,423
	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1920</u>
British	71,548	42,572	54,773
French	203,508	F9,330,500*	F8,758,844*

*Francs

Source:

Piesse, 'Australian and New Zealand Interests in the New Hebrides', revised edition. These are figures supplied by the British Resident Commissioner. In this memorandum there are also figures for the trade of the New Hebrides from La Bulletin du Commerce, Nouméa, 17 March 1922. But these cannot be relied upon because the suggested yearly amounts of the total trade of the group is at times less than Australia's trade with the islands.

APPENDIX CAustralian Newspapers(i) 1883 and 1886(a) Victoria, June-September 1883

<u>Supporting Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Age	12	200
Argus	29	427
Daily Telegraph	7	255
Herald	13	231
Ballarat Courier	11	218
Ballarat Star	8	189
Benalla Standard	2	19
Bendigo Independent	4	104
Colac Reformer	1	30
Geelong Advertiser	7	100
Gippsland Mercury	1	68
Gippsland Times	1	42
Hamilton Spectator	5	56
Horsham Times	1	34
Ovens and Murray Advertiser	5	76
Riverine Herald	2	97
St Arnaud Mercury	1	48

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Camperdown Chronicle,
Colac Herald, Portland Guardian, St Arnaud Times, Wimmera Star

Opposing Annexation of the New Hebrides: Bendigo Advertiser,
Geelong Times.

(b) Victoria, March-June 1886

<u>Opposing French Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Age	13	219
Argus	31	426
Daily Telegraph	21	289
Herald	39	271
Ballarat Courier	8	190
Ballarat Star	16	185
Benalla Standard	1	20
Bendigo Advertiser	8	108
Bendigo Independent	4	74
Camperdown Chronicle	2	23
Geelong Advertiser	7	106
Geelong Times	10	124
Gippsland Mercury	2	65
Gippsland Times	6	57
Hamilton Spectator	1	53
Horsham Times	2	24
Ovens and Murray Advertiser	1	23
Riverine Herald	5	80
St Arnaud Mercury	2	19
St Arnaud Times	1	18
Wimmera Star	1	15

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Colac Herald, Colac Reformer, Portland Guardian

(c) New South Wales, June-September 1883

<u>Supporting Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Evening News	2	198
Burrangong Argus	1	28
Clarence and Richmond Examiner	1	37
Illawarra Mercury	1	35
Maitland Mercury	1	95
Newcastle Morning Herald	1	101
Singleton Argus	1	27

Only Opposition to
French Annexation

Echo	2	257
Sydney Daily Telegraph	5	191
Sydney Morning Herald	7	430

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Bega Gazette, Cowra Free Press, Deniliquin Chronicle, Forbes and Parkes Gazette, Monaro Mercury, Richmond River Express, Tamworth News, Tamworth Observer, Yass Courier

Unperturbed About French Annexation: Bathurst Times, Bulletin, Burrangong Argus, Goulburn Herald, Maitland Mail

(d) New South Wales, March-June 1886

<u>Opposing French Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Daily Telegraph	17 (O,X)	210 ⁺
Echo	6 (B,X)	111 ⁺
Evening News	17 (B,X)	307
Globe	[17] (O,X)	*
Sydney Morning Herald	21 (O,X)	442
Bathurst Times	6 (P)	91
Bega Standard	2 (X)	22
Burrangong Argus	[3] (X)	*
Forbes and Parkes Gazette	1	16
Goulburn Herald	1 (P)	61
Illawarra Mercury	[3] (P)	*
Maitland Mercury	4 (B,P)	71
Newcastle Morning Herald	8 (B,X)	190
Richmond River Express	1 (B,X)	5
Singleton Argus	2 (X)	16

Key: B Supporting British annexation
O Opposing British annexation
P Supporting Parkes' motion
X Opposing Parkes' motion

⁺ Not counting
'Topics of the Day'
or 'Notes of the
Day'
* Not all issues
extant

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Bega Gazette,
Clarence and Richmond Examiner, Cowra Free Press, Crookwell
Gazette, Tamworth News, Tamworth Observer

Supporting French Annexation or Criticising Opponents of it:
Bulletin, Cooma Express, Deniliquin Chronicle

(e) Queensland, June-September 1883

<u>Supporting Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Brisbane Courier	9	178
Gympie Miner	2	10
Northern Miner	2	79
Queensland Times	3	42

Only Against French Annexation: Observer

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Logan Witness,
Port Denison Times, Towers Herald, Western Champion,
Wide Bay and Burnett News

Opposing Annexation of the New Hebrides: Telegraph

(f) Queensland, March-June 1886

<u>Opposing French Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Brisbane Courier	10	309
Observer	12	369
Telegraph	9	324
Cairns Post	1	18
Northern Miner	4	80
North Queensland Telegraph	[1]	*
Queensland Times	4	49
Towers Herald	1	39

<u>Opposing French Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Warwick Argus	1	40
Western Champion	1	14
Wide Bay and Burnett News	2	17

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Herberton Advertiser,
Logan Witness, Port Denison Times

Supporting French Annexation: Maryborough Chronicle

(g) South Australia, June-September 1883

<u>Supporting Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
South Australian Advertiser	12	264
South Australian Register	11	355
Border Watch	4	38
Kapunda Herald	3	37
Northern Argus	2	62
South Eastern Star	1	44
Walleroo Times	2	79

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Narracoorte Herald

Opposing Annexation of the New Hebrides: Port Adelaide
News, Port Augusta Dispatch, Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser

(h) South Australia, March-June 1886

<u>Opposing French Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
South Australian Advertiser	9	267
South Australian Register	11	355
Border Watch	2	50
Port Augusta Dispatch	2	49

No Editorials About the New Hebrides: Kapunda Herald, Narracoorte Herald, Northern Argus, Port Adelaide News, Port Augusta Dispatch, South Eastern Star, Wallaroo Times, Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser

(j) Tasmania, March-June 1886

<u>Opposing French Annexation of the New Hebrides</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>	<u>Total Editorials</u>
Daily Telegraph	4	165
Mercury	6	194

(ii) 1888-1893

	<u>N.H.</u>	<u>N.C.</u>	<u>N.G.</u>	<u>O.M.</u>	<u>S.</u>	<u>O.P.</u>	<u>G.</u>	<u>T.P.</u>
<u>ARGUS</u>								
1888	3	1	1	2	3	3	2	15
1889	3	3	8	-	9	2	1	25
1890	8	1	2	-	-	2	1	13
1891	7	1	1	-	-	1	-	9
1892	7	2	-	1	-	-	1	10
1893	1	-	-	-	2	1	1	5
TOTAL	29	8	12	3	14	9	6	77

SYDNEY MORNINGHERALD

1888	2	-	2	2	3	1	-	10
1889	3	1	1	1	12	1	-	19
1890	2	3	1	1	1	1	-	8
1891	3	-	3	2	2	3	-	13
1892	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	5
1893	2	1	2	2	3	8	2	20
TOTAL	14	6	10	8	22	14	2	75

BRISBANECOURIER

1888	5	1	8	2	1	1	-	18
1889	-	1	7	-	6	-	-	14
1890	3	1	3	-	1	-	-	8
1891	3	-	2	-	1	1	-	7
1892	4	-	2	-	1	1	2	10
1893	-	-	1	2	-	2	-	5
TOTAL	15	3	23	4	10	5	2	62

Key: Editorials with substantial references to:

N.H. New Hebrides

N.C. New Caledonia

N.G. British New Guinea

O.M. Other Melanesian islands and territories

S. Samoa

O.P. Other Pacific island groups (i.e. islands surrounded by the Pacific excepting New Zealand and islands belonging to Australia)

G. Pacific islands in general; (i.e. editorials relating to the islands, not subjects such as trans-Pacific communications)

T.P. Total editorials re Pacific islands: (these figures do not always correspond with those for the separate island groups because at times one Pacific islands editorial contained substantial references to more than one island group)

(iii) 1901-1906(a) Pacific Islands Editorials

	<u>N.H.</u>	<u>N.G.</u>	<u>O.P.</u>	<u>G.P.</u>	<u>T.P.</u>
<u>ARGUS</u>					
1901	6	5	3	-	12
1902	2	2	-	-	4
1903	1	1	-	-	2
1904	2	2	2	-	6
1905	2	2	1	1	6
1906	6	1	1	-	6
TOTAL	19	13	7	1	36

AGE

1901	7	3	-	-	10
1902	7	3	-	1	9
1903	3	4	-	-	6
1904	3	2	3	-	7
1905	2	4	2	-	8
1906	3	3	-	1	7
TOTAL	25	19	5	2	47

	<u>N.H.</u>	<u>N.G.</u>	<u>O.P.</u>	<u>G.P.</u>	<u>T.P.</u>
<u>SYDNEY</u>					
<u>MORNING HERALD</u>					
1901	2	1	1	-	4
1902	3	-	2	3	8
1903	1	-	-	2	3
1904	4	1	6	1	11
1905	3	1	5	5	12
1906	9	3	-	1	13
TOTAL	22	6	14	12	51

DAILY
TELEGRAPH

1901	3	1	4	4	10
1902	4	-	2	-	6
1903	2	2	3	-	7
1904	6	4	4	2	14
1905	3	4	3	2	12
1906	4	1	-	-	5
TOTAL	22	12	16	8	54

Key: Editorials with substantial references to:

N.H. New Hebrides

N.G. British New Guinea

O.P. Other Pacific islands and territories (defined as in Appendix C (ii))

G. Pacific islands in general (defined as in Appendix C (ii))

T.P. Total editorials re Pacific islands (see Appendix C (ii))

(b) Victoria, March-June,
October-November 1906

	<u>Frequency of Publication</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>
Age	D	3
Argus	D	5
Bairnsdale Courier	T	1
Ballarat Star	D	2
Bendigo Advertiser	D	-
Bendigo Independent	D	1
Geelong Advertiser	D	1
Geelong Times	D	2
Gippsland Mercury	B	-
Gippsland Times	B	-
Horsham Times	B	2
Riverine Herald	D	-
St Arnaud Mercury	B	-
Wangaratta Chronicle	B	-
Key: D Daily		
B Bi-weekly		
T Tri-weekly		

(c) New South Wales, March-June
October-November 1906

	<u>Frequency of Publication</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>
Daily Telegraph	D	4
Sydney Morning Herald	D	8
Albury Daily News	D	-
Bathurst Daily Argus	D	4

	<u>Frequency of Publication</u>	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>
Border Morning Mail	D	-
Clarence and Richmond Examiner	B	2
Goulburn Penny Post	T	-
Lithgow Mercury	B	-
Newcastle Morning Herald	D	1
Wagga Wagga Advertiser	T	-

Key: D Daily
 B Bi-weekly
 T Tri-weekly

(d) Other States, March-June,
October-November 1906

	<u>New Hebrides Editorials</u>
QUEENSLAND	
Brisbane Courier	6
Daily Mail	7
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	
Advertiser	2
Register	1
TASMANIA	
Mercury	5
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	
Morning Herald	2
West Australian	3

APPENDIX DPublic Meetings and Other Bodies which Acted
on the New Hebrides Question(i) Victoria(a) 1883-1884

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Before 19 September 1883Melbourne^c (1)

Whittlesea (1)

Horsham (1)

Alexandria (1)

20 September-28 NovemberBuninyong^a (1)Broomfield Gully^b (1)Ballarat^{ab} (1)Castlemaine^b (1)Clunes^b (1)Maryborough^b (1)Creswick^b (1)Daylesford^b (1)

Kyneton (1)

Fitzroy^c (1)Creswick^{ab} (1)

LOCAL COUNCILS

Before 19 September 1883Ballarat^b (1)

Horsham (1)

Majorca^b (2)

Eltham (1)

Yea (1)

20 September-28 NovemberCastlemaine^b (3)

Mortlake (1)

Warrnambool Town (1)

Melbourne^c (4)

Seymour (1)

Bairnsdale (1)

Newstead^b (1)

Warrnambool Shire (1)

Eaglehawk (1)

Kerang (6)

Geelong (1)

20 September-28 November

Mansfield (1)
 Hawthorn^c (1)
 Moyston^a (1)
 Cathcart^a (1)
 Echuca (1)
 Glenorchy^a (1)
 Jackson's Creek^a (1)
 Dooen^a (1)
 Burnt Creek^a (1)
 Murtoa^a (1)
 Inglewood (1)
 St Kilda^c (1)
 Dimboola^a (1)
 Nhill^a (1)
 Footscray^c (1)
 Ballarat^b (5)
 Stawell^a (5)
 Newstead^b (5)
 Box Hill (5)
 Gre Gre^a (5)
 Beasley's Bridge^a (5)
 St Arnaud^a (5)
 Berwick^a (5)

After 28 November 1883

Bairnsdale^a (5)
 Stratford^a (5)

20 September-28 November

Sandhurst (1)
 Stawell (1)
 Mansfield (8)
 Dunolly (1)
 Richmond^c (1)
 East Loddon (1)
 Ballarat East^b (1)
 Korong (1)
 Ballan (1)
 Benalla (1)
 Bacchus Marsh (1)
 Footscray^c (1)
 Avon (1)
 Prahran^c (5)
 South Melbourne^c (5)
 Brunswick^c (5)
 Swan Hill (5)
 Kilmore (5)
 Lowan (5)
 Gisborne (5)
 Hamilton (5)
 St Arnaud (5)

After 28 November 1883

Maffra (5)
 Sandridge^c (5)

After 28 November 1883

Brigalong^a (5)
 Newry^a (5)
 Maffra^a (5)
 Glenmaggie^a (5)
 Sale^a (5)
 Rosedale^a (5)
 Morwell^a (5)
 Traralgon^a (5)
 Ballarat^b (9)
 Ballarat^b (9)
 Stawell (9)

After 28 November 1883

Dunolly (9)
 Ararat (9)
 Mornington (9)
 Echuca (9)
 Hawthorn^c (9)

OTHER BODIES

20 September-28 November

Shepparton and Lower Goulburn Agricultural and Pastoral
 Society (1)
 Ballarat Master Traders' Association^b (5)
 Goulburn Valley Central Farmers' Association (5)
 Melbourne Chamber of Manufacturers (5)
 Baptist Association of Victoria (5)
 Congregational Union of Victoria (5)
 Presbyterian Church of Victoria (7)
 Creswick Australian Natives' Association^b (1)
 Kingston Australian Natives' Association^b (1)
 Kerang Australian Natives' Association (1)

After 28 November 1883

Melbourne Chamber of Commerce (5)
 Second Intercolonial Trades Union Congress (5)

After 28 November 1883Ballarat Australian Natives' Association^b (9)Clunes Australian Natives' Association^b (9)

Sandhurst Australian Natives' Association (9)

Key: a Addressed by Paton (determined from the resolutions submitted to the Government plus Ballarat Star, 24 September 1883)

b Ballarat or the county of Talbot

c Melbourne and suburbs

Sources:

- 1 V.P.P., 1883, 2nd session, III, no. 47.
- 2 V.P.P., 1884, III, no. 38, p.45.
- 3 Argus, 22 September 1883, p.12.
- 4 Office of the Governor of Victoria, Inwards Correspondence, 1883, M36, State Archives of Victoria, Melbourne.
- 5 V.P.P., 1884, II, no.23.
- 6 Argus, 5 October 1883, p.5.
- 7 V.P.P., 1884, II, no.25, p.28.
- 8 Argus, 11 October 1883, p.11.
- 9 V.P.I.C., 84/1292a and following.

(b) 1886

<u>Public Meetings</u>	<u>Inspired by A.N.A.</u>	<u>Local Councils</u>
Ballarat (1)	* (2)	Sandhurst (1)
Sandhurst (1)	* (3)	Numurka (1)
Timor (1)	* (4)	Hawthorn (1)
Geelong (1)		Ararat (1)
Inglewood (1)		Echuca (1)
Creswick (1)	* (5)	Maryborough (1)
Eaglehawk (1)		Prahran (1)
Buninyong (1)		Raywood (1)
Charlton (6)	* (6)	Daylesford (1)
Ararat (7)	* (7)	Horsham (8)
Horsham (7)	* (7)	Traralgon (1)
Melbourne (Presbyterian) (1)		South Melbourne (1)
Avoca (9)	* (9)	Mornington (10)
Brunswick (9)	* (9)	Rosedale (11)
South Melbourne (12)	* (12)	Malmsbury (1)
Stawell (12)		Warrnambool Town (1)
Bacchus March (13)		Narracan (1)
Euroa (1)	* (9)	Maldon (1)
Melbourne (1)	* (11)	Brunswick (1)
Richmond (1)	* (9)	Korong (1)
Port Melbourne (1)	* (14)	South Shepparton (1)
		St Arnaud (1)
		Chewton (1)
		St Kilda (1)

Local Councils

Euroa (1)
 East Loddon (1)
 Talbot (1)
 Rosedale (1)
 Yackandandah (1)
 Kyneton (1)
 Dunolly (1)
 Kilmore (1)
 Wangaratta (1)
 Waranga (1)
 Warrnambool Shire (1)
 Melbourne (1)
 Lilydale (1)
 + Eltham (1)
 + Metcalfe (1)

Other Bodies

Australian Natives' Association Deputation (15)
 Presbyterian Church of Victoria Deputation (16)
 South Melbourne Australian Natives' Association (17)
 Maryborough Australian Natives' Association (8)
 Melbourne Australian Natives' Association (17)
 Metropolitan Parliamentary Debating Society (1)
 Melbourne Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (18)
 Congregational Union of Victoria (1)
 Wesleyan Church of Victoria (1)
 Brunswick Australian Natives' Association (1)

Avoca Australian Natives' Association (1)
 Melbourne Chamber of Commerce (1)
 Bacchus Marsh Mutual Improvement Society (1)
 Whycheproof Australian Natives' Association (1)
 St Luke's Young Men's Friendly Society, North Fitzroy (1)
 Avoca Progress Committee (1)
 Melbourne Independent Order of Rechabites Council (1)
 Melbourne Trades Hall Council (19)
 Memorial from the Residents of Stawell (1)
 Shepparton Mutual Improvement Society (1)
 + Presbyterian Church of Victoria Deputation (20)
 + Heathen Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of
 Victoria (1)
 + Warracknabeal Australian Natives' Association (1)
 + Melbourne Chamber of Commerce (1)

Key: + Protesting against the occupation of the New
 Hebrides by French troops.

Sources:

- 1 V.P.I.C., 86/935 and following.
- 2 Argus, 1886, 6 April p.5.
- 3 Ibid., 3 April p.9.
- 4 Ibid., 2 April, p.5.
- 5 Ibid., 5 April, p.5.
- 6 Ibid., 31 March, p.5.

- 7 Ibid., 15 April, p.6.
 8 Ibid., 7 April, p.8.
 9 Ibid., 21 April, p.6.
 10 Ibid., 19 April, p.6.
 11 Ibid., 20 April, p.7.
 12 Ibid., 16 April, p.5.
 13 Ibid., 22 April, p.10.
 14 Ibid., 30 April, p.6.
 15 Ibid., 18 March, p.5.
 16 Ibid., 19 March, p.7.
 17 Ibid., 26 February, p.5.
 18 Ibid., 7 April, p.4.
 19 Ibid., 17 April, p.11.
 20 Ibid., 18 June, p.10.

(c) Attendance at Public Meetings

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Described Size</u>	<u>Estimated Number</u>	<u>Source</u>
<u>1883</u>			
Melbourne		2,000	1
Horsham	Sparse		2
Buninyong	Crowded		3
Ballarat		700	4

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Described Size</u>	<u>Estimated Number</u>	<u>Source</u>
Castlemaine	Large	500-600	5
Clunes	Good		6
Maryborough		150	7
Daylesford		100	8
Fitzroy*		40	9
Mansfield	Large		10
Hawthorn*	Not large		11
Echuca	Not large		12
St Kilda*	Very small		13
Inglewood	Large		10
Dimboola	Good		14
Nhill	Large		10
St Arnaud	Not large		15
Ballarat	Fair		16
<u>1884</u>			
Bairnsdale	Fair		10
Stratford	Fair		17
Ballarat		4,300	18
<u>1886</u>			
Ballarat		3,500	19
Sandhurst		500	19
Creswick	Large		20
Geelong		500	21
Eaglehawk		100	22

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Described Size</u>	<u>Estimated Number</u>	<u>Source</u>
Ararat	Large		23
Stawell	Moderate		24
Melbourne (Presbyterian)*		150	25
Avoca	Fair		26
Euroa	Large	500	27
Melbourne*	Large		28
Richmond*		150	27
Port Melbourne*		200	29

Key: * Melbourne and suburbs

Sources:

- 1 Argus, 19 July 1883, p.11.
- 2 Horsham Times, 24 July 1883.
- 3 Ballarat Star, 19 September 1883.
- 4 Ibid., 24 September 1883.
- 5 Argus, 1 October 1883, p.9. Age, 1 October 1883, p.9.
- 6 Ballarat Star, 2 October 1883.
- 7 Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser, 3 October 1883.
- 8 Argus, 5 October 1883, p.5.
- 9 Argus, 8 October 1883, p.10.
- 10 V.P.P., 1883, 2nd session, III, no. 47.

- 11 Argus, 9 October 1883, p.10.
- 12 Riverine Herald, 16 October 1883.
- 13 Argus, 20 October 1910.
- 14 Dimboola Banner, 26 October 1883.
- 15 St Arnaud Mercury, 10 November 1883.
- 16 Ballarat Star, 12 December 1883.
- 17 Gippsland Mercury, 14 February 1884.
- 18 H.N. Baker, 'The Federation Movement in Australia',
Contemporary Review, XLVI (1884), p.870.
- 19 Argus, 6 April 1886, p.5.
- 20 Argus, 8 April 1886, p.6.
- 21 Argus, 10 April 1886, p.10.
- 22 Argus, 13 April 1886, p.5.
- 23 Ararat Advertiser, 16 April 1886.
- 24 Pleasant Creek News and Stawell Chronicle, 17 April 1886.
- 25 Argus, 18 April 1886.
- 26 Avoca Mail, 20 April 1886.
- 27 Argus, 21 April 1886, p.6.
- 28 Argus, 20 April 1886, p.7.
- 29 Argus, 30 April 1886, p.6.

(ii) New South Wales, 1886

<u>Public Meeting</u>	<u>Described Size or Estimated Number</u>	<u>Number Voting Against Decision</u>	<u>Source</u>
<u>Before 14 April</u>			
Sydney*	Large	Nil	1
Goulburn			2
St Stephens Presbyterian Church, Sydney*	Not well attended		3
Lithgow			4
Balmain*	200	2	5
Bathurst	Large		6
Newtown*	Large	A few	5
Orange		Nil	5
Queanbeyan		3 less than voted for it	5
Randwick*	Large	Nil	5
Mudgee			7
<u>After 14 April</u>			
Germanton		Some	8
Leichhardt*	Large	Nil	9
Glebe*			10
Wollongong	Well attended	Very few	11
St Leonards*	250		12
Young	100	Nil	13

Key: * Sydney and suburbs

Source:

- 1 S.M.H., 6 April 1886, p.5.
- 2 Presbyterian, 10 April 1886, p.7.
- 3 Ibid., p.8.
- 4 Echo, 12 April 1886, p.9.
- 5 S.M.H., 13 April 1886, p.5.
- 6 Bathurst Times, 13 April 1886.
- 7 N.V.P., 1885-86, II, p.219.
- 8 S.M.H., 20 April 1886, p.8.
- 9 S.M.H., 21 April 1886, p.9.
- 10 Carrington to Granville, 6 May 1886, C.O. 881/7/118.
- 11 Illawarra Mercury, 11 May 1886.
- 12 S.M.H., 18 May 1886, p.5.
- 13 Burrangong Argus, 2 June 1886.

(iii) Queensland, 1886

<u>Public Meeting</u>	<u>Described Size</u>	<u>Sources</u>
Rockhampton		1
Mackay		1
Bundaberg	Large	1,2
Maryborough	Small	1,3
Gympie	Fair	1,4
Park St Presbyterian Church, Brisbane	Not as large as expected	5
Toowoomba	Fair	1,6
Allora		1
Ipswich		1
Brisbane	Large	1,7

Sources:

- 1 Q.C.S.O., Premier's Department, Correspondence and Associated Papers re French Activity in the New Hebrides, nos. 7852 and following.
- 2 Bundaberg Star, 2 October 1886, in Cutting Book of the Rev. J.G. Paton, 1884-1890, in possession of the Rev. J.W. Gillan, Melbourne.
- 3 Maryborough Chronicle, 5 October 1886, in ibid.
- 4 Brisbane Courier, 7 October 1886, p.5.
- 5 Ibid., 12 October 1886, p.5.
- 6 Ibid., 19 October 1886, p.5.
- 7 Ibid., 27 October 1886, p.5.

APPENDIX EParliaments(i) Victoria, 1883-1887(a) Attitudes Towards the Government's
New Hebrides Policy

<u>Member</u>	<u>Action in 1883</u>	<u>Action in 1886</u>	<u>Speech(es) in Parliament</u>
<u>Legislative Assembly</u>			
Anderson, W. (Creswick)		* (1)	
Anderson, W. (Villiers and Heytsbury)	o +	o	C N
Andrews, C.		* (2)	
Bailes, A.S.		* (3)	
Bell, H.	* (4)		
Billson, G.	+		
Bosisto, J.	+		
Carter, G.D.		* (5)	
Clark, W.M.			X
Cooper, T.	* (6)		C
Coppin, G.S.	+		
Davies, M.H.	o +		
Deakin, A.	* (7)	x	
Fink, B.J.	+		
Gaunson, D.		* (8)	X
Graves, J.H.			D

<u>Member</u>	<u>Action in 1883</u>	<u>Action in 1886</u>	<u>Speech(es) in Parliament</u>
Harper, R.	* (9)	o * (10)	C D L
Harris, J.	* (11)		
Highett, J.M.		* (5)	
James, J.	* (4)		
Jones, C.E.			X Y
Kerferd, G.B.	+		
Langridge, G.D.	+		
Laurens, J.	+		C
McColl, H.	* (11)		D E
McColl, J.H.		* (12)	C
McIntyre, J.			X Y
Mackay, A.			X Y
McLellan, W.	+		L
Madden, W.	+		
Mason, F.C.	+		
Miramis, J.	o * (13)		
Moore, T.	+		
Munro, J.		o * (2)	
Murray, J.			X
Nimmo, J.	+	* (8)	
Officer, C.M.	+		
Orkney, J.	* (11)		
Patterson, J.B.	* (7)		
Pearson, C.H.	+		C D
Quick, J.	+	* (14)	X Y
Reid, R.D.	+		

<u>Member</u>	<u>Action in 1883</u>	<u>Action in 1886</u>	<u>Speech(es) in Parliament</u>
Richardson, R.	* (15)		C
Robertson, W.	+		
Rose, J.M.	+		D E
Russell, J.	* (4)	* (3)	
Service, J.	+		C D E
Shackell, J.	+		
Sheils, W.	+		E L
Smith, C.	+		C
Smith, W.C.	* (4)	* (3)	
Staughton, S.T.	+		
Tuthill, F.H.		o	
Vale, R.T.			X
Walker, W.F.	* (16)		C
Wheeler, J.H.	* (17)	* (2)	C
Woods, J.	+	* (8)	C L
Wrixon, H.J.	+		C L
Young, C.	+		
<u>Legislative Council</u>			
Anderson, R.S.	+		C
Balfour, J.	o	o	C E L N
Beaney, J.G.	+		
Beaver, F.E.	* (18)		C D N
Campbell, J.			C D L
Davies, J.M.	+		
Dobson, F.S.	+		C

<u>Member</u>	<u>Action in 1883</u>	<u>Action in 1886</u>	<u>Speech(es) in Parliament</u>
Fitzgerald, N.			C
Ham, C.J.	+		C
Ormond, F.	+		
Sargood, F.T.	+		C
Simpson, W.P.			C
Stanbridge, W.E.	* (19)		
Thornley, N.	+		
Wettenhall, H.H.		* (8)	
Zeal, W.A.	+		C

There were others who spoke on the subject in Parliament without either mentioning reasons for their attitude or any of the major reasons; but no member listed below in (b) to (e) belonged to that group.

Key: * Spoke or officiated at a public meeting or initiated action in a local council or other body.

+ Signed the petition for the Melbourne public meeting (20) or attended the presentation of Parliament's annexation resolutions to the Governor (21).

o A member of the Presbyterian deputations in June 1883 (22) or in March 1886 (23) or in June 1886 (24).

x Introduced the Australian Natives' Association deputation in March 1886 (25).

Reasons for supporting the policy:

- C Convicts
- D Defence
- E Economic
- L Labour Trade
- N Other aspects of the welfare of the natives
- X Opposition towards the policy
- Y But opposed to French annexation

Sources:

- 1 Argus, 8 April 1886, p.6.
- 2 Argus, 10 April 1886, p.10.
- 3 Argus, 6 April 1886, p.5.
- 4 Ballarat Star, 24 September 1883.
- 5 Argus, 20 April 1886, p.7.
- 6 Argus, 2 October 1883, p.5.
- 7 Argus, 1 October 1883, p.9.
- 8 Argus, 16 April 1886, p.5.
- 9 Argus, 17 July 1883, p.7.
- 10 Argus, 17 April 1886, p.11.
- 11 Argus, 20 October 1883, p.10.

- 12 Argus, 13 April 1886, p.5.
- 13 V.P.P., 1883, 2nd session (2 s.), III, no. 47, p.5.
- 14 Bendigo Advertiser, 6 April 1886.
- 15 V.P.P., 1883, 2 s., III, no. 47, p.10.
- 16 Argus, 13 October 1883, p.13.
- 17 Daylesford Herald, 5 October 1883.
- 18 Argus, 10 October 1883, p.10.
- 19 V.P.P., 1883, 2 s., III, no. 47, pp.10-11.
- 20 Argus, 12 July 1883, p.12; 14 July 1883, p.6.
- 21 Argus, 12 July 1883, p.7.
- 22 Argus, 7 June 1883, p.9.
- 23 Argus, 19 March 1886, p.7.
- 24 Argus, 18 June 1886, p.10.
- 25 Argus, 18 March 1886, p.5.

(b) Known Wesleyan, Congregationalist and Baptist
Members of the Legislative Assembly

<u>Member</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Source</u>
Andrews, C.	1	Laurens, J.	7
Bell, H.	2	Mirams, J.	8
Cooper, T.	3	Quick, J.	9
Graham, G.	4	Richardson, R.	10
James, J.	5	Rose, J.M.	11
Keys, J.	6	Walker, W.F.	12

Sources:

- 1 Argus, 3 July 1895, p.5.
- 2 J.E. Parnaby, 'The Economic and Political Development of Victoria, 1877-1881', Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1951, p.302.
- 3 V.P.P., 1883, 2nd session, III, 47, p.13.
- 4 Argus, 24 July 1922, p.8.
- 5 Renate Howe, 'The Wesleyan Church in Victoria, 1855-1901', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1965, p.80.
- 6 Argus, 1 August 1904, p.4.
- 7 Age, 3 April 1894, p.5.
- 8 R.J. Moore, 'Marvellous Melbourne: A Social History of Melbourne in the '80s', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1958, p.57.
- 9 L.E. Fredman, 'Quick: The Role of a Founding Father', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1956, p.2.
- 10 Parnaby, 'The Economic and Political Development', p.300.
- 11 Bulletin, Sydney, 6 February 1886, p.10.
- 12 Argus, 13 October 1883, p.10.

(c) Known Anglican Members of the
Legislative Assembly

<u>Member</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Source</u>
Carter, G.D.	1	Patterson, J.B.	6
Francis, J.G.	2	Shackell, J.	7
Graves, J.H.	3	Smith, W.C.	8
Langridge, G.D.	4	Staughton, S.T.	9
MacMahon, C.	5	Tucker, A.L.	10

Sources:

- 1 Argus, 2 May 1902, p.5.
- 2 Argus, 26 January 1884, p.5.
- 3 P. Mennell, Dictionary of Australasian Biography, London, 1892, p.195.
- 4 Age, 28 March 1891, p.9.
- 5 Age, 1 September 1891, p.5.
- 6 Argus, 31 October 1895, p.5.
- 7 Argus, 27 April 1895, p.5.
- 8 Argus, 23 October 1894, p.5.
- 9 Argus, 2 September 1901, p.5.
- 10 Alexander Sutherland (ed.), Victoria and its Metropolis, Melbourne, 1888, p.505.

(d) Known Roman Catholic Members of the
Legislative Assembly

Donaghy, J.	Hunt, T.	Madden, J.J.	Murphy, E.
Duffy, J.G.	McLean, A.	Madden, W.	Toohy, J.

Sources:

S.M. Ingham, 'Some Aspects of Victorian Liberalism, 1880-1900', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1949, p.44.

G.R. Bartlett, 'Political Organisation and Society in Victoria, 1864-1883', Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1964, p.260.

(e) Known Presbyterian Members of the
Legislative Assembly

<u>Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
Anderson, W. (Villiers and Heytsbury)	1	McColl, J.H.	6
Cameron, E.H.	2	Mackay, A.	7
Clark, W.M.	3	Munro, J.	8
Davies, M.H.	4	Officer, C.M.	9
Harper, R.	5	Orkney, J.	10
McColl, H.	6	Robertson, W.	11
		Tuthill, F.H.	12

Sources:

1 Mennell, Dictionary of Australasian Biography, p.9.

2 Argus, 30 September 1915, p.8.

3 See above, p.95, note 5.

4 Argus, 13 November 1883, p.5.

5 G.A.P.V., 1883.

6 Age, 22 February 1929, p.9.

- 7 Mennell, Dictionary of Australasian Biography, p. 299.
- 8 Moore, 'Marvellous Melbourne', p.47.
- 9 D.C. Chambers, 'A History of Ormond College', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1966, p.9.
- 10 Argus, 25 September 1883, p.7.
- 11 Argus, 28 June 1892, p.5.
- 12 Argus, 18 June 1886, p.10.

(ii) Australian Commonwealth, 1904-1906(a) Attitudes Towards New Hebrides
Policies and Backgrounds of Members

Categories:	I	Shipping subsidy
	II	Tariff relief
	III	Political status and isolationism
	IV	Reasons for support
	V	Party affiliation
	VI	Home state
	VII	Religion
	VIII	Occupation and class
	IX	Education
	X	Sources

<u>MEMBER AND GENERAL ATTITUDE</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>House of Representatives</u>										
*Bamford, F.W.	+	X	+	bp	Lt	Q	o	O	B	1,2
*Brown, T.	+		+	bs	Lf	N	o	O	A	1,3
*Cook, J.N.H.H.			+		P	V	o	C	?	4,5
*Crouch, R.A.	+		+		P	V	o	E	D	1,4
*Deakin, A.	+		+	bms	P	V	o	E	D	6
*Edwards, R.			+	e	P	Q	o	?	?	2,7
*Fisher, A.	+		+	bs	Lf	Q	o	W	A	1,3
*Higgins, H.B.			+		P	V	o	E	D	3,5
*Johnson, W.E.	+	+	+	bem ps	F	N	oo	O	A	2,8
*Kelly, W.H.			+	b	F	N	o	C	B	2,5

<u>MEMBER AND</u> <u>GENERAL ATTITUDE</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>House of</u> <u>Representatives</u>										
*Knox, W.			+	bms	F	V	oo	C	B	2,5
*Lee, H.W.			+	bp	F	N	o	C	?	2,7
*McCay, J.W.			+	bs	P	V	oo	E	D	4,5
*McDonald, C.	X	X	X		Lf	Q	o	W	A	1,3
*McWilliams, W.J.	X	+			F	T	o	O	?	2,5
*Mahon, H.	X		X		Lf	W	/	O	A	1,2,9
*Maloney, W.R.	X		+	b	Lt	V	/	E	D	1
*O'Malley, K.	X		X		Lt	T	o	C	B	1,2
*Page, J.	X		X		Lf	Q	o	W	A	1,3
*Reid, G.H.	+				F	N	o	E	B	2,5
*Salmon, C.C.			+	bs	P	V	oo	E	D	2,5
*Skene, T.			+	bp	F	V	oo	O	D	2,5
*Smith, B.			+		F	N	o	E	D	3,5
*Spence, W.G.	X		+		Lt	N	o	W	A	1,2
*Thomson, David	X		X		Lt	Q	o	O	?	1,2
*Thomson, Dugald			+	bs	F	N	oo	C	B	4,9,10
*Tudor, F.G.	X				Lt	V	o	W	A	1,2
*Turner, G.			+		P	V	o	E	D	2,5
*Watson, J.C.	+	+	X+	be ps	Lt	N	o	W	A	1,2
*Webster, W.	X		X+		Lf	N	o	W	A	1,2
*Wilkinson, J.	X	X+	X+	s	Lt	Q	o	W	B	1,2
*Wilks, W.H.			+	bs	F	N	o	C	?	1,5,7
*Willis, H.		+	+	bp	F	N	o	C	B	2,5

<u>MEMBER AND GENERAL ATTITUDE</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>	<u>IX</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Senate</u>										
*De Largie, H.			X		Lt	W	o	W	P	2,5,1
*Dobson, H.	+				F	T	o	E	B	2,5
*Givens, T.	X		X		Lt	Q	o	Wj	A	1,2
*Gray, J.P.	+			e	F	N	o	C	?	4,5,11
*Henderson, G.	X				Lt	W	o	W	A	1,2
*Higgs, W.G.	X	X	X		Lt	Q	o	O	A	1,2
*MacFarlane, J.	+		+	be ms	F	T	oo	C	B	2,5,10
*McGregor, G.	+				Lt	S	o	W	A	1,2
*Matheson, A.P.	X		X		F	W	o	C	B	2,5
*Mulcahy, E.		X			P	T	/	Wj	A	2,5,12
*O'Keefe, D.J.	X	X			Lt	T	/	Wj	A	1,2
*Pearce, G.F.		+	+	ps	Lf	W	o	W	A	1,2,9
*Pulsford, E.	+				F	N	o	C	?	2,5
*Smith, M.S.C.	+	+	+	bce mps	F	W	o	P	D	2,5,13
*Symon, J.H.	+				F	S	o	P	B	2,5
*Trenwith, W.A.	X	X	X		P	V	o	W	A	2,5,14
*Walker, J.T.	+	+	+	be mp	F	N	oo	C	B	4,5

Key: * Classified as an interventionist
x Classified as an isolationist
+ Supporting shipping subsidy or tariff relief or
opposed to French annexation
X Opposed to shipping subsidy or tariff relief or
expressing isolationist views

- b Specific support for British annexation
- c Convicts
- e Economic
- m Missionaries
- p Panama Canal
- s Australia's security

- F Free Trade
- f Favouring free trade
- L Labour
- P Protectionist
- t Favouring protection

- N New South Wales
- Q Queensland
- S South Australia
- T Tasmania
- V Victoria
- W Western Australia

- / Roman Catholic
- o Protestant (in the broad religious sense; i.e. not necessarily practising Christians)
- oo Presbyterian

- C Commercial
- E Professional
- O Other non-working class (journalists, farmers, manufacturers etc.)

- W Working class
- j Members who were journalists but who had been manual workers

- A Primary education
- B Secondary education
- D Tertiary education

- ? Not known

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WHOLE GROUP

(b) PARTY

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Labour	9	12
Protectionist	8	2
Free Trade	17	2

(c) SOCIO-ECONOMIC

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Professional	12	0
Commercial	11	2
Other Non-Working Class	4	4
Working Class	6	10
Not known	1	0

(d) EDUCATION

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Tertiary	10	0
Secondary	11	2
Primary	7	12
Not known	6	2

(e) RELIGION

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Protestant	33	13
Catholic	1	3
Presbyterian	8	0

(f) STATE

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>	<u>Total No. of Members</u>
N.S.W.	14	1	33
Vic.	10	2	28
Qld.	4	5	15
S.A.	2	1	13
Tas.	2	4	11
W.A.	2	3	11

LABOUR PARTY(g) ATTITUDE TO TARIFF

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
In favour of:		
Protection	6	3
Free Trade	3	4

(i) EDUCATION

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Tertiary	1	0
Secondary	2	1
Primary	6	10
Not known	0	1

(h) SOCIO-ECONOMIC

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Non-working Class	3	4
Working Class	6	7
Commercial/ Professional	1	1

(j) RELIGION

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Protestant	8	10
Catholic	1	2

(k) STATE

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
N.S.W.	3	1
Vic.	1	2
Qld.	3	4
S.A.	1	0
Tas.	0	2
W.A.	1	3

OTHER GROUPS(1) PRIMARY EDUCATION/SOCIO-ECONOMIC

	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst</u>
Working Class	5	9
Non-working class	2	2

(m) STATE/SOCIO-ECONOMIC

	<u>N.S.W. & Vic.</u>		<u>Other States</u>	
	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst.</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst.</u>
Working Class	2	3	3	8
Non-working class	21	0	7	3
Unknown	0	0	1	0

(n) STATE/EDUCATION

	<u>N.S.W. & Vic.</u>		<u>Other States</u>	
	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst.</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Agst.</u>
Primary	4	3	3	9
Post-Primary	14	0	6	2
Unknown	5	0	2	1

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Examples of the majority viewpoint:

'Although at present the exports of the New Hebrides are extremely limited, I have no hesitation in asserting that some day these islands will occupy a very important commercial position in the southern hemisphere; their immense natural resources, and their proximity to Australia...put the matter almost beyond doubt.' F.A. Campbell, 1873.

'The New Hebrides are a valuable group of islands. Every tropical production can be cultivated there to perfection. If carefully protected and developed they may become to Australia and New Zealand what the West Indies have been to the mother-country.' John Inglis, 1887.

'Though not greater in aggregate area than the county of Yorkshire, they [the New Hebrides] are very fertile and possess many fine harbours and a numerous population, and are consequently capable of great economic development....' Guy H. Scholefield, 1919.

The minority viewpoint:

'...the future agricultural destinies of the New Hebrides, even from the most optimistic point of view, cannot be said to be very great or important.... The New Hebrides is not absolutely the finest country in the world from the point of view of fertility of soil or charm of climate. There are other countries better, but equally there are others that are worse.' Edward Jacomb, 1914.

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