

The  
**Fijian**  
people

before and after independence  
1959-1977

Isireli Lasaqa

Australian National University Press  
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*The Fijian People* reviews social, economic, administrative and political change in Fijian society in the years before and after independence. These changes have been accepted, but modifications have had to be worked out within the continuing cultural values of Fijian society.

As Dr Lasaqa points out, the Fijian people face a number of handicaps in terms of economic development and population numbers, but they are managing to hold their own in a difficult and delicate situation.

Some writers on Fiji have not been entirely understanding interpreters of Fijian needs and aspirations; they have brought to their studies outlooks and value systems not necessarily in keeping with the traditional Fijian ethos. This book is a Fijian's interpretation of life in Fiji. Although it is essentially a personal view, it tries to put this viewpoint in the broader context of Fijian social evolution and in the light of the Fijians' determination to face the challenges of the future in a non-colonial, independent and multi-racial society.

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# The Fijian People

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*Before and After Independence*

Isireli Lasaqa

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## *Foreword*

I remember when I saw this book in manuscript I wrote at the bottom, 'This is a first class piece of work and I hope it will be published as soon as possible'. I am very glad this has come to pass and I am very pleased to write a few words of introduction.

Dr Lasaqa is an academic who has had the sobering experience of finding himself being translated into the field of administration and he has distinguished himself in both. But this means that he has been able to bring to his writing of this book both intellectual and practical disciplines, and his academic studies have been tried and tempered in the field.

The book is contemporary and realistic and sets out with admirable honesty and clarity Fijian views and aspirations in the changing society and world in which we all find ourselves. It is a book with a message, particularly for Fijians, but there is much in it for others to learn and I hope it will be widely read.

**Rt Hon Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, GCMG, KBE  
PRIME MINISTER**

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# *Preface*

This book is about the Fijian people. It aims to analyse and highlight certain significant aspects of Fijian life and thought which have influenced the evolution of the contemporary Fijian situation in a multi-racial society in the years before and after independence on 10 October 1970. In the years since 1960 Fijian activity and aspirations showed considerable, and in certain respects dramatic, changes on a number of fronts. These changes are particularly marked when seen against the relative stability of the previous decade. However, by 1960 the need for change in Fijian society and associated institutions was becoming increasingly urgent: this was well documented by overseas writers such as Belshaw, Ward and Watters, but most particularly by Spate, who analysed with considerable clarity the economic problems and prospects confronting the Fijian people as they began to move into the second half of the twentieth century.

Apart from the obvious change in Fiji's political status arising out of independence, which had far reaching effects on all aspects of life in Fiji, there have been other changes, some less dramatic in nature, which have influenced and will continue to influence Fijian action for a long time in the years ahead. I refer particularly to the loosening of the traditional Fijian social order in the face of external influences, brought about largely by alien ideas and value systems, the increasing economic activity, arising in part from internal and local effort, and major external inputs, and the associated increase in urbanisation, all of which are typical of developing countries. These changes have resulted in a re-evaluation of the Fijian position, which is now set in a non-colonial, independent, and multi-racial context. Such a reassessment has involved, indeed it has demanded, a deep and bold examination by the Fijians themselves, including their leaders, of certain basic and traditional concepts which have guided Fijian thinking and action for a long time in the past.

Expatriate writers on the Fijian situation have been generally useful, although not all of them have been entirely understanding

interpreters to the outside world of Fijian needs and aspirations. This has been understandable and unavoidable because these analysts inevitably have brought to their study premises, outlooks, objectives and value systems not necessarily in keeping with the traditional Fijian ethos which underlies much of the Fijians' contemporary activities. It would seem desirable, therefore, for a Fijian to interpret, as faithfully as possible, Fijian life and thought, Fijian needs and aspirations, how they see their neighbours, and the Fijian scene and beyond. In this way it is hoped that some of the major factors and trends which have shaped the events of the past, some of which are likely to influence the future, can be pointed out and highlighted from the viewpoint of the Fijians themselves. It is accepted that this is only one particular Fijian viewpoint; but it does not detract from the need for a Fijian to express a Fijian viewpoint.

But before the detailed analysis of the Fijian position can begin, it has been necessary to outline the broad national socio-economic and political scene against which the Fijian situation can be viewed in better perspective. What emerges from this analysis is a young nation with a youthful population containing a high potential for future increase. The political scene is fairly stable, despite some recent uncertainty. The problems of economic development and the issues arising out of increasing trade with the outside world are considerable, though not insurmountable. There is the problem of economic dependence on external markets although this would appear to be weakened by the willingness of Fiji's trading partners in the European Economic Community and elsewhere to assist as far as possible. Internally there is considerable economic imbalance between the major communities. The land has been and will remain the basis of the Fiji economy, although tourism will continue to have a significant role to play.

This book takes as its baseline the time of the Spate report in 1959. It then attempts to trace some of the main changes in Fijian life, and particularly in the social, economic, administrative and political spheres since that time; it is essentially a general examination of the evolving Fijian situation based on a personal assessment of viewpoints and circumstances. The Spate report is used in this way because through it the Fijian situation was analysed for the first time authoritatively and in depth, by a highly trained mind, with objectivity and sympathy.

Changes in the Fijian social order cannot be stopped; and the factors of change are many and varied. The Fijian is pressured from all sides to make the necessary changes. Although the village

is the centre of Fijian traditional life, migration to the towns is increasing and is having a significant and far-reaching impact on Fijian thinking and aspirations. Migration is offering a way of life that is not only different from village existence but also capable of providing a wider range of experiences.

Education offers another route to the 'good life', and in this field of endeavour the Fijians lag seriously behind other communities. This explains in part their weak economic position, although important new initiatives are beginning to have some useful results. A major thrust in this area is being exerted through the rural development program, which in both philosophy and practice is wide-ranging and all-embracing, for it includes the whole gamut of developmental work undertaken for and by the rural people.

With all these changes, it has been inevitable that considerable adjustment has had to be made in Fijian institutions. And contrary to popular opinion, the Fijian institutions which one might expect to take a backward-looking stance resistant to change have taken the initiative and are in the forefront of change. But these changes had to suit their judgment of the local circumstances. Some of the major changes have occurred in the Fijian administration, but perhaps the greatest change of all was the acceptance by the Fijians of political autonomy in the light of the long period of colonial rule, and especially when independence had to be accepted in the context of a multi-racial society. This is a measure of the wise and realistic leadership by Fijians, and the accommodating outlook taken by them in general towards other communities. One would hope that this attitude will continue and be reciprocated by others, both in theory and in practice, in the interests of all.

Isireli Lasaqa  
Suva, Fiji

## *Acknowledgments*

It goes without saying that in producing a work on a subject as complex as Fijian society and the changes that have occurred in it during the last two decades, I have received the help of many people too numerous to name individually. Some of them may find some of their views expressed in the following pages; others may disagree with what I have said. The views expressed are personal ones, formed over a period of years as a member of Fijian society and as a participant in the huge and difficult process of change and development within and for Fijian society. I can only say that I have tried to express as faithfully as possible the feelings, the views and aspirations of a people, handicapped in a number of ways, who are attempting to march with time.

I am grateful to Professor O.H.K. Spate of The Australian National University in Canberra and to Professor H.C. Brookfield, Department of Human Geography, Australian National University, for their comments on an earlier draft. In Fiji, Sir Robert Sanders, KBE, CMG, Secretary to the Cabinet, kindly made suggestions to improve the whole presentation. Vuluma Tora of the Land Use Section of the Agriculture Department in Labasa, Setareki Tuinaceva, Government Archivist, and Peni Tukunia of the Education Department provided useful information. Dharam Singh of the Town and Country Planning Office drew the maps and figures.

The International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada provided the financial support necessary for the final revision of the manuscript; this I acknowledge with gratitude. Without that support it would have been extremely difficult to complete the revision. The University of the South Pacific provided the necessary office accommodation during the period of revision.

This book has been published with the assistance of the Republic of Nauru Fund of the Australian National University, the Australian Cultural Fund and a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa.

At various stages of the preparation of the manuscript Mrs Miriam Veiqaravi and Mrs Pauline Fong Toy transcribed my illegible scribbling into meaningful drafts. I am grateful for their assistance.

The opinions expressed in this work do not necessarily represent the views of any individuals or organisations; they are my responsibility, including any deficiencies which still remain.

## *Note on Fijian Spelling*

Throughout this work the accepted standard spelling of Fijian words is used. Thus *dalo* and *buli* rather than *ndalo* and *mbuli* are used. For pronunciation the equivalents are as follows:

<i>b</i>	is pronounced	<i>mb</i>	as in	<i>timber</i>
<i>c</i>	"	"	<i>th</i>	" " <i>thy</i>
<i>d</i>	"	"	<i>nd</i>	" " <i>band</i>
<i>g</i>	"	"	<i>ng</i>	" " <i>king</i>
<i>q</i>	"	"	<i>ng</i>	" " <i>finger</i>

## *Abbreviations*

CSR	Colonial Sugar Refining Company
FAB	Fijian Affairs Board
FDFB	Fijian Development Fund Board
FIDC	Fijian Investment and Development Corporation
FSC	Fiji Sugar Corporation
NDC	Native Land Commission
NLDC	Native Land Development Corporation
NLTB	Native Land Trust Board
NZ	New Zealand
UK	United Kingdom
\$	Fijian dollars are used throughout unless otherwise indicated.



## *The Fiji Scene*

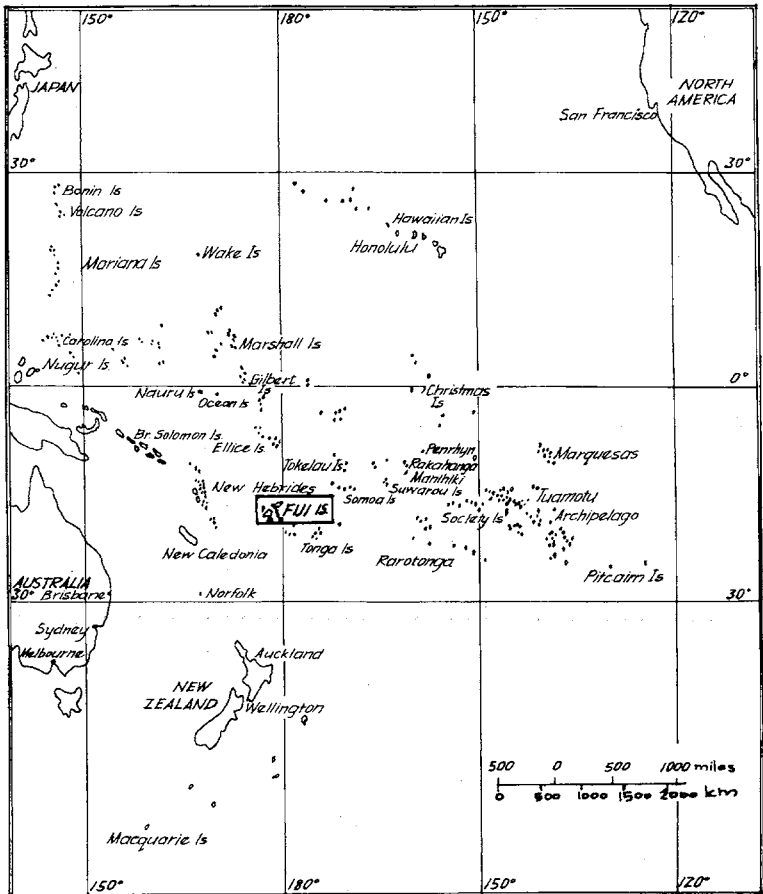
### **The land**

The Fiji Group comprises no less than 520 islands and islets, of which only about a hundred are permanently inhabited.<sup>1</sup> Many of the uninhabited islands are visited intermittently by their Fijian owners for planting purposes, or for temporary residence while collecting coconuts. The total land area of Fiji is 18,343 square kilometres. The two principal islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, together account for 87 per cent of the total area, but Viti Levu alone, with 10,426 square kilometres, accounts for more than half. The Fiji Group is scattered over 650,000 square kilometres of the South Pacific Ocean, and is about 2,720 kilometres north-east of Sydney, 1,760 kilometres north of Auckland and halfway round the world from Western Europe (Map 1). The archipelago is physically fragmented. Long distances have a significant bearing on the affairs of these small islands. From Suva, the capital, to Fulaga Island in the south-east is a distance of 346 kilometres of open sea. Udu point on Vanua Levu to the north-east is 320 kilometres away from the capital (Map 2). These simple facts of long distances and barriers of mountain and sea have profound effects, though not always immediately apparent, on the daily lives of the Islanders, including the many decisions they take affecting their sustenance. Thus the movement of people and goods is a major problem in the outer islands and in the inaccessible interior locations, leading to the high cost of goods available only from the main urban centres. These issues raise afresh the old problem of the relationship between and the relative advantages of the centre and the periphery in the context of development. On the international scene, long distances from overseas urban centres will always make trading difficult and will emphasise Fiji's past and continuing weak and subordinate position with regard to overseas markets and their economic and political decision-makers. However, its central location in the South Pacific region has helped the growth of Suva as an entrepôt port of considerable significance.

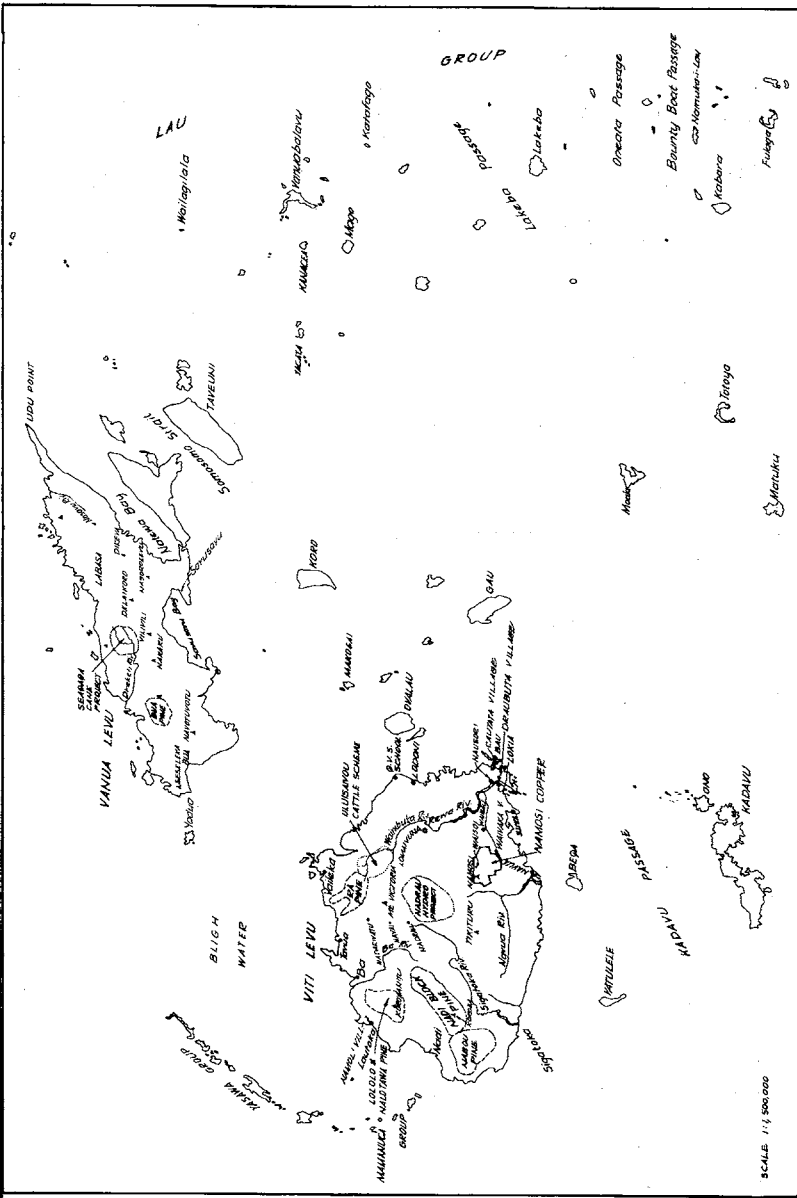
On the whole Fiji has an equable climate. Mean monthly temperatures range from a minimum of 20°C in July to a maximum

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of 30°C in January. The annual average rainfall is around 307 centimetres in Suva and increases to 500 centimetres in the interior uplands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, and drops to about 175 centimetres per annum in the dry north-west portions of the two main islands.<sup>2</sup> Winds blow mainly from the south-east and the bulk of the rain falls during the beginning and end of year months (November to March) which is also the hurricane season in Fiji.



Map 1 Fiji in the Pacific Basin



Map 2 The Fiji Islands

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The environmental setting of the Fiji Group ensures the presence of a wide range of regional variation which is based in part on a variety of physical structures. There are the atolls like Wailagilala and the raised coral islands like Fulaga. Throughout the group one finds numerous small volcanic islands, with rugged forested interiors, which stand in marked contrast to the low and sparse vegetation of the atolls and coral formations which are most common in the islands of Lau in eastern Fiji. The larger islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu emphasise the regional variation further. In the south-eastern part of Viti Levu are the lowlands of the Rewa River and its tributaries. The land is wet and alluvial in origin. In the north-west part of the island coastal lowlands and riverine plains form the basis of Fiji's sugar industry. The interior is still forested and much of it is steep land with limited potential for agricultural development. The island of Vanua Levu is similarly divided with a wetter south coast, important for copra production, and a dry north-west which is noted for sugar cane production. These regional variations provide the basis for land development and varied economic activities in these islands, and it is the land which will remain the foundation of livelihood for the bulk of Fiji's population for a long time to come.

In Fiji, land and subjects associated with land invariably take a prominent place in any discussion of development or issues linked with development. Some 83 per cent of all land, of varying quality, is owned on a communal basis by over 6,000 Fijian landowning units. Another 10 per cent, which includes most of the best farming land, is privately owned freehold, and the balance is held by the government as Crown land. The Indians own very little land, but they farm on a commercial basis about 180,000 hectares, much of it medium to good quality land under sugar cane, and leased from Fijian proprietary units.

The broad pattern of landownership in Fiji in relation to the main racial groups has not been questioned officially and directly. How long this situation will last is not known. It is the system of tenure, however, which has come under considerable criticism in recent years. It has been claimed that tenure on Fijian land is insecure, thus destroying the initiative to make full use of leased Fijian land. Customary tenure also, under which the bulk of Fijian land is at present held and used, is said to be a disincentive to the hardworking, industrious and enterprising Fijians. These factors are seen by numerous spokesmen on the country's landownership and tenurial systems as definite disincentives to increased rural productivity. This is true to a certain degree. But it does not

necessarily follow that collective ownership and utilisation of land may not be appropriate in certain situations, especially where land is very scarce in relation to the owning or resident population. One cannot dismiss the suggestion that there may be other approaches to the Fijian land situation than through individual titles.

All Fijian land is administered by the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) which was created specifically for this purpose in 1940. The basic function of the board is to arrange the leasing of native land, not required for the use and support of the owners, on terms beneficial to them; its main objective is to administer native land in the best interests of the owners. In recent years the board has been criticised, mainly by non-Fijians, as anachronistic; it has been suggested that the landowning groups themselves should administer their land and that the board should be abolished. It is not surprising that such criticisms are sometimes ascribed to ulterior political motives, especially when they are made by leaders of non-Fijians, Indians in particular.

Despite these problems, there has been major expansion in land development on Fijian land since 1960. There has been much expansion in coconut planting since 1963, especially in the northern and eastern islands of the group. This was part of a subsidy scheme which resulted in 26,400 hectares of new coconut planting, financed largely by a grant from the United Kingdom government. When the scheme ended in 1971 no less than \$1,072,740 had been approved for expenditure of which 90 per cent was in the form of a United Kingdom grant.<sup>3</sup> It cannot be said that the scheme was an unqualified success. Indeed in many areas it failed. The Lomaivuna land development scheme in south-east Viti Levu, sited on leased Fijian land, commenced production of bananas and root crops on a cash basis in 1964. Today Lomaivuna is one of the major suppliers, if not the largest, of root crops to Suva market. Similar schemes were started in various parts of western Viti Levu during the same period. Large-scale irrigated rice cultivation has been developed in the Rewa Valley and in Navua.

In the forestry field much has occurred since the late 1960s. A major timber milling venture was established near Labasa on Vanua Levu; the company, Fiji Forest Industries, having gained a logging concession over much of the island. Other similar ventures were established in western Viti Levu and on Kadavu. The latest of the larger milling ventures involved the Emperor Gold Mining Company at Vatukoula. This recent development is part of that company's attempt at industrial diversification in the face of depleting gold ore reserves. All these developments have been

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significant because they cover large areas of Fijian land, and involve Fijian owners as shareholders in the milling and logging enterprises, apart from their general effect on the gross domestic product and on employment. The planting of pine has expanded rapidly in western Viti Levu, and is likely to be even more significant in terms of timber production and Fijian equity participation in the future.

The economy of Fiji will be based on the land for a long time to come. Any industrial development of significant scale is likely to depend on the products of the land. The dominance of land-based resources in the economy is seen in the short list of domestic exports: sugar, coconut oil, gold,<sup>4</sup> lumber, ginger, cement, veneer sheets and cigarettes.

### **The economic situation**

Fiji's economy has always been dominated by sugar, which, since 1970, has accounted for no less than 68 per cent by value of domestic exports; in fact the proportion stood at 80 per cent in 1976 (Table 1a). Other major exports include coconut oil and other coconut products, gold and a fairly narrow range of manufactured products, such as cement, paint, veneer sheets and cigarettes. The items in Table 1b demonstrate beyond doubt Fiji's dependence on overseas market forces, which can alter drastically over a short period. To give one example: 14,000 tonnes of coconut oil were exported for each of the years 1974 and 1976, but earnings from this product declined from \$10,725,000 in 1974 to \$4,564,000 in 1976;<sup>5</sup> the serious depression in the world market price of vegetable oil during 1971-2 was repeated in 1976, though not to the same extent. All this does not ignore the fact that local environmental hazards, particularly hurricanes, which devastated much of the group in 1972-3, can have a debilitating effect on the economy. However, on the whole it is clear that external factors exert a continuing and major influence on the economic life of Fiji. Fiji's economy, therefore, increasingly diversified during the last decade or so, has been drawn more and more into the web of the international market and has become more vulnerable as a result. This is perhaps the inevitable consequence of greater development in the past and is likely to be intensified in the future: ironically, it is part of the process of entry into the twentieth century.

Fiji's dependence on external economic conditions is seen clearly in its pattern of overseas trade. Between 1959 and 1975 domestic exports rose from \$11 million to \$98 million while imports grew from \$16 million to \$220 million. During the same period there was

Table 1a  
Principal Exports by Value (FOB) (\$'000)

Year	Coconut		Oil seed, cake & meal	Paints	Gold	Lumber	Ginger	Bakery products	Cement	Veneer sheet	Cigar- ettes	Total
	Sugar	oil										
1970	31,820	5,131	383	135	3,349	270	271	222	197	51	221	42,530
1971	32,851	3,944	231	131	2,678	237	161	288	445	227	203	41,884
1972	34,423	2,375	256	164	3,979	194	334	313	358	193	154	43,233
1973	34,280	5,669	480	275	6,125	550	610	336	301	745	95	50,252
1974	66,952	10,725	366	238	8,621	976	548	621	500	811	48	91,669
1975	94,717	5,064	306	190	8,584	397	607	473	588	597	19	112,784
1976	67,704	4,564	271	203	7,250	953	637	504	306	637	39	83,065
1977	93,576	8,865	464	310	6,559	724	1,415	465	478	801	60	113,717
1978	83,273	8,941	548	325	4,952	1,435	988	606	577	680	64	102,389
1979	116,962	11,683	234	282	6,492	1,634	1,021	769	236	868	55	140,236

Source: Bureau of Statistics, *Current Economic Statistics*, Government Printer, Suva, April 1977, pp. 60-61.

Table 1b  
Principal Exports as Percentage of Total Value

Year	Sugar	Coconut oil	Oil seed, cake & meal	Paints	Gold	Lumber	Ginger	Bakery products	Cement	Veneer sheet	Cigarettes
1970	74.81	12.06	0.90	0.31	7.87	0.63	0.63	0.52	0.46	0.11	0.51
1971	78.43	9.42	0.55	0.31	6.39	0.56	0.38	0.68	1.06	0.54	0.48
1972	79.62	5.49	0.59	0.37	9.20	0.44	0.77	0.72	0.82	0.44	0.35
1973	68.21	11.28	0.95	0.54	12.19	1.09	1.20	0.67	0.59	1.48	0.19
1974	73.03	11.70	0.40	0.26	9.40	1.06	0.59	0.68	0.54	0.88	0.05
1975	83.98	4.49	0.27	0.17	7.60	0.35	0.54	0.42	0.52	0.53	0.02
1976	80.96	5.46	0.31	0.24	8.29	1.14	0.76	0.60	0.36	0.75	0.04
1977	82.29	7.80	0.41	0.27	5.77	0.64	1.24	0.41	0.42	0.70	0.05
1978	81.33	8.73	0.54	0.32	4.84	1.40	0.97	0.59	0.56	0.66	0.06
1979	83.40	8.33	0.17	0.20	4.63	1.16	0.73	0.55	0.17	0.62	0.04

Source: Bureau of Statistics, *Current Economic Statistics*, Government Printer, Suva, April 1977, pp. 60-1



surplus of exports over imports only in 1963; and since 1966 the trade deficit has increased annually, reaching \$105 million in 1975.<sup>6</sup> Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have been and continue to be Fiji's major trading partners. In recent years the European Economic Community (EEC) and various countries in South-east Asia have gained a more prominent position as sources of imports. In 1959 Fiji imported \$2.8 million worth of food, mainly from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. By 1975 food imports were valued at \$38.5 million; they included meat, dairy products, eggs, fish, cereals, fruit and vegetables, tea, coffee and cocoa. Canned beef imports alone rose from \$97,853 in 1959 to \$545,929 in 1975. Canned fish imports rose from \$258,163 in 1959 to \$1,689,839 in 1975.<sup>7</sup> It seems rather illogical that an archipelagic state like Fiji should be importing so much fish, and be dependent on overseas countries for much of its food needs, especially meat, eggs, fish, cocoa and vegetables, all of which it can produce locally.

The dominance of domestic primary products for export in the economy of Fiji has been challenged seriously by tourism in recent years. In 1964 tourism expenditure was only \$3.6 million; by 1972 tourists were spending in Fiji \$37 million and tourism was challenging sugar as the base of the economy. In terms of employment tourism provided 7,000 jobs in 1971 of which 4,000 were in the hotels, and the added value to the economy from these was no less than \$15.5 million.<sup>8</sup> Inflationary trends throughout the world since 1974 have seriously affected the tourist industry. Tourist arrivals have declined leading to low occupancy rates in many hotels and consequent staff lay-offs. From an all-time high of 186,000 visitors in 1973, the number declined to 181,000 in 1974, 162,000 in 1975, and only started to recover in 1976 when the number rose to 169,000. Room occupancy in hotels with more than 30 beds dropped from 63 per cent in 1973 to 62 percent in 1974, 52 per cent in 1975, and to 50 per cent in 1976.<sup>9</sup>

The position of some tourist hotels has become quite precarious, and buoyancy in the industry is not yet in sight. These difficulties clearly show the vulnerability of this industry and the Fiji economy in general to external conditions, and obviously greater dependence on tourism might not be to the long-term advantage of Fiji. This should be watched closely. However, because of Fiji's location on international air routes tourism will remain a major factor in its economy.

In Fiji the fruits of development have not been spread evenly. The bulk of the benefits has accrued mainly to the urban and peri-

urban areas, leaving the rural and peripheral zones to struggle for a better economic deal under conditions of considerable handicap characterised largely by inadequate access to and lack of reliable and regular links with the centre. In these conditions it is not surprising that rural-urban migration has gained much momentum in recent years, so that the proportion of the total population that can be classified urban has risen from 33 per cent in 1966 to 37 per cent at census date in September 1976. At the same time, however, the government has embarked on programs aimed at improving transport and communication, living conditions, productive capacity, marketing facilities, and the income of rural dwellers.

### **Population growth**

Fiji's population stood at 588,068 in September 1976 (Table 2). Of this number 44 per cent were Fijians, nearly 50 per cent Indians, while Europeans, part-Europeans, Rotumans, Chinese and other Pacific Islanders composed the remaining 7 per cent. The rate of population growth has been fairly high, running at 2.5 per cent per annum in the late 1950s and 1960s; it was around 2.3 per cent in the decade 1966-76. The result is a young population with about 41 per cent aged 15 years and less in 1976. Crude birth rates in 1976 were running at 27.21 per 1,000 for the Fijians and 29.47 per 1,000 for the Indians, while death rates were 4.06 per 1,000 for Fijians and 4.72 per 1,000 for the Indians.<sup>10</sup> An important point to note here is that although the Indian birth rate has been falling in recent years, it is still higher than the rate for Fijians.

**Table 2**  
**Composition of Fiji's Population 1976**

Component	Population	Percentage
Fijian	259,932	44.20
Indian	292,896	49.80
European	4,929	0.84
Part-European	10,276	1.75
Chinese	4,652	0.79
Other Pacific Islanders	6,822	1.16
Rotumans	7,291	1.24
Others	1,270	0.22
Total	588,068	100.00

*Source:* Bureau of Statistics, Suva, 1977 (1976 Population Census preliminary results).

In 1976 52 per cent of all Indian women, or 75,722 and only 48 per cent of all Fijian women, or 61,554, were still in the reproductive age group. Moreover, the Indian fertility rate has always been high; Indian women bear children at an earlier age, and they give birth to a higher number of female children than Fijian women.<sup>11</sup> All this makes it clear that the disparity between Fijian and Indian numbers will accelerate in the future, particularly if outward migration remains statistically insignificant. An indication of this widening disparity is the fact that the Indian component exceeded the quarter million mark in 1967, while for the Fijian this position was not achieved until early in 1976, nine years later.

At the time of the 1966 Census of Population, 24 per cent of the Fijians and 30 per cent of the Indians were classified as urban. The proportions for the other racial groups were 86 per cent for the Europeans, 71 per cent for the part-Europeans, and 84 per cent for Chinese and part-Chinese.<sup>12</sup> By 1976 the proportions were 31 per cent for the Fijians, 39 per cent for the Indians, 83 per cent for Europeans, 71 per cent for part-Europeans, and 86 per cent for Chinese and part-Chinese.<sup>13</sup> Increasing development in the urban areas, the hope of obtaining jobs in urban locations, and the improved means of transport and communication between the urban and rural areas before and after 1966, have contributed to the increasing urbanisation of Fiji's population. Of the Indian sector, the bulk is tied to the sugar belt of the two main islands and the Rewa Valley of south-east Viti Levu; 63 per cent of the total Indian population reside in the sugar-producing provinces of Ba, Nadroga-Navosa, and Macuata. The Fijian population, however, is more evenly spread over the rural areas, a large proportion in the remoter zones which are as yet unserved by roads. This remoteness and the greater apparent opportunities for development in the urban centres have caused a considerable flow of people to urban areas, thus placing a major strain on urban amenities and services. There have been disincentives too in the rural sector, largely of an economic nature. These include the relatively undeveloped infrastructure, infrequent or costly marketing services, and insufficient good land for suitable remunerative crops for development.

### **Social service and welfare**

In the field of social services, the developments over the last two decades have been remarkable compared with developing countries of similar size and resources. The standard of literacy is quite high.

However, the education system was, for a long time, over-formal and largely academic until recently; the school curriculum is now being adapted to suit the local needs. The overall aim in education is to produce trained and educated men and women who will be able to harness the local resources effectively and with locally-defined goals and objectives in mind. Associated with this is the urgent need to create sufficient jobs for the 10,000 annual school leavers who have been entering the labour market in recent years, with only a small proportion having been absorbed into employment.<sup>14</sup> In view of the youthfulness of the population, the unemployment situation is likely to deteriorate if the rate of job creation, which hinges on numerous factors which are complex in themselves and are complexly related, does not rise significantly.

Health facilities too have expanded a great deal over the last two decades. Numerous medical and health centres have been established in the remote and inaccessible interior villages and outer islands, which in some cases were visited in the past only too infrequently by medical staff, either because of the shortage of trained personnel or transport difficulties or both. Much of this improvement in medical care contributed directly to the decline in the death rate since the end of World War II and therefore to the resulting rapid rise in population in the 1950s. This has had an impact on the overall welfare of the population.

But despite the growth in population in the late 1950s and 1960s and the greater degree of urbanisation and development in general in these decades compared with the pre-war years, the broad pattern of economic activity and the structure of the economy on which the people's welfare ultimately depends have not changed significantly. Although there has been an absolute improvement in the general welfare of the population, the relative position of the various communities and living conditions has changed only slightly. Sugar is still dominant; its cultivation depends largely on Indian labour, leased Fijian land, and the technical expertise of the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) which took over the assets of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) in 1973. Copra is based equally on plantation operation and on the groves communally owned by Fijian villagers. The bulk of Fijian *mataqali* land is cultivated sparingly under a system of shifting cultivation to meet the cash and subsistence needs of the owners. The economic scene is dominated by large enterprises, largely overseas owned. There is also an important element of small and medium sized trading concerns, the bulk of which are locally owned, mostly family-operated Indian concerns. Fisk has pointed out that the pattern of

economic activity by racial groups in 1966 showed that 45 per cent of the economically active Fijians were engaged mainly or wholly in subsistence agriculture and 20 per cent were in other primary industries such as mining. Of the Indian component 51 per cent were in primary industries, mainly commercial farming. Put another way, 56 per cent of the economically active European-Chinese group, over 32 per cent of Indians, but less than 15 per cent of Fijians were engaged in secondary industry, commerce, construction and tourism—the most buoyant industries attracting the bulk of local and foreign investments.<sup>15</sup> By 1976 the Fijian position had improved somewhat, so that 20 per cent of the economically active Fijians were employed in secondary industry, commerce, construction and transport, and 37 per cent of the Indians, and 48 per cent of Europeans and Chinese who were economically active were in these sectors.<sup>16</sup> As for status within these growth industries, the European-Chinese group dominate the higher paid and supervisory roles, while the Fijians are predominantly found in the least skilled and lowest paid categories of employment.

### **Constitutional development**

Fiji's Crown Colony status lasted for ninety-six years. The usual dominance of the official side in the legislature and in the affairs of Fiji as a whole was not changed until 1966. But when political reform was introduced progress was rapid. In 1963 the franchise was extended to Fijians for the first time; before that the Fijian members of the Legislative Council were nominated by the Governor from a panel of names submitted to him by the Council of Chiefs. In July 1964 the membership system was introduced whereby three elected members of the Legislative Council were given responsibility for specific areas of government policy. Such measures made the transition to independence fairly smooth.

Major changes in the structure of government occurred after the Constitutional Conference held in London in 1965. The conference approved that the elected members of Legislative Council should be increased from twelve to thirty-six of whom the Fijians should elect eleven, nine by universal suffrage and two by the Council of Chiefs. Also the Indians were to elect nine members and the general electors seven communal members. There were also to be nine special seats, three each for the three main racial groups, in which all communities voted under a system of cross voting. New elections, which saw the emergence of party politics, were held in 1966 on this basis.

When Fiji moved towards independence in 1970 the two-party system of government had clearly emerged and taken root. The Alliance Party, which won the elections in 1966, with twenty-seven of the thirty-six seats, contains three constituent bodies (Fijian Association, Indian Alliance and the General Electors Association), although its support is derived largely from the Fijian population. The Opposition National Federation Party, which was born out of the sugar dispute in the early 1960s, is Indian dominated, although in recent years it has attracted a sprinkling of people of other races.

Events moved rapidly after the 1966 elections. In September 1967 the ministerial system was introduced, and the leader of government business, who was also leader of the Alliance Party, became Chief Minister. The Federation Party then protested against what they regarded as an undemocratic constitution because of communal voting; they demanded a common roll system of election. This led to their walkout from and boycott of the Legislative Council, and a by-election in 1968 in which they were all re-elected. The potential for racial confrontation was high but things settled down. This led to discussions between the two parties on the basis of a future constitution and independence. And by the end of 1969 these talks reached a broad measure of agreement to warrant further constitutional progress.

At the Constitutional Conference held in London in May 1970, it was agreed that the House of Representatives should have fifty-two members to be elected as follows:

	<b>Communal Roll</b>	<b>National Roll</b>
Fijian	12	10
Indian	12	10
General	3	5

The cross-voting system, first tried in the 1966 general elections, was further extended in the 1970 constitution. In the 1972 general elections, the first after Independence, the Alliance Party obtained a comfortable majority, winning thirty-three out of the fifty-two seats.

The 1970 Constitutional Conference also approved the establishment of an Upper House, the Senate, with twenty-two members to be appointed on the following basis:

- 8 nominated by the Council of Chiefs
- 7 nominated by the Prime Minister
- 6 nominated by the Leader of the Opposition
- 1 nominated by the Council of Rotuma

The tenure of office of senators is not affected by the dissolution of Parliament. The constitution also provides that the vote of three-quarters of the members of each House is required before amendments can be made to the Fijian Affairs Ordinance, the Native Land Trust Ordinance, the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Ordinance and a limited number of other acts. Moreover, if an amendment in any of these 'reserved' acts affects Fijian land and custom, then the support of six of the eight senators nominated by the Council of Chiefs is also required before it can become effective.

### **After independence**

Since the general elections in 1972, the Alliance Party as the party in power has implemented the Sixth Development Plan which spanned the five years 1971-5. It has formulated and begun to implement the Seventh Development Plan for the period 1976-80. In these plans the emphasis is on the better distribution of the benefits of development so that the rural dwellers gain from the whole process of modernisation. This involves the improvement of access in the rural areas through road construction, incentives for increasing rural productivity and improved marketing arrangements through the National Marketing Authority and a shipping freight subsidy to island producers, the expansion in sugar cane production at Seaqaqa in Vanua Levu, the intensification of pine planting on the *talasiga* lands of western Viti Levu, and a more liberal attitude by the Fiji Development Bank in financing development proposals submitted to it by Fijians. The evaluation of the large body of low quality copper ore deposits in Namosi is being intensified. If a mine is established the implications and the benefits in terms of employment, income and the necessary infrastructure for this hitherto undeveloped area, and the country as a whole, will be substantial. The same would apply to the construction of the hydroelectric scheme at the Nadrau plateau in central Viti Levu which is now under way. By these measures since 1966, but especially since 1972, the government has adopted a policy of development aimed at helping the economically handicapped by providing the opportunities and incentives for their involvement in the nation's commercial economy. It has also introduced measures to place on an equitable basis the landlord-tenant relationship through the recent amendment to the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act in 1976. By this amendment agricultural tenants are to be given thirty-year leases (they were ten years previously) and a fair basis of rent fixing, based on the

unimproved capital value of land to be declared by a Committee of Valuers.

By 1974 there were already rumblings on the political scene; noises that threatened to upset the peaceful multi-racial society. These came from the formation of the Fijian Nationalist Party, which claimed that little or nothing had been done by the government for the Fijians in their own country. Their leader and sole representative in the House of Representatives, Sakiasi Butadroka, was dismissed by the Alliance Party because of his extreme racist views. He was previously member for the Fijian communal constituency of Rewa-Serua-Naomosi during 1972-7. In late 1975 he moved a motion in the House of Representatives for the expulsion of Indians from Fiji. Not only was the motion defeated; it was amended to give recognition to the contributions of all communities to the progress and welfare of Fiji. But this motion does show the extreme racialist stand taken by the party and its supporters. The unfounded claim that the interests of the Fijians have been betrayed since 1970 was preached widely, though quietly, by the leaders and supporters of the Fijian Nationalist Party right up to the time of the general election in March 1977. In that election Fijian votes were split to the extent that the nationalist leader retained his seat in Parliament, and in three national constituencies formerly held by the Alliance Party, Fijian votes were split between the Alliance and the Fijian Nationalist Party, and Indian votes for the Alliance reduced so substantially that these constituencies were lost to the National Federation Party. The Fijian communal constituency of Ndroga-Navosa was won by an independent. The overall result was that the Alliance party won twenty-four seats, the National Federation Party twenty-six, Fijian Nationalist and Independent one each. But the National Federation Party was plagued by a leadership crisis which contributed heavily to its inability to form a government. Under the circumstances the Governor-General appointed Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Leader of the Alliance Party, Prime Minister, and asked him to form a government, though his party was in the minority.

The distribution of seats in the House of Representatives at that time was such that no party could hope to govern effectively on its own, and the Alliance Party had also rejected coalition with the National Federation Party, which was determined to show its voting strength by introducing controversial issues. This situation led to the defeat of a confidence motion introduced by the government and the dissolution of Parliament in June 1977. Fresh elections were held in mid-September. During the election



campaign the National Federation Party split into two opposing camps and fielded parallel candidates. This seriously divided the Indian votes, and with the weakening of the Fijian Nationalist Party as a result of intensive campaigns in key areas by the Fijian Association, the Alliance Party was returned to power with thirty-six out of the fifty-two seats in the House of Representatives.

The general picture of Fiji that emerges from the broad discussion is a multi-racial society whose economic well-being, based as it is on the land, is largely dependent on overseas conditions and decisions. There is considerable differentiation internally in the pattern of landownership and power among the major racial groups. The population, largely because of improved health services, has increased rapidly since 1956, and the rate of job creation has not kept pace with the output of school leavers and the consequent growth in the potential labour force. This has led to unemployment, especially in the urban areas, and is accentuated by rural-urban drift. These factors contain elements of potential danger in the future. The political scene, with the Alliance Party in control, is calm and stable. A number of pressing problems including inflation, increasing unemployment and underemployment and the need for an equitable distribution of wealth are already demanding considerable expertise and resources in the formulation and execution of policies and strategies designed to meet them. These problems are particularly pressing for the Fijians because of their relatively weak economic position, and because their adjustment to the needs of these situations has tended to be slow. However, there has been evolution from within to which we will now turn.

## 2

# *Fijian Society in 1959 and Now*

### **The nature of Fijian society**

In 1959 Spate noted that Fijian society<sup>1</sup> was adhering strongly to traditional social concepts, although there was a fair degree of ambivalence when these concepts were related to the desire for new goods and the means of obtaining them. He noted also that there was a constant harking back to the old ways.<sup>2</sup> This summary implied a thoroughly conservative social order, which at times allowed some minor changes in the pattern of social organisation, or at least some modification of the basis of individual and group action. At this point one may well ask: What was the nature of this society? What changes have taken place in it during the last two decades? And what are some of the major implications of those changes?

Fijian society is traditionally hierarchical in structure. The essential social strata to which every Fijian belongs are the *i tokatoka* (extended family), the *mataqali* (family group), and the *yavusa* (clan). In any locality a number of *yavusa* group together to form a *vanua*, which is in fact a socio-political association, cemented by social and economic ties, with common allegiance to a chief. A number of *vanua* group together through kinship links, marriage, social and ceremonial ties between the leading *yavusa*, and conquest to form a *matanitu* (state). Fijian society is largely patrilineal, and the direct agnatic descendants of a legendary founder (the *kalou vu* or ancestor god) formed the *yavusa*. Below and descended from this founder are the senior male relatives who form the *mataqali*; below this again are the *i tokatoka* which are subdivisions based on the same principle of patrilineal agnatic descent. This pattern of social organisation is repeated throughout the Fijian countryside, from one village to another, and from one province to the next. These groupings are universally recognised by Fijians; they are the units under which Fijians are registered as landowners, and quite distinct from other communities in Fiji. They have remained basically unchanged for generations and their codification and maintenance through the registration of all Fijian births ensure their permanence.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, what has

ensured the survival of the Fijian's social organisation and given it meaning and life is 'the sure belief—the depth of which is hard for a civilised being to fathom—in common descent, common faith, and common interest; and the qualities that have enabled it to live and endure were on the one side shrewdness, tact and forbearance and on the other loyalty, obedience and reverence'.<sup>5</sup>

Each social unit in the hierarchy has a fixed position and there is a known order of seniority which is applied both within social groups and between them. The position of a social unit in a particular hierarchy is known, and carries specific functions and responsibilities. These roles operate vertically within the hierarchy and laterally between hierarchies. For example, a particular *mataqali* might be expert fishermen in a particular *yavusa*; the same *mataqali* might have a traditional relationship with another *yavusa* in the same *vanua* where they are called upon by the head of the *vanua* to fish for him on important social or ceremonial occasions, in a feudal type of association. In these respects each social unit has certain traditional titles and duties with which it is identified and distinguished from other groups.<sup>6</sup>

In each *vanua* there is a definite chain of *yavusa* succession through which each *yavusa* owes allegiance to a single overlord. The pattern of *yavusa* succession is rigid and each *yavusa* has a fixed place in the chain of succession. The same rule of succession applies to the *mataqali* within the *yavusa* and the *i tokatoka* within the *mataqali*. Each unit has a name and a specific place and function in its own limited hierarchy. Its name often reflects its function or place of origin or some important event in its history. At the same time there is adequate flexibility in the system to allow adjustments to be made in accordance with the needs of each situation, which may be affected by population change or brief absence of certain groups.

The position will become clearer if we take a specific example from the old *tikina* of Dawasamu in Tailevu North (Fig. 1). There the *Ratu*, who is *Turagani yavusa* of *yavusa* Dawasamu, is the Lord of the *vanua* of Dawasamu, which contains seven *yavusa* living in five villages (Driti, Delakado, Silana, Nataleira and Nasinu), and twenty-three *mataqali*. In terms of seniority the seven *yavusa* are placed in the following order: Dawasamu, Voni, Delai, Navuniseya, Taci, Tova and Nagilogilo.<sup>7</sup> This is what the official records indicate, and it implies an authoritarian and rigid traditional structure. Even in 1959 this chain of *yavusa* succession was not always adhered to, particularly by the younger generation to whom this traditional structure was fast becoming obscure, if not obsolete.

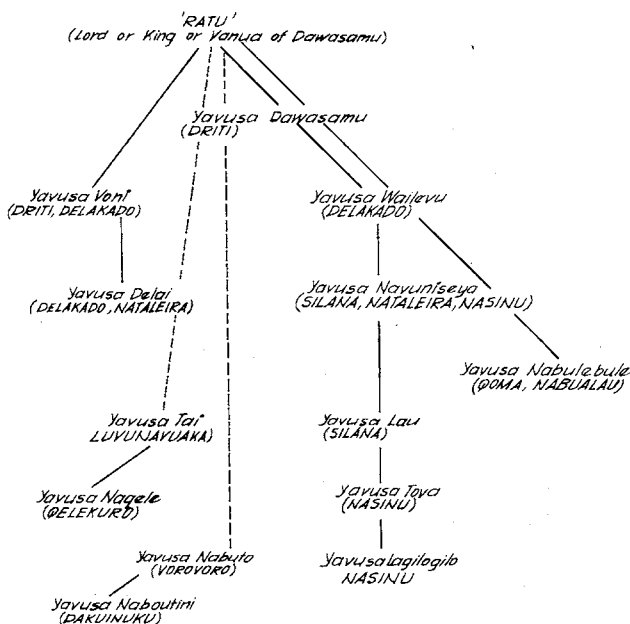


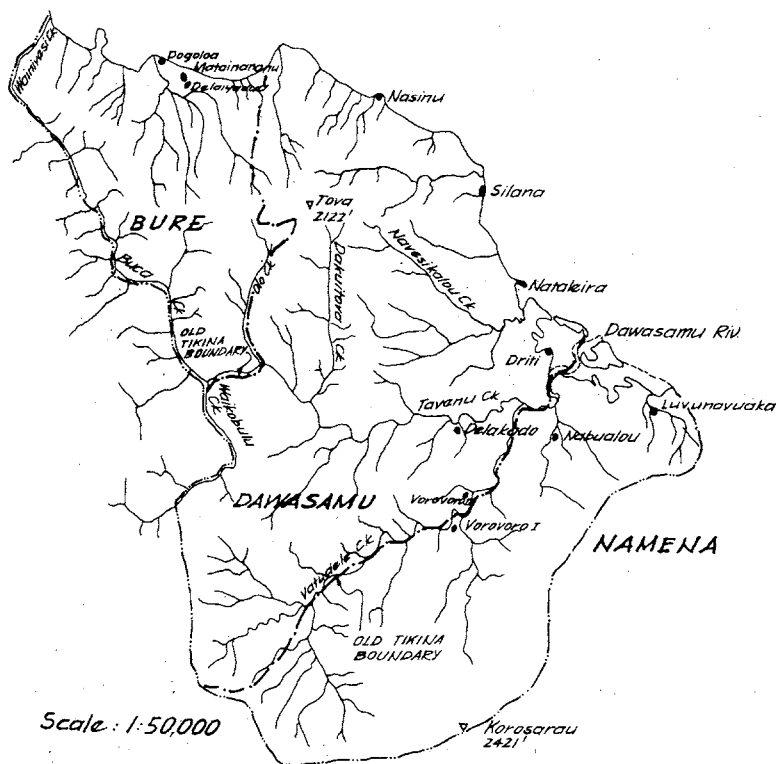
Fig 1 Tribal allegiance in Dawasamu

What the record contains does not always tally with the people's practice. This is the result in part of the flexibility of the social system which codification of social groups after Cession in 1874 eroded, the physical circumstances of the *vanua* including difficulty of access, and the ambitions and fluctuating fortunes of leading men. Thus the village of Vorovoro, inland from Driti, was looking more and more to Dawasamu in most matters than to the *vanua* of Sawakasa with which it had traditional affiliation. Also, the village of Luvunavuaka in the *vanua* of Namena associated more closely with Dawasamu in development matters; they share the same school (Map 3).

It will be obvious from the above that the members of the *yavusa* and the *mataqali*, and less so the *i tokatoka*, are usually dispersed over a number of villages. This is normally due to marriage and other social circumstances. But on most social occasions involving the *mataqali* or the *yavusa*, despite their scatter, members normally co-operate to fulfil their particular functions.

The members of the social group are bound together by their common name, common ownership of land and common or close

residence. Membership is largely patrilineal, though the residence of husbands may be uxorilocal in some cases. Nayacakalou has pointed out that although the basis of membership of the social group is predominantly through patrilineal descent, this is not the only way through which individuals become members of social groups. Co-residence is an important factor since a stranger could not have a socially significant life unless he was connected with some group within the village; in fact he would not be allowed to live in the village without being connected in some way.<sup>8</sup> Nayacakalou noted that the Methodist minister in Tavuki, Kadavu, was treated as a member of *mataqali* Nadurusolo; and all officers of the Fijian Administration living in that village were treated as members of *mataqali* Naocovonu.<sup>9</sup> These officers are obviously



Map 3 Vanua of Dawasamu

part of the village community and in order to become socially acceptable to it they must participate in the social and other activities of the village. By general consensus amongst the elders of the village, such officials are identified with specific groups. However, when matters strictly concerning the descent group are discussed, including their land, it is unlikely that such outsiders will have much of a say.

The nature of the local group clearly has an important influence on its stability. A village with one *yavusa* is likely to be more stable than one which has two or three. Common descent and common identity are likely to weigh heavily amongst its members in times of crisis and are certain to bind them together.

Fijian society is very much tied to the land; a Fijian also identifies himself with a piece of land, which belongs, in most cases, to the *mataqali*, the most common landowning unit in Fijian society. As Milner has said the Fijian speaks of his land as *na qau vanua*. Not only my land, but the land to which I belong, of which I am an integral part, the land which is part of me and feeds me. The men are the land.<sup>10</sup> The ownership of his land, in the local context, is based on common descent and binds his common proprietary interest. He places much faith in this system of landholding as immutable. He believes that the foundation of his landholding cannot be altered and will remain so for all time; there is little evidence for thinking otherwise.

The Fijians have remained loyal to their social system and have in general followed its tenets obediently, and in many cases without question. In many situations, to question such tenets, and to fail to conform to their rules, is to be un-Fijian and to contradict one's own status and being. However, even in 1959 certain aspects of traditional social mores were losing much of their validity, which prompted Spate to say that:

Loyalty, for example, is undoubtedly a virtue in any decent society; but it is also a functional one. Thus the history of pre-cession warfare suggests that loyalty to hierarchical superiors was not an absolute. The functions of the Chief as a real leader lost much of their point with the suppression of warfare and the introduction of machinery to settle disputes, but constant emphasis seems to have led to an abstract loyalty in vacuo, to leaders who have nowhere to lead to in the old terms and, . . . too often lack the skills or the inclination to lead on the new ways . . . the people have become conditioned to wait for a lead which is never given.<sup>11</sup>

These statements by Spate are true to a large extent at the local level, and particularly if we see the role of chiefs only in the context of warfare. But chiefs are part of a social system, indeed the apex of the system, and they cannot help but provide leadership, if only in a social context. As community or village leaders, and especially locally, they are involved closely in the day to day discussion of village activity and in the decisions taken at these levels: although it is agreed that because these are local matters the decisions taken have only a local application. Admittedly such discussions and decisions have a limited value in terms of modern requirements, largely because very often village communities and their leaders are still by and large inward looking and by their very background understandably unable to 'lead on the new ways'.

There is no doubt that in 1959 Fijian society was still largely tradition oriented and the assessment of needs by the Fijians themselves was made largely in the light of the need for social cohesion and solidarity among Fijians as a whole. Spate put it in more definite terms when he said that it is a 'society in which chiefs were chiefs and common men obeyed without question'.<sup>12</sup> In other words such rigid and structured social relations pervaded all aspects of Fijian life. However, this summary of Fijian society and social relationships appears to overlook certain important aspects of society. Fijians regard their society in terms of a fundamental unity between the people and the chiefs. They often refer to this unity as *turaga ni tamata* and *tamata ni turaga* that is to say, the chief belongs to and is of the people, and the people belong to and are of the chief. This unity is cemented by a common bond of allegiance, loyalty and reverence binding together the people and their chief, and is demonstrated by the reciprocal duties each side has for the other. The Fijians realise that they must serve their chiefs and at the same time the chiefs are obliged to look after their people. This is why *lala* or personal service to a chief when current was rendered so that he, as an individual, could fulfil his chiefly role to his people who regard him as the epitome of generosity and kindness. While addressing the Council of Chiefs in 1944 Ratu Sukuna said that:

We need clearly understand, and always be conscious of, the fact that we can only be sure of our people continuing to follow us provided that they appreciate our authority is better than that of anyone else, that as a result of our forethought and energy they prosper—that is, when we cease to rely on status to see us through, and when we prove once more that we possess both the qualifications and the authority to rise to the occasion such as our ancestors possessed.<sup>13</sup>

If it was essential to make such a statement in 1944 it was also relevant in 1959, largely because traditional concepts still formed the basis of leadership in Fijian society. In a sense one can consider Ratu Sukuna's words as seeking to provide inspiration and encouragement to Fijian chiefs to consider constantly the needs of their people, which are broadly synonymous with those of the chiefs themselves. Underlying this call was the belief that if the people prosper, there will be some benefit to the chief who will find his village and *vanua* prosperous and able to meet its obligations and any call on its resources.

It is often held that Fijians obey their chiefs without much question. This is true enough, but the implication often drawn from such a statement is that Fijians, because of their social system and its associated responsibilities, are not encouraged to think individually. There is probably some truth in this belief, but it is unfortunately not the whole truth: for it ignores the consultation and discussion that goes on at all levels of Fijian society on a variety of issues, and which are often keen and intense, between people and chiefs, through accepted procedures, before a firm decision is taken and action follows. Such processes take time, and in some situations they will slow down decision-making. But this is the price which has to be paid, and it is willingly paid, if the people are to be led in areas and directions they accept and appreciate and which will be to the advantage of both the leaders and the led.

These processes of consultation and the associated social units appear to have been given official sanction and status through the separate Fijian administration and its hierarchy of councils and officials. The Fijian administration was created soon after the Cession of Fiji to Queen Victoria in 1874, largely as a means of involving the Fijians in their own government and to minimise costs. A system of indirect rule was instituted whereby Fiji was divided into twelve provinces each in the charge of a native official styled *Roko*. The provinces were subdivided into *tikina* (districts) which were in the charge of *Buli* below whom were the village headmen.<sup>14</sup> These administrative units followed closely the boundaries of traditional socio-political units; they conformed very closely to the *vanua* boundaries.

In effect the Fijian administration was a separate department of the government. At its apex was the Secretary for Fijian Affairs, who was a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils; he was chairman of the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB), which consisted of the five Fijian members of the Legislative Council. The board determined the Fijian Regulations which governed the way the



affairs of the village and Fijian society in general were to be regulated. It also appointed certain staff of the provincial council. However, the *Roko* was appointed by the Governor on the advice of the FAB.

To assist the officials at different levels perform their task is a hierarchy of councils: provincial, *tikina* and village. The provincial council levies rates on all adult males aged 18 to 60 years, and this revenue is spent on items of benefit to the province. The *tikina* council regulates matters such as house building, food gardening and sanitation; it is this council that sanctions the official program of work (see appendix). The village council is non-statutory and concerns itself entirely with village affairs. The district council consists of the *turaga ni koro* of all the villages in the district and the officials. This body nominates representatives to the provincial council which in turn sends representatives to the Council of Chiefs.<sup>15</sup>

In operational terms the whole administrative structure depends on the effectiveness of the village. This is where the role of the village headman and the village chief become critical. In practice the village headman, to be successful, depends on the support he gets from the village chief who wields considerable influence beyond matters of custom and ceremony. Thus the position of village headman is one of worker for everybody, with little prestige; very few want it. And before the Fijian Regulations were abolished in 1967 members of the village failing to follow his instructions were liable to prosecution: an unenviable position in a situation where the web of kinship is so close.

A major objective of the Fijian administration was to allow the Fijians to govern themselves in their own way, at their own pace, and in accordance with their custom. This is why the Fijian regulations followed closely the customary pattern of social relations in the village and the system of subsistence agriculture. Indeed the administration aims to preserve the social system. In a sense this concept is a contradiction or at best a confusion of ideas and objectives in Fijian advancement, I suspect initiated largely by expatriate officers. When Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna reorganised the Fijian administration after the war he envisaged that it would train the Fijians 'in order to fit them progressively and surely, to play an ever increasing part in the development of their country'.<sup>16</sup>

The Fijian administration can also be regarded as a system of local government in view of its role in purely local matters such as sanitation, house building, school construction, and cropping. More significant in this respect is its use of local councils as bodies

in which Fijian representatives discuss matters of local importance and take decisions on them. However, in matters of general application, there is control from headquarters and at times the Fijian seems to have felt the effects of excessive control from the top of his administration. But against this view must be set the aim of maintaining Fijian society, and the administration was the major official vehicle of social continuity. In this regard the administration has to approve applications from Fijians to reside away from the village on a *galala* basis. Such exemption from the responsibilities of the village was not usually easily obtained because it was considered that it would undermine the solidarity of village life and the social system. And so village society and the administration were clearly interdependent. The administration was dependent on the solidarity of Fijian society, on the ties of kinship within the social units composing the society and the obedience to and reverence of chiefs which in turn were applicable also to the officials of the administration, who regarded as their prime responsibility the maintenance of Fijian society as a going concern along traditional lines. This is partly the reason why communal projects were given official support in the economic development of the Fijians in the 1950s. It was considered that this was a way in which Fijian society, as a going concern, still cohesive and viable, could remain intact in the face of contact with external ideas and patterns of behaviour.

Although Fijian society encouraged cohesiveness and family solidarity, these concepts and the values associated with them were particularly relevant in a subsistence and agriculturally oriented society. But the Fijian of 1959 was already seeing the need to be more than a subsistence villager; he wanted to improve his living conditions in the village in the shortest possible time and with the minimum of delay. As Spate has said:

for now with horizons widened by the war and Malaya, with the increased mobility of the bus, with the constant irritant stimulus of the Indians, with new needs for money on all hands, the rot—or the ferment—has set in: most evident around the town and along the road girdle of Viti Levu, but lapping up the Sigatoka, the Wainibuka, the Wainimala like a rising sea . . . he comes up against the unresolved conflict of contract and money against kinship and status.<sup>17</sup>

### **Social, economic and administrative changes**

The ferment that was evidently beginning in 1959 developed further during the next two decades and had a fundamental impact on the

nature of Fijian society. Perhaps one of the most potent influences was the need for items which only a cash income can buy, an income obtained either through wage employment or through cash cropping. This meant that the cohesive social unit was no longer universally binding and the Fijian was seeing the use of his time and effort in terms of his own betterment. The village program of work, which had ordered and determined his labour, to provide both communal and individual wants including his subsistence needs, no longer provided the sort of requirement necessary to improve living conditions in the village. Indeed the very way in which resources were utilised in the villages placed a premium on collective work, which the Fijian was beginning to devalue in terms of his individual and immediate family wants. As an individual and through official encouragement the Fijian was becoming drawn more and more into the web of the cash economy. This led to the process of contracting out of the village situation, if not in residence, certainly in the use of one's time. Many rural Fijians, though continuing to reside in the village, were spending the bulk of their time on their own particular activities aimed at increasing their cash income, which they saw as the only means of obtaining a better life for themselves and their children. There were others who opted out of the village as *galala*, a movement which was officially discouraged, at least villagers wishing to adopt this status did not easily gain official sanction. In the late 1960s this restriction was formally lifted and the villager was left to determine his own activity, but it is interesting to note that when this was done, there was no mass exodus of Fijians out of the village to reside on the land they cultivated. This situation could be attributed to a number of factors. Important among these were the Fijian's belief in communal living, in doing things as a group and in the joys and satisfaction obtained from the fellowship of others in the village. At the same time it was realised that in order to be involved fully in cash crop production, it was not absolutely essential to leave the village. Some Fijians, however, live for a few days a week on their blocks of cultivated land in order to give maximum attention to the land, especially when the land is some distance away from the village. Even in such cases the villager continues to contribute to village activities and plays his part accordingly in the social and ceremonial life of his village.

Where the break with the village is most obvious, this has been through migration to urban areas and places of wage employment. In the majority of cases migration of this sort tends to be permanent and has been encouraged by the availability of wage

opportunities in the urban areas. And when the worker reaches retiring age, he often retires in the town where he has built up real assets and where amenities to which he has become accustomed are available. In a sense, living conditions in the village tend to discourage Fijians from retiring to it. At the same time, a comfortable life in the village on retirement demands resources which may not be so readily available to the Fijian who returns to it. The prospect of having to start afresh, to build from scratch, is not at all encouraging or conducive to retirement in the village for the urban worker. But this does not rule out support by the migrant for village development projects, not only during the period of urban work but also while in retirement away from the village.

Education and new ideals have also had their effect on Fijian society in the last twenty years. Schooling has expanded greatly, especially in the rural areas where there has been a tendency for each *vanua* to want to have its own school. This had led to the imparting of knowledge, and especially the ability to read and write, to most Fijians. With this kind of development there has been a tendency to shape new attitudes: the encouragement of an inquiring mind and a willingness to question tradition, rather than a passive acceptance of fate. In this way the suitability of the social system to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the individual Fijian has been questioned. Education has also given the opportunity to chiefs and people to take advantage of available training facilities. As a result commoners of ability and experience have arisen to contribute to the analysis of issues facing the Fijian people and the formulation of approaches to meet them. The children of two decades ago are the young adults and the young parents of today. They have been brought up in an educational system that has tended to assume that any development must ultimately lead to the adoption of the cultural, social and economic way of life of the nations of North America and Western Europe. Underlying this trend is the belief in the egalitarian ethos of Western democracy. At the same time much support is given to individualism in development efforts. It is only recently that closer thought is being given to the use of the collective village approach to problems of development. Indeed the communal village approach has, to some extent, been discredited in official quarters. But it must not be forgotten that the roads to economic progress are many and varied; the nature of the road followed in any situation must be determined by the particular circumstances of the people concerned, what resources are available and the means of utilising them. Clearly, in the village, the individualistic approach to resource use cannot be the exclusive road to village development and progress.

Means of communication have improved markedly over the last two decades. This has allowed, indeed encouraged, internal mobility between residents of the remote and peripheral parts of Fiji and those of the centre. New ideas have moved freely from one Fijian village to another. The mass media have played an important role in this respect. At the same time modern technology has brought to the remotest villages and settlements in a matter of hours news of happenings in Suva, Lautoka, Tokyo, London and New York. And often such news encourages the kind of thinking that questions authority. No doubt these processes have their effect on the tender and unsophisticated minds of young Fijians, some of whom are likely to question directly and through their actions the legitimacy of traditional authority, particularly if that authority is unable to provide the goods and services necessary to improve living conditions in the village.

An obvious impact of these influences can be seen in the weakening role of Fijian social organisation and kinship ties as means of providing some measure of social welfare to its members. It is true that the Fijian social system provides for the sick and aged; but over the years the cover it provides is becoming thinner and thinner. In the past the tendency was for the system to operate only within the context of the village subsistence economy, and through kinship links. Over the last twenty years the net provided by the social system has become increasingly coarse so that more and more elderly Fijians pass through the net and cannot derive much support and benefit from the system. In other words the kinship links have weakened and the younger generation, with their increased commercial sense, greater individual needs, and commitment to their nuclear family, are either unwilling or unable to look after their aged relatives. In this way the number of rural and urban Fijians receiving direct cash grants from the government to help with their subsistence has increased dramatically from nil in 1959 to 1,500 in 1970, and about 3,000 in 1977.<sup>18</sup> Fijians in receipt of such allowance from government were unheard of twenty years ago. Times have changed, so have Fijian values as they relate to their socio-economic system.

There have been considerable changes of an economic nature which have affected Fijian society during the last two decades. The need for cash has become pressing in many quarters because there are numerous items of daily living that only money can buy. This has led to a greater urge to use land, to increase productivity, and to grow crops that command a good price in the market system. An outcome of this trend is the increase in root crop and vegetable production for urban markets in places near and accessible to Suva

and Lautoka. There has been a renewed vigour by Fijians in sugar cane farming, with much official support, not only in the established cane growing areas but also in the areas of new cane cultivation. All these efforts have intensified the development of an attitude that places a premium on individualism, and an outlook that aims at improving the living conditions of the individual nuclear family. At the same time there are areas and localities where the traditional links are still strong and binding and where the collective and communal approach to resource utilisation and development still has some relevance, especially in remote and inaccessible locations.

In the urban areas Fijians are beginning to show some initiative beyond wage employment. Small building construction units are being operated although none is as successful or as large as those of other races. Others are in the transport field as truck and taxi operators largely on an individual basis. It is only recently that a Fijian taxi co-operative has been established, and it seems to be operating with some success. Small vendors are involved in the retail trade in the Suva market and elsewhere, most of them as middlemen. One or two Fijians own restaurants but none has been outstandingly successful. Nevertheless, these developments indicate the Fijian's willingness to take risks and have a stake in the country's commercial economy, and compete with other races. He is keen to learn, and with some guidance, encouragement, and a lot of hard effort, the future should be bright.

These developments indicate that the Fijian's values and social standards, largely through economic influences, are being modified. Even in the village, he has developed and acquired a sense of money, and he is placing a cash value on his energy and effort. Work that he would do in the village on a reciprocal basis a decade ago is now given a cash value which is being asked for.

These changes led to the questioning of the administrative structure by which the Fijian had been governed since 1945. The developments in the educational and economic fields demanded a more liberal attitude towards Fijian participation in his own government at the village, district and provincial levels. Before 1967 Fijian local government institutions consisted largely of nominated members and officials. The rank and file of the Fijian population had no say in the choice of members of his local government bodies. Realising the need for reform Fijian chiefs and their leaders made drastic changes in the constitution of the provincial councils, which became largely elective, consisting of representatives of the people at village level. The new councils

became locally autonomous with regulation-making powers which previously resided only with the FAB and the Secretary for Fijian Affairs.

One of the major features of the administrative reorganisation was the abolition of the *tikina* council and the post of *Buli*, the official responsible for Fijian affairs in the *tikina*. This move ended the discussion and co-ordination of land use and land development at that level based on the official program of work devised by the *turaga ni koro* of each village within the *tikina*. Indeed the program of work cannot properly be seen as a means of village economic development: nor was it meant to be such. It was more a program of services to be rendered by the villagers to themselves and to their village. At the same time it ensured a minimum pattern of subsistence agriculture. With the disappearance of the program of work villagers' agricultural activities tended to respond more and more to market forces. Where urban markets were accessible, and transport and marketing facilities available, the cultivation of local vegetable produce and root crops was greatly stimulated. Government policy also encouraged land settlement schemes on Fijian land in the two main islands in the 1960s. In the outer islands the movement toward greater land development saw the increased planting of coconuts on new hitherto uncleared land with the payment of a cash subsidy to the occupier/holder. The coconut subsidy scheme became an important feature of village land development in the islands during the 1960s.

For a while after the Fijian administration was reorganised in 1967, there was a tendency in official circles to play down the value and supportive role of Fijian social institutions at the lower levels of society. It did not take long for the people at grassroots to find that the gap between the village people and their provincial council was quite wide. The vacuum left by the *Buli* and the *tikina* council remains unfilled. The provincial staff and councillors have at times found themselves unable to be effective substitutes, largely because they are part of a bureaucracy that has no base in local level institutions. Under these conditions the Fijian people, both rural and urban, took the initiative and utilised existing social affiliations and *vanua* groupings in order to attempt to bridge this gap. The channels of communication used in organising local groups between the village and the province, based largely on the old *tikina*, are traditional in nature and are based on the local social network. The manipulation and use of such networks meant more to the Fijians in terms of social and political organisation and groupings than any administrative system based on bureaucratic

principles of operation. At the same time the people's efforts in these local contexts encouraged the traditional competitive spirit between units which was part of traditional social relations and which the reorganised provincial administration tended to disregard. But these *vanua* efforts seem to be finding a place in the economic, social and political life of the Fijians, and in the context of an independent Fiji.

Spate was obviously quite right when he said that 'the choice, then, is no longer (and has not been for over a century) whether or not to change, but the much more difficult one of how much and how fast'.<sup>19</sup> Over the last twenty years Fijian society has undergone considerable change. In 1959 the society was still largely based on tradition-sanctioned concepts. Fijian councils at various levels were largely nominated bodies and in their composition took little account of developments which were already having an impact on society. These developments were largely of a nature that encouraged the weakening of traditional communal outlook, and tended to glorify the value of individual effort. It was held that the individual must have a direct say in his own affairs through his elected representatives to the various councils that dealt with local matters. All this was an adjustment to the general tendency to loosen the control central authority exercised over village life, based on traditional methods of organisation and covering matters like village clearing and gardening. It was felt, and rightly so, that the Fijian must be given increasingly greater opportunity to use his initiative to run his own affairs, including activities in the economic, social and administrative spheres. In this way the Fijians were beginning to take some useful initiatives, not only in the new market system of contract and competition, but also in the re-examination of social mores and social institutions to serve modern ends.

Social change is accepted by the Fijians; in fact it has been accepted for more than 150 years. To the younger generation, especially in the urban areas, the traditional segments of society appear to have little or no meaning and value. This is because the local residence group and his employment associates are part of his immediate experience. They mean much to him in his daily sustenance. However, in the rural areas, though social change has occurred, the social system continues to display a degree of resilience that ensures social modification in a context of social continuity. The *i tokatoka*, *mataqali*, and the *yavusa* still mean much in the daily lives of the villager.



The major factors of change are largely economic through wage employment and cash cropping which have brought close involvement in the cash economy to an increasing number of Fijians. Through this process thrift and acquisitiveness are being encouraged among many Fijians throughout the country. Although these values are not as yet characteristic of Fijian society generally they are accepted as essential components of Fijian progress in the modern world and are spreading. A new balance in Fijian social relationships seems to be developing; it encourages individual effort and does not appear to be paying much attention or giving much support to the traditional groupings in society. If this trend continues the value of social groups, based on the *mataqali* and the *yavusa*, and the chiefly system could be seriously undermined and weakened. They could ultimately cease to have any real meaning in the day to day existence of Fijians and in the progress of their society into the modern world. In this way they may eventually only serve to mark a stage in Fijian social evolution. As an indicator of Fijian social change, this trend is most marked in the urban areas for the obvious reason of greater contact with new ideas, but more particularly the work situation, which always emphasises the value of individual effort and initiative. In order to guard against this tendency it might be advisable to lay some emphasis on the fundamental unity of the Fijian social order, especially the inseparable and mutually supportive existence of people and chiefs in the social system. Chiefs have particular and specific functions in the social milieu; this should be reciprocated by the people in order to continue the social system as a living entity and as a going concern. Because reciprocity is a basic element in the survival of the Fijian social system, it is vital that both sides fulfil their distinctive roles essential to the *raison d'être* of the system. But this unity cannot remain static; it has to accept the growth of individualism, and this is not difficult, but it must also aim at making the individualist recognise the need for unity in social action at a new and higher level. Indeed it has to assume a dynamic role that adjusts to modern conditions and finds a new meaning and purpose in Fijian life.

## *The Village and the Land*

### **The village scene**

The village is at once the core and foundation of Fijian life; upon it is focused the Fijians' desire and attempt to demonstrate their separate identity and their urge to carve a better place for themselves now and in the future. About 60 per cent of the Fijian population live in villages and every Fijian can be identified with a particular village of origin.

Being the focus of Fijian life, the village inevitably is multifunctional and as such it embraces the whole range of the general pattern of Fijian rural existence. The function of the village as a place of residence is its most obvious role. Nearly all Fijian villages stabilised on their existing sites about the 1930s; very few have changed their locations in recent years, and then only as a consequence of natural hazards which rendered the old sites insecure for human habitation.<sup>1</sup>

The Fijian village can be regarded as a series of related social, economic, and political systems subsisting and operating on a relatively static site. In contrast to the stability of village sites, the social, economic and political systems of the village have been subjected to many and varied influences, most of them external in origin. These influences have wrought much internal change of a socio-political and economic nature which has resulted also in some stress and strain within the systems themselves. The result is a much changed village scene and in some instances some instability has been introduced.

All aspects of village life have been affected to some degree by change and these varied aspects have interacted with one another during the course of their change. On the social plane the village epitomises Fijian society in microcosm: it is essentially a *yavusa* grouping where more than one *yavusa* converge on a common place of residence. Each *mataqali* within the *yavusa* has its own title and function by which it is identified in the social system of the village. There is a strict ordering of *mataqali* within each *yavusa*, in order of seniority. On any major social occasion in the village, or in related villages, the *mataqali* and *yavusa* have clear roles to perform and in

doing so, they follow well defined procedures and lines of communication based on kinship and affinal links. Decisions in these matters rest largely with the elders, particularly the *turaga ni mataqali* and the *turaga ni yavusa*. Because of social links, the village is very much a cohesive unit of organisation, and any matter of social import affecting a particular segment of the village soon becomes a matter in which the entire village is involved. No member of the village will find any difficulty in identifying the particular connection which gives him authority and an obligation to be associated with the particular occasion and will make every effort to contribute to the fund of social valuables demanded by the occasion. Such involvement would be based on descent, common residence, reciprocity, and marriage. Fijians take joy and pride in doing things as a group, and will do their utmost to show their position and relationship in the social system when particular social circumstances call for it. Although at times such effort will dig deeply into savings, the solidarity of the kinship units and associated ties, many of which are strengthened affinally, will demand that such savings are used. It is believed also that the time will come when one's relatives will face similar situations and reciprocate, and to count one's pennies on such occasions might be considered socially mean and indicative of socially small-hearted men.



Plate 1 A typical Fijian village

Following Spate's report, it was widely held that social obligations were a major disincentive to saving and thrift among Fijians.<sup>2</sup> The view was held that social obligations were burdensome and served as a major obstacle to Fijian economic progress. Despite this view, the support Fijians have for their social responsibilities and associated obligations both in the village and in the town has not weakened. Indeed greater economic development in the rural areas during the past two decades has tended to enhance the Fijian's ability to meet and thus strengthen such obligation. And because such social obligations are part and parcel of the Fijian identity it is most unlikely that they will cease to be part of Fijian life. The form they take may change but they are unlikely to disappear completely, if at all, in the years ahead. If anything, their place in the village social milieu has tended to strengthen, particularly after the onslaught of attacks by various outside commentators in the 1960s, who observed that such social obligations were a drag on Fijian economic advancement.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that the Fijians would prefer not to erode features of their distinctive identity by shedding these aspects of their social order, even if this means a greater effort in the economic sphere. And indeed there have been tremendous efforts in the economic field in

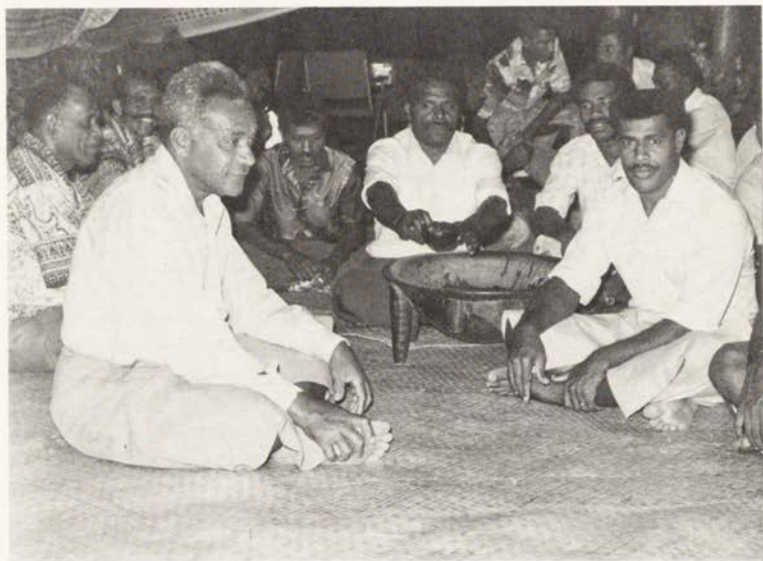


Plate 2 A village meeting

the rural areas in recent years, but this has not been accompanied by a diminution in the frequency of activities of social obligation which have engulfed the whole village.

Various observers have commented that village elders' control over their people has tended to weaken over the years in the wake of individualism. The growth of individualism cannot be disputed and its effect has penetrated almost every aspect of Fijian life. However, it would be quite misleading to conclude that because of this trend, Fijians generally tend to ignore the call of their village elders, particularly those of the *turaga ni mataqali* and the *turaga ni yavusa*. For very obvious reasons, Fijians who have left the village for employment in urban areas cannot be contacted so easily by village elders. For one thing it is not always easy to track down such migrants and consequently they may never get to know about the elders' plans for village development. However, when they ultimately learn of the elders' call, they will not let it go unheeded. This means that to regard urban migration by individual Fijians as a necessary symptom of the weakening hold elders have over their people is to draw a hasty conclusion which can be quite misleading.



Plate 3 Village garden, dalo crop

It does not necessarily follow that if a Fijian has left the village in search of employment in the urban areas he has ignored his own social system and has ceased to play his role, however intermittently, in that system. To draw this conclusion would be to make the kind of interpretation that is indicative of a shallow understanding of the Fijian mind. Indeed urban employment has tended to strengthen the Fijian's ability to participate in numerous social occasions demanding the involvement of his village and his wider social affiliation.

The influence of elders on the people of their village may be seen most clearly on the young people, especially the early school leavers. Twenty years ago, such young people left school at classes 6 to 8; many never received any secondary education. When they left school in those days and returned to the village they were expected to provide the necessary labour in the home and for the village community. Their job was to fetch food and firewood, and to do numerous chores around the home, including the preparation and serving of *yaqona* to the adults and elders. In the past young people have accepted this mode of existence as part of their training to become good villagers; perhaps some of them may have regarded it as an unavoidable penalty for not doing so well at school. During village meetings and discussions the youths were not expected to speak their mind; adults and elders were supposed to do all the talking; the young people were expected to implement the decisions reached in these discussions and particularly those in which the village is involved.

Today with rising standards all round we find in most villages a different kind of young person. He is invariably better educated than his counterpart of twenty years ago; he has been in contact with outside ideas for a longer period and more frequently; he may have had some schooling away from his home district. All this has introduced new behaviour patterns in the village, some of them socially unacceptable. In many instances this has resulted from the excessive consumption of alcohol in the village leading to brawls and injury and the subsequent patching up of the strained relations in the normal, socially acceptable manner, by the presentation of *yaqona* or *tabua*.

At village meetings, young people are no longer the silent group they used to be. Perhaps they are aware of their rights and are ready to have their say in the welfare of the village. However, they continue to be the village 'work-horses', as in the past. On the whole, all this is a healthy development, provided it is guided into the proper channels of activity. This guidance is the responsibility

of the elders, who, in performing this function, need all the support and tact they can get. Not only is there a generation gap, with varying aspirations between the youths and elders of the village, they may see the role and objectives of village development in different perspective. But if views on village development differ, they are probably not fundamentally at variance because individual objectives which young people are likely to emphasise can strengthen the overall village goals which elders are likely to emphasise more frequently.

The re-organisation of the Fijian administration in the late 1960s tended to play down and indeed ignore the role of the elders in the welfare of the village. Perhaps they were taken for granted, if they were not regarded as an inevitable element in the development process based on the effort of the individual. It soon became clear that they were a real force in the village scene, and in a situation where the organisation of the village ceased to be directed from the top through the *Buli* and the *turaga ni koro*, the villagers turned to their elders, who were not found wanting in providing the necessary guidance and leadership at that level. This leadership expressed itself in various ways, depending on the circumstances of the particular situation. Where village elders have been formally and ceremonially installed in traditional leadership roles in the normal manner, they have tended generally to provide the necessary guidance and direction to village activity. Where elders have not been formally installed, the locally acknowledged traditional leader is always consulted and unmistakably plays a critical role in village affairs.

Every village in Fiji is part of a *vanua* which formed the basis of the *tikina* administration up to 1945. After World War II when the Fijian administration was restructured, the old *tikina*, based on *vanua* groupings, were amalgamated to form the new and enlarged *tikina*. As a consequence of this re-organisation and the changes after 1967, which were based largely on local government principles, the *turaga ni vanua* were eclipsed, and their political powers seem to have waned as a result. These changes may have undermined their authority over their people, because the new bureaucracy tended to ignore the traditional basis of society and the place of traditional leaders within it. But this is not to say they have lost influence completely. They may have lost influence with the administration, because of amalgamation which lumped together a number of *vanua* in the one *tikina*, but in *vakavanua* matters they very much held their own. And most definitely in matters affecting land, they cannot be ignored by the

administration, which will continue to find it necessary to consult them and obtain their support in all major matters affecting the *vanua*. To ignore them in such matters would be to put the particular issue in some jeopardy, especially if the authorities need the people's support in order to implement a particular project.

Leadership at the village level is still very much based on the traditional hierarchy; the village chief is still very much the village leader. His is supported in this task by the *turaga ni koro*, who is the link with the outside world, passing on opinion and decision to and from the village. The authority of the village chief is based on traditional loyalties and allegiances, which are usually most explicit where the village chief has been formally installed. Rights and obligations acknowledged and observed between the chief and his people witness this special relationship. The villagers have given him the right and authority to decide for the welfare of the people, and his decisions in such matters are never questioned. The *turaga ni koro* on the other hand was not a true leader; he was a representative of the people, often their spokesman to the administration. He was also the agent of the administration and passed down its decisions to the village council. In order to carry out his work in the village effectively, he depended much on the support of the village chief.

The re-organisation in 1965-7 cast some doubt on the need for a *turaga ni koro*. In many cases the remuneration which the provincial council paid the *turaga ni koro* ceased, and it was thought that, somehow, the village would find a way of organising its activities. There appeared to have been some confusion as to the need for a *turaga ni koro*, and especially when the provincial council found it impossible to meet their remuneration. Without a definitive directive on the matter most villages eventually found it necessary to revive the position of *turaga ni koro*, if only because they needed someone to indicate their aspirations to the administration. There was also the need to co-ordinate village activities, and this role fell on the *turaga ni koro*. Although there was some uncertainty about the position of the *turaga ni koro*, that of the village chief admitted no room for doubt. He was always there, by ceremony and tradition, and his position tended to strengthen, particularly after independence when there was a tendency to examine and believe in the value and role of traditional leaders in the administration of Fijian affairs. This assessment led to the conclusion that traditional leaders are still a force in the village scene. They should be brought into contact with the machinery of government, if only to be consulted and their support



sought, and especially in the field of development. Their involvement in a facilitating manner in the activities of government could be mutually beneficial, particularly to the people whose aspirations are likely to be fully aired in this way, and also through the elective system of the councils and the administration. By this procedure maximum consultation can be ensured and the sorts of development work undertaken can confidently be regarded as in accordance with the aspirations of the people.

### The effects of land laws

The law on native land prescribes that 'native lands shall be held by native Fijians according to native custom as evidence by usage and tradition'.<sup>4</sup> Any reference to native owners is a reference to the *mataqali* or other division or subdivision of the Fijian people having the customary rights to occupy and use any native lands. The bulk of native land in Fiji is owned by the *mataqali*. However, there are large tracts of land held by the *i tokatoka*, a subdivision of the *mataqali*, and the *yavusa*, a collection of *mataqali* based on patrilineal descent, or they might belong to the descendants of a particular man or woman (known as *kovukovu* or encumbrances on *mataqali* land) and may have been given as dowry or in recognition of some special circumstances.<sup>5</sup> Thus it is possible that in a village all these social units are also the landowning units, but with the *mataqali* as the unit owning the bulk of the land and through which the villagers lay customary and proprietary claim.

Soon after Cession in 1874, the colonial government established a Native Lands Commission with the task of determining the ownership of land by Fijians. Thus started the long and arduous process of investigating each and every claim, and weighing all evidence, and in the end determining the ownership of each piece of land. In most cases untangling the evidence, which was at times conflicting, became quite a complex task. The work took more than fifty years to finalise.

The various disadvantages of the *mataqali* as the basis of ownership of Fijian land were noted by Spate in 1959;<sup>6</sup> these are still applicable today. Most notable among these is the disparity in the amount of land held by the *mataqali*, a fact which takes no account of the *mataqali* population and the number of cultivators in it. Also the distribution of energetic men and women within the village bears no rational relation to the distribution of the land among the *mataqali*. Some *mataqali* with large tracts of land often lack the enthusiasm needed to utilise their land quite apart from the relevant

know-how; where enthusiasm and keenness abound, the *mataqali* may be hedged in by a small and strictly prescribed *mataqali* land.

In 1959 Spate considered two specific cases—Draubuta in Tokatoka, Tailevu Province, and the old *tikina* of Vuna, Taveuni—to demonstrate the limitations imposed by *mataqali* holdings. The position then and in 1970 is set out in Table 3. By 1977 only 7.5 hectares was leased in Draubuta<sup>7</sup> compared to 53.8 hectares or about one-third of the total land in 1959. This marked decline in leases is the direct result of the reserves policy, which in most cases allowed whole blocks of *mataqali* holdings to be reserved for the owners.<sup>8</sup> The disparity in the distribution of population and *mataqali* holdings which Spate noted in 1959 has persisted into the 1970s. The sole surviving member of *mataqali* Matauta owns 5 per cent of all the land. *Mataqali* Marakirua, Nameremere, Nalecava and Nabunitu, with 30 per cent of the land made up 55 per cent of the population in 1970. These disparities could be evened out somewhat if land were owned by the *yavusa*. In Draubuta *yavusa* Naibatisuli with 65 per cent of the land made up 50 per cent of the population in 1970; *yavusa* Nalecava had 25 per cent of the land and 26 per cent of the population; while *yavusa* Burenivalu with 9 per cent of the land had 22 per cent of the village population. Although the disparity would not be evened out completely through *yavusa* ownership the situation would be a slight improvement on ownership of land on a *mataqali* basis.

Between 1959 and 1970 the population of the proprietary units in Draubuta increased by more than 60 per cent, giving an average growth rate of more than 5 per cent per annum in eleven years. The obvious result in terms of land distribution is the reduction in the amount of land available per head of population. This has dropped from 0.85 hectare per head in 1959 to 0.53 hectare in 1970. This order of decline can be seen in nearly all the *mataqali* in the village. These figures demonstrate beyond doubt the land shortage villages like Draubuta, and others in the Rewa delta and plain, are already facing, despite the fertility of the soils, which in many places need to be drained properly (a time consuming and expensive operation) before their full agricultural potential can be realised. It is little wonder that the Native Lands Commissioner recommended that no less than 112 hectares out of a total of 154 hectares be put in reserve in Draubuta, following the claim of the native owners. But as Spate has noted, Draubuta is fortunate because it is close to Suva where urban jobs provide alternative means of livelihood for its rapidly increasing population.

In the old *tikina* of Vuna Spate noted that the disparity between population and *mataqali* holdings was worse: 33 per cent of the population owned 8 per cent of the land in 1959.<sup>9</sup> However, since 1964 *mataqali* Vusaratu and Waimakilu allowed 280 hectares in each of their holdings to be subdivided for leasing to members of their *mataqali* and to others. This is the result largely of the forward-looking and sound leadership of the Tui Vuna and the Tui Waimakilu and their people, whose decision to subdivide the land has given the tenants, mostly Fijians, the security and incentive they need for greater land development. It would seem that in Vuna at least Fijian landowners have taken the advice that 'land you cannot profitably use is not worth keeping; it brings you in nothing but abuse and ill-will: have it leased at economic rentals'.<sup>10</sup> There was also a feeling amongst members of these Vuna *mataqali*, especially Vusaratu, that their traditional leadership position in the social hierarchy demanded that they make some of their land available to the less fortunate members of the *vanua*. This was probably the best way out of a difficult situation of land inequality which even ownership on a *yavusa* basis could not solve. In this sort of situation only subdivision and allocation to those with little or no land can redress the imbalance which, in the future, could lead to dissatisfaction, unrest and instability.

The division of the village land on a *mataqali* basis has tended to compartmentalise the village population into rigid and exclusive groups which could not have been envisaged at the time this social unit was adopted by the Council of Chiefs in 1881 as the basis of ownership of Fijian land. At the same time it introduced rigidity that never existed previously in the use of Fijian land at village level. Fijian subsistence cultivation today clearly illustrates the flexibility that existed in native land tenure before the codification of ownership based on the *mataqali*, so that villagers do not always or only make their gardens on their own *mataqali* land. Gardens were and are still intermixed, and this demonstrates the social, affinal, economic and political ties between the people of the village. Such intermixing of gardens, known as *kana veicurumaki* or intercultivation, shows not only the flexibility of the old system, but is at the same time an expression of the communal system as it affects the use of land. Intercultivation by members of different *mataqali* and different *yavusa* still applies today, but mainly though not entirely for subsistence purposes. Perhaps the incidence of intercultivation will diminish in the future, especially when *mataqali* land is used for cash cropping even without a formal lease.

Table 3  
 Land Distribution by *Mataqali* in Draubuta, Tailevu Province, and in Vuna, Taveuni Island

	Total area (ha)	Population 1959 %	Population 1970 %	Ha per head 1959	Ha per head 1970
<b>DRAUBUTA</b>					
<i>Yavusa Naibatisuli</i>					
<i>Mataqali Nasiganadua</i>	13.6	6	11	2.3	1.24
Naqara	8.8	2	8	2.3	1.10
Marakiru	29.2	42	78	0.7	0.37
Naividugu	24.8	10	11	2.5	2.25
Nameremere	7.2	22	22	0.3	0.30
Natauta	7.2	1	1	7.2	7.20
Tai	9.6	16	16	0.6	0.60
	<u>100.4</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>0.68</u>
		65.2	55	50.9	
<i>Yavusa Nalecava</i>					
<i>Mataqali Nalecava</i>	5.6	32	14	0.2	0.40
Nakiova	9.2	7	19	1.3	0.48
Nakolata	14.8	6	43	2.5	0.34
Burekalou	7.2	1	—	7.2	—
	<u>38.8</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>0.51</u>
		25.2	25.6	26.3	
<i>Yavusa Burenivatu</i>					
<i>Mataqali Levuka</i>	7.6	6	17	1.2	0.45
Nabunitu	3.2	24	40	0.1	0.08
Naviteitei	4.0	5	9	0.8	0.44
	<u>14.8</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.22</u>
		8.6	19.4	22.8	
Total	154	180	289	100.0	0.85
		100	100.0	100.00	0.53

Table 3 (Cont'd)

	Total area (ha)	%	Population 1959	%	Population 1970	%	Ha per head 1959	1970
<b>VUNA</b>								
<i>Yavusa Yuna</i>	649.4*	52.8	80	12.7	135	14	8.1	4.81
<i>Mataqali Vusaratu</i>	398.8	32.6	102	16.7	160	16.6	3.9	2.49
<i>Waimakihu</i>	1,048.2	85.4	182	29.4	295	30.6	5.7	3.55
<i>Mataqali Navesi</i>	29.6		44		57		0.6	0.52
<i>Vuanimakita</i>	15.6		55		75		0.2	0.20
<i>Waimiyaku</i>	34.2		137		229		0.2	0.15
	79.4	6.45	234	37.6	361	37.5	0.34	0.22
	1,127.6	91.85	416	67.0	656	68.1	2.71	1.72
<i>Yavusa Kanacea</i>								
<i>Mataqali Nabua</i>	56.7		84		134		0.6	0.42
<i>Soso</i>	32.4		64		42		0.5	0.77
<i>Lomanikoro</i>	7.6		59		131		0.1	0.05
	96.7	8.15	207	33.0	307	31.9	0.46	0.31
<b>Total</b>	1,224.3	100.0	623	100.0	963	100.0	1.96	1.27

\*Excludes mountain block of more than 5,600 hectares.

Sources: *Spat Report*, pp. 10-12; Native Lands Commission.

Such a state of affairs would be admirably suited to a static situation where the whole economy and society were in equilibrium and based on subsistence production. But this is no longer the case here as elsewhere, for Cession in 1874 implied the formal acceptance of social change and a money economy. And indeed the new economy has tended to intensify the disparity in landholdings on a *mataqali* basis. Where the leasing of their own land by members of the *mataqali* has been encouraged and without a properly planned subdivision, there has been a tendency to pick the best land and those areas nearest and most accessible to the village. This has left unused those areas furthest from the village and least fertile. In consequence a degree of land scarcity has been artificially induced into the village system. The solution may lie in a re-parcelling of land for agricultural use that will redistribute land to villagers more equitably. This does not necessarily mean lease though this might be desirable, but it does mean the allocation of usage rights over specific areas of land to family units. This notion would tend to make the idea of basing landownership on the *yavusa* quite sensible because, on the whole, this larger unit will undoubtedly be able to cushion effectively and even out to a large extent the inequalities of landholdings on a *mataqali* basis.

### **Reserved land**

The policy of reserving a proportion of Fijian land for use only by the owners has been criticised by a number of writers. Spate has said that land reservation is an 'over-protective device' and that 'reserves might become merely static defences for an inert garrison'.<sup>11</sup> Watters claimed that reserves were created 'to allow them to hold enough of the land that they own to compete effectively with Indians', and that it is 'not in the long-term interests of the Fijians themselves, as it insulates them from Indian competition on the land'.<sup>12</sup>

If one looks at the reserves policy simply from the standpoint that regards land as a commodity that should be made available in the open market, then it is not difficult to see the logic of the criticisms noted above. Thus it can be argued that by reserving a proportion of Fijian land one may not be encouraging increased agricultural production, particularly in areas once leased to others which have fallen into reserve and have not been cultivated by the Fijian owners. This would appear to be a reasonable criticism, but at the same time there is need to assess carefully the reasons why such lands are not in continuous cultivation, for some of the factors of non-commercial use of such lands could very well be

beyond the control of the Fijian owners of the land. Land availability is not the only factor of production. However, this and other criticisms would appear to ignore the needs and interests of the Fijian owners. At the same time it appears that the basic and initial reason for reserving Fijian land has been overlooked.

The beginnings of the reserves policy go back to the 1930s when the colonial government continually urged Fijians to use their land to best advantage. In opening the meeting of the Council of Chiefs held at Suva on 18 November 1930 the Governor said:

it is necessary that you should reserve to yourselves sufficient lands for your present and future needs. In some districts the land around your villages has been leased and your people who now desire to plant more extensively find themselves without sufficient areas.<sup>13</sup>

The council responded by formally resolving:

that this council is in complete accord with the proposal to reserve, in each province, sufficient lands for present and future needs of the natives and to prohibit the leasing of land so reserved.<sup>14</sup>

To this the Governor replied:

I regard the reservation of land for your use of the greatest importance, and I trust that when you return to your provinces you will assist the Government in defining the boundaries of these reserves.<sup>15</sup>

The same resolution was passed again in 1933, and in 1936; largely as a result of the powerful and convincing arguments of Ratu Sukuna, the Council of Chiefs overwhelmingly agreed:

that it would be in our best interests if native lands, at present lying idle, were put to use; that the amount of land needed for the proper development of the Native owners be determined: this step would indicate the amount left over; that all land not so required be handed over to the Government to lease on our behalf.<sup>16</sup>

This motion was passed by the council and was incorporated in the Native Land Trust Ordinance 1940.

It is clear from the above that the reserves policy was formulated initially to ensure that the owners' interests were safeguarded. And at the time this was done, it was vital if Fijian fear of the demand

for land apparent from the increasing population of non-Fijians was to be allayed. As owners of the land Fijians must have a right to set aside some of their land for their own use; to ignore this right would be to render the concept of ownership meaningless. An equally important element in the reserves policy which many outside commentators can easily overlook is that unreserved land becomes available for leasing by non-Fijians. Without a reservation policy it is doubtful if Fijian landowners would have readily leased their land to non-Fijians, as they have done during the last thirty years or so. It is not always realised that of the 1.48 million hectares of native land, a little more than 0.92 million hectares or 63 per cent have been made available for leasing to non-Fijians and are not reserved.<sup>17</sup> By 1975 420,446 hectares were already leased and the total is certain to increase in the future.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, an assurance to the owners that sufficient land had been set aside for their own use is an important factor in the approval of leases to non-Fijians on native land. At the same time in recent years specific areas of reserved land have been dereserved by the NLTB with the approval of the owners for the use of non-Fijians. These are aspects of Fijian generosity that few people have noted; but they need to be taken into account when evaluating the policy on native land in general and the reserves policy in particular.

In terms of the historical background to the reserves policy, Spate's notion of 'over-protection' cannot be completely justified. To set aside sufficient land for one's own use is merely to look after one's own interest; and in so doing the land needs of others are being readily provided for, because in leasing land outside reserves the NLTB does not have to consult the owning unit as a legal requirement. Moreover, in the last decade the board has dereserved a not inconsiderable amount of native land in order to accommodate the needs of non-Fijians. At the same time the reservation of native land stopped in 1967 and no further areas of Fijian land have been reserved. The purpose of reservation suggested by Watters does not appear to tally directly with the reason attributed to the policy by the colonial government, and the chiefs who approved it. It would seem to this writer that the particular objective assumed by Watters can be regarded as a modern day interpretation that seems logical in the context of competing demand for good land by all races, in a situation where first class land is scarce. The point about the insulation of Fijians from Indian competition seems less easy to justify, because acceptance of this contention would appear to ignore the fact that



Fijians can and do compete with Indians and others in the leasing of non-reserved land.

An important point regarding the reserves policy that should not escape notice is the state of the Fijian economy at the time the policy was formulated. During the 1930s the Fijian economy was largely subsistence in nature. The Fijians' main cash crops were bananas and copra. The potential of other agricultural pursuits were pointed out to them. The Governor said to the Council of Chiefs in 1936: 'Yours is a very rich agricultural country, and you are not making full use of it. There are many other countries without your soil and your rainfall where the natives are ahead of you as producers'.<sup>19</sup> He pointed out also that there was potential for tobacco, rice, and the keeping of cattle, pigs and poultry. Thus the reservation of Fijian land looked not only at the needs of indigenous subsistence cultivation at the time, but also at the need for cash cropping and mixed farming by Fijians in the years ahead. And in this context and in terms of its initial objectives, and with a broad historical perspective, the policy cannot be regarded as reactionary and backward-looking.

### **Attitude to land**

When Fijians speak of their land, they invariably refer to it as *na qau vanua* or my land, or the land that sustains me and from which I eat. The meaning of this statement is far wider than it might at first appear because its meaning implies that the land has fed its owners for past generations, and it will do so in future; on it depends their entire livelihood. But Fijian land is more than a resource; it is regarded as a homeland, and means of identity. The Fijian's land is part of his being, for not only does his land belong to him, it is also of him. This is why it is often said that the land is the people, the two are interwoven closely and cannot be separated completely. Hence the belief that many Fijians tend to accept that if Fijian land were broken up the people and their society would disintegrate. These notions give an indication of the deep attachment Fijians have for their land; even if a Fijian has been away from his village for a long time, he knows that his *mataqali* land is still there and he can return to it if necessary. And so Fijians regard their land as their last tangible asset remaining in their control, and this helps to explain their swift reaction to any attacks on existing Fijian land laws.

All villages in Fiji are located on land which belongs to certain members of the village. Such land has been reserved for village use

as house sites and for other communal uses. The reservation of land for this purpose is a source of village social cohesion and solidarity. In such situations the owners of village land are normally ready to allocate additional land for village extension if necessary. The identification of land owned by each proprietary unit within the village has led to village solidarity *vis-à-vis* other villages. The boundaries and use of the villagers' land are watched closely by its members and these are potential sources of intra and inter-village competition and friction. Each village and proprietary unit within the village unobtrusively guards its own land from use by others without properly obtained permission.

Where land is registered in the name of the *mataqali*, through tradition and use each *i tokatoka* claims ownership and usage rights over certain portions of the *mataqali* land. This is understood and clearly recognised by members of the *mataqali*, and is in recognition of the traditional position of the *i tokatoka* within the *mataqali*.

In all this the elders still have a central role to play. They still hold considerable influence in terms of *mataqali* activity and cohesion; indeed they provide the unifying factor which binds the *mataqali* together. This applies particularly to land matters, where *mataqali* elders speak of *mataqali* solidarity. And if such attitudes are translated into land matters, they often mean that the elder's permission must be obtained, along with that of other members of the *mataqali*, if their land or any portion of it is to be leased to others. Where *mataqali* land is large in relation to its adult members this permission is not difficult to obtain; but it is often the reverse when *mataqali* land is small in area. *Mataqali* elders are often blamed for the refusal of permission to lease *mataqali* land, and because of this they are wrongly labelled as opposed to progress and development. This view seems one-sided and therefore inadequate because it appears to see the matter only from the viewpoint of the person wishing to lease *mataqali* land. It fails to take account of the interests of other members of the *mataqali* including the young and those yet unborn for whom the elders must provide some guidance and protection in land matters. And for this important role, *mataqali* elders are often wrongly criticised for placing obstacles in the way of Fijian land development. This of course is not entirely the case, for elders, by their very position, are guardians of *mataqali* land. However, it is often argued that the development of Fijian land will benefit the *mataqali*. This is debatable in view of the possibility of over-dependence by the owners on rent money if the bulk of their land is leased to others.

All this does not deny the existence within the village of a spirit of individualism, fostered mainly by the demands of the cash economy and new social considerations, like education, which villagers must now face, in the interest of themselves and their children. Villagers must provide for the sustenance of their families, on an individual basis, by and large feeding mainly from communally owned *mataqali* land. They must find cash in order to feed, clothe, and educate their children. These are individual responsibilities and are additional to those which are essential for communal living in a village and subsisting on *mataqali* land. It is the impact of the new social responsibilities and the lure of the cash economy which seem to provide the strongest incentives for individualism within the village. The physical expression of this trend in economic terms is the individual homestead of the cultivator on the land he tills. This has not developed as a strong movement attracting Fijian villagers throughout the country even after compulsory labour for village clearing and house building was abolished following the administrative re-organisation in 1966. It seems clear that the villager prefers to meet and shoulder all his responsibilities within the context of his village existence. He sees his village as the basis of his resource mobilisation and the crux of all this must rest on sound leadership, efficient organisation of effort and allocation of resources within the village.

#### **Variety within rural Fijian society**

The increasing variety and differentiation within rural Fijian society is not unexpected. This variety is a result of many things. It is associated with the relationship between population and rural resources, their availability, the nature of these resources, their degree of access to market and marketing facilities, and the relative attraction of resources in the new cash economy. Thus there is no longer a unified Fijian social order which is undifferentiated in economic terms, even in the rural areas. Because there has tended to be marked variance between resources and aspirations, the internal differentiation of Fijian rural society has been heightened. One of the more obvious differences between rural Fijians exists amongst those residents of the large and high volcanic islands, rich in soil and forest resources, and those of the low coral islands, and the much smaller islands of volcanic origin. On the poorer islands there is an immediate restriction to the limits of resources available, and the threshold of their exploitation on the small volcanic islands and low coral islands is easily reached. This has encouraged not only emigration of population from these islands to the richer areas

of the large and high volcanic islands, particularly Viti Levu and Vanua Levu and their respective urban centres, but also the marginalisation of isolated, low coral and small volcanic islands poor in resources. These areas remain in the backwater of economic development on a national basis. Many of the small islands of eastern Fiji fall into this predicament, which is likely to be a source of some frustration in the face of development around them and in the context of increasing wants, which are likely to be satisfied mainly through participation in the cash economy.

In the Eastern Division one finds islands which are diverse and widely contrasted in resource base and in their utilisation. The island of Fulaga in the Lau group is of raised limestone with very little planting land. The soil is poor, rainfall is relatively low and water is scarce. The sea is a major resource; the lagoons and reefs provide fish in plenty. The people of Fulaga belong to a carpenter clan of high repute, and this skill they have exploited well. They are noted for carved bowls and platters which in the past were bartered for food from the nearby islands. Today they carve various artifacts for the tourist industry. Partly because of their difficult environment, the shortage of good farming land, and the attraction of large centres for jobs and social amenities, there has been much emigration from Fulaga in recent times. In 1956 the total population of Fulaga was 577; this had dropped to 525 in 1966<sup>20</sup> and by 1976 the total was around 500.

The situation in Kabara is much the same; it is a raised coral island, whose planting is limited to the volcanic outflow on the north-western side of the island. The people of Kabara are renowned for wood carving, especially of canoes, *tanoa*, and other articles made of *vesi* (*Intsia bijuga*). Although Kabara's population rose from 636 in 1956 to 733 in 1966,<sup>21</sup> it is quite likely that there has been a decline, or at least a reduced rate of increase in the decade 1966-76; for as Bedford has noted, 40 per cent of the households enumerated on the islands in 1966 were not there in 1975, and many of those who have left the island were under 15 years of age in 1966.<sup>22</sup> Because these movements are made by family units and by young people who are likely to find life outside the island more attractive, the movements are likely to be long-term. The problems of land shortage one finds in Fulaga and Kabara can be taken as representative of most of the Lau group. This has led to considerable outmigration in recent years.

In the Lomaiviti group, the island of Koro is not only large; its soil is also quite fertile, being largely volcanic in origin. The island's central plateau offers much potential for development

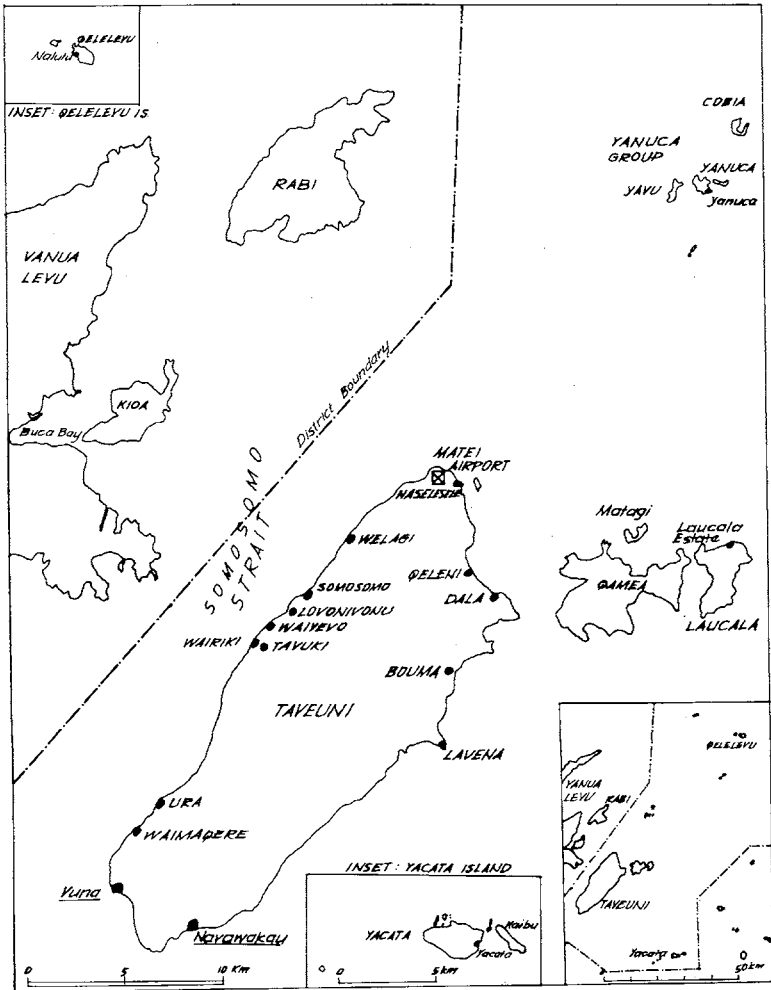
which would depend not only on internal communication, but also and perhaps more importantly on easy and regular contact with and access to outside markets and centres of population. There is no overall land shortage though the disparity between population and the land owned (by *mataqali*) is accommodated by the availability of usufructuary rights on other lands.<sup>23</sup>

At least the environmental resources of Koro Island do not encourage outward migration. Population has continued to increase from 1,940 in 1946 to 2,843 in 1966 and 3,199 in 1976.<sup>24</sup> Resources are more than ample to provide an adequate standard of living. Most houses on the island are built of permanent materials like timber, concrete and roofing iron. This is an indication of its relatively high level of cash income derived largely from copra and *yaqona*. In Nacamaki village for example income from copra stood at \$38.20 per capita in 1975-6 and *yaqona* at \$69.90 which compared with \$37.00 from copra for Taveuni District in 1975.<sup>25</sup> These figures may be compared with the income from copra from other areas. Within Taveuni District (Map 4), Taveuni Island itself averaged \$26.00 per capita in 1975. Qamea was \$60.00, Yacata \$74.00, Laucala \$102.00, Yanuca \$172.00 and Qelelevu reached \$193.00 per capita from copra alone.<sup>26</sup>

There is little doubt that such income variations are a major basis for differentiation between Fijians in the copra areas. It is also the kind of differentiation that can be accentuated by wage employment, particularly when this is available only or to a large extent in some copra areas.

In the islands of the maritime provinces and in southern Vanua Levu and Taveuni, copra is the mainstay of the cash economy. The bulk of Fijian copra is produced from palms which are more than fifty years old and are part of communally owned groves. In the 1960s the colonial government, in an attempt to revitalise the copra industry, embarked on a coconut subsidy scheme whereby native land was subdivided on paper, boundaries were shown on the ground, lease documents prepared and issued to encourage Fijian landowners to plant more coconuts. Cash subsidies of \$6 an acre were paid for fresh land clearing and coconut planting, and \$3 an acre for the clearing and thinning of existing groves. But in many cases new groves were not properly maintained; they were difficult to reach and in the end they remained unattended. There was another interesting problem; the Fijians involved in the scheme had to take out leases, in many cases on their own land; they argued that they should not pay any rent on such land. They asked: Why should we pay rent to ourselves? They did not seem to realise that

by leasing *mataqali* land they are denying other members of the *mataqali* the use of the portion they have leased, for at least thirty years. As a result rent arrears on such lands have accumulated over the last ten years or so.<sup>27</sup> Today in many parts of the outer islands overgrown young coconut palms testify to the difficulties



Map 4 Taveuni District

associated with a scheme that, in order to be a complete success, required that adequate thought be given to the interrelation of the many and varied factors of production. Lack of access and fluctuations in price apart, the place of residence of the new cultivator was uncertain. It was assumed in many quarters that the scheme would encourage individualism and individual settlement amongst villagers. It is clear that it had little of this hoped-for effect: one such scheme established during this period near Suva continues to maintain a thriving secondary forest, while the people who were supposed to develop the area continue to cultivate their garden land from the village.

Economic activity and well-being in the copra areas are tied closely to the rise and fall in the price of copra, with an important effect on the purchasing power of the rural population. In Nacamaki, Koro, income from copra in recent years was as follows:<sup>28</sup>

	\$
1970-71	6,060
1973-74	31,040
1975-76	10,440

After a steady rise in the 1960s, the price of copra rose to an all time high in 1974. This led to a boom in the copra areas. A steady decline came in 1975-6 when prices reached their lowest level since World War II. This led to the introduction of a guaranteed price supported largely by the new economic arrangements with the European Economic Community. But the low prices led to a modification in the land use pattern. Many coconut groves were not maintained, and coconuts from communal groves were not collected and cut into copra regularly. Those who were able to do so turned to other cash crops like *yaqona*.

On the plains and lowlands of south-east Viti Levu, land scarcity is becoming a problem among the Fijian population, fostered in part by the increasing population in recent years and by the nature of the land itself. Though the soil is fertile, it is badly drained in many places. Note for example the following description of a reserve claim by *mataqali* Namara, *yavusa* Naseuvou of Lomainasau, Nakelo in Tailevu:

On the east the land is swampy being very little above high-water level and, except in small patches, of little use for agricultural purposes. The whole is partially covered in light forest. The western half has good cultivable land which could be greatly improved by drainage, if this were economically possible; the natural fall of the locality is eastward . . .<sup>29</sup>

The position has not changed markedly since 1950 when this statement was made. Where possible some rice is grown, but the bulk of Fijian land in these areas is used to grow subsistence crops like *dalo*, cassava and vegetables for local use and for sale in the nearby urban markets of Nausori and Suva, mostly on a weekly basis. Income from this source is not substantial, but it does enable the purchase of some essential items of consumption.

The village of Cautata in Bau *tikina*, Tailevu Province, like Draubuta, seems to have as serious a land scarcity problem. Much of its land is low lying and swampy, requiring costly engineering and drainage works before it can be properly cultivated on a commercial basis. Land per head of population is even less than at Draubuta. It has a large resident population, 412 in 1966, and at least half as many again are *yasa* (migrant in urban areas). Cautata appears to have a very strong sense of social cohesion; and Spate has noted its 'strong sense of individuality as the bridgehead and border fort for Bau'.<sup>30</sup>

Urban employment has become necessary in many villages in the lowlands of Tailevu because of land scarcity, but also because of the ready availability of urban jobs. The proximity of the Suva urban area offers also a ready market to the villages of south-east Viti Levu for the sale of local produce, not only from the land but also the produce of the sea such as fish, sea shells, sea weed, crabs and other crustacea gathered regularly from its shores and estuaries.

In western Viti Levu, cane cultivation both away from the village and on a non-communal basis appears to have been successful. This could well be associated with the efficient marketing and extension services provided by the sugar industry, for without these ingredients, commercial cane production cannot be assured. An interesting feature of Fijian cane production is the apparent success of Fijians from other provinces compared to locals planting cane on individual lease holdings in the established cane areas. This is a clear indication of their acceptance of the regime and requirements of the crop and its proper utilisation.

In between the uncertainty of world prices in the copra industry, and the relative stability and affluence in the sugar industry, there lies a range of rural economic activities in which Fijians play a role, though in some cases it may not be the leading role. Cash cropping for the urban markets of Viti Levu has grown in recent years. This has resulted in increased intensive cultivation of communal land and the development of subdivision for cash cropping for the



supply of food crops and vegetables for the urban markets of Suva, Lautoka, Nadi, Ba and Labasa. Though incomes from these sources may be small compared to those of the sugar cane farmers, the sources are definite, easy to tap and regular, depending largely on the producer's initiative.

Recent developments taken in the rural areas, largely by government, will lead to marked changes in the rural countryside and are certain to lead to greater differentiation, not only on a regional and provincial basis, but also amongst Fijians in the same region. Pine planting in the Western Division has brought into use large tracts of rolling to undulating land once occupied only by grass, scrub and casuarina. Though pine is a long-term tree crop, pine planting is providing cash employment to owners of such agriculturally poor land. The long-term economic interests of the owners of such land are quite certain, and definite economic advantages assured. In the north-eastern part of Viti Levu, a cattle scheme has been initiated on a large-scale system of management and production. Though cattle are the base of economic activity, there is a provision for arable farming and some timber extraction. This is a case where the nature and range of activity are determined mainly by the variety of resources available which can be exploited commercially.

In both these schemes the Fijian owners of the land have an equity in the venture. This is a recent trend that began to be promoted more forcefully in the late 1960s. And now, with a new economic nationalism amongst Fijians, equity participation is the rule rather than the exception in most commercial ventures involving the use of Fijian assets, including land.

Despite all these efforts, some of them directed at encouraging individualism among Fijians, the village is still the focus of Fijian activity, being the major unit of residence. However, this is not to say that the pattern of village development is uniform throughout the country. The nature of village activity, its vigour, and the extent to which the village operates effectively as a unit, must depend on factors such as the extent and diversity of resources available, the ease with which such resources are and can be exploited, opportunities for involvement in the new cash economy, and the ability to come to terms with the demands of the new economy and sound leadership. These are factors which, individually and collectively, make for differentiation between villages throughout Fiji.

**The non-village rural Fijian**

The non-village rural Fijian is a product largely of increasing economic aspirations and widening horizons opening before him. He will be found settling on and cultivating a piece of land to which he may have either legal or customary rights; he may well be a part of a properly designed subdivision and carrying on commercial agriculture as part of a group working to a specific program of production; and he will be found also as an agricultural labourer earning a wage on the farm, and more often than not he has a small patch of garden land given to him by his employer or by the neighbouring Fijian landowners.

The village origin of such Fijians is obvious and indeed most, if not all of them, continue to maintain some contact with their villages. Some make regular pilgrimages to their villages, if their new place of abode is some distance away, and the extent to which contact with the village is maintained seems to depend largely on distance from and ease of contact with the village. But the link with the village is not severed completely. Such Fijians contribute to village fund raising efforts, in addition to their assistance in cash and in kind to their close relatives in the village. However, the degree and frequency of assistance will depend largely on their own resources and what surplus they are able to spare for village kin and village projects.

The non-village rural Fijian is essentially an enterprising individual. He may have felt confined in his activities for self-betterment in the village and consequently looked elsewhere, more often than not away from his own district, for land to cultivate and other economic opportunities. This is very much the case with Fijians in the Waibau and Lomaivuna subdivisions, and at Seaqaqa Cane Development Scheme. The available land, its secure title, and accessible markets for garden produce make these places more attractive than say the resource poor islands of eastern Fiji. The family independence which life in such settlements entails encourages greater effort on the land and greater productivity. Given the infrastructure, marketing facilities, and easy credit, Fijians on such land should be able to improve their lot considerably. What is in their favour is their readiness to venture into the unknown to take the risks associated with beginning a new life in initially unknown surroundings. To succeed, it requires something of the frontier spirit that creates something from nothing.

Where Fijians congregate in some numbers in such non-village localities, there is a tendency for some communal activities to

emerge. These include church services and associated activities, women's welfare groups, and recently a local political organisation affiliated to the main central body, the Fijian Association. However, despite all this, the economic life of such Fijians is clearly based on individual effort and thrift. If he cannot swim he will sink and be washed back to the village, not necessarily his own.

There is a general impression among village Fijians that those of them who have left the village are relatively well off. They believe that they are not over-burdened by village social obligations and their resources are utilised largely to better their own individual conditions. It is not often realised that many Fijians who have left the village for other rural areas because of a combination of factors are really not much better off economically than their village counterparts. Indeed, the position could really be worse for those who have been forced to work as agricultural labourers on plantations with no land of their own on which they could produce some of their subsistence requirements. But where there are remunerative crops to cultivate, and a sure market, like sugar cane, such Fijians are quite well off and can look forward to a standard of living that is better than in their own villages.

In general terms, Fijian villages continue to provide the necessary stability in Fijian society; they are still the rallying points for Fijians, and with their *mataqali* land give the Fijians a deeper meaning to their sense of identity. They have a village and *mataqali* land which they can call their own. But the Fijian village of twenty years ago has changed considerably. No doubt living standards have improved, new concrete and wooden houses have replaced thatched *bure* in many places. The social, economic, tenurial and political circumstances of the village allow economic progress. However, some Fijians find the village environment constricting; they believe it limits individual initiative to a certain extent, especially where land is limited. Despite all this the village still has a place and a meaning in Fijian life; it is indeed the very core of the Fijian collective existence.

## *The Drift to the Towns*

### **Some factors of urban drift**

The drift of population from the rural areas to the towns is a world-wide phenomenon and Fiji is no exception. It is neither good nor bad in itself, but its effects at the two ends of the rural-urban continuum can be regarded as problematic. Some commentators attribute rural-urban drift in the Pacific Islands to the push factors of the rural areas and the pull factors of the urban scene; that life is hard and discouraging in rural areas and there are attractions in the towns. Though these terms are useful labels, they could present an over-simplistic view that takes no account of temporary migration lasting only for a few months. They ignore the many issues that come into play when an individual decides to move from the rural area into the town. For example the status of the individual in the rural area, in his village, can be an important consideration among the factors influencing the decision to move to the town. It would seem that rural-urban migration cannot be adequately explained by single factors which can be labelled economic, social or political. It is argued that the villager, before making a decision to migrate to a town, will assess all such factors relevant to his own situation. In most cases of rural-urban migration, all such factors come into play and are considered by the migrant, if they are not attributed by him as the reasons for his shift to the town. But more often than not such factors will be operative to varying degrees, and their emphasis will vary from one migration to another.

Migration of varying durations amongst Fijians is often attributed to social factors that are tied closely with social relations in the village. A person may feel that his social status in his community is not given due recognition by those who ought to take account of it in their daily lives. This could be a source of embarrassment to him and in his own assessment the gentlemanly solution to the situation is migration to the town on a permanent basis. But the migration could be temporary if the situation changes and his position in the village and in its social activities is given due recognition. Often such social factors have other deep seated considerations which are not always easily discernible to the

untrained and unfamiliar observer. Other complicating factors might be the right to use specific areas of *mataqali* land and the harvesting of permanent tree crops on such land. Disagreement about the use of such resources could well lie at the base of what might appear at first sight a social rift regarding the status of the individual within the village.

In other situations, examples of which are numerous, land shortages, real or induced, have been potent causes of the drift to the town amongst Fijians. Land shortage in Fijian villages is a complicated matter. On one view, very few Fijian villages can be truly regarded as absolutely short of land. The exceptions are the small islands of eastern Fiji, where increasing population has clearly led to absolute land shortage and migration to Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. But land shortage as a factor for migration to town can be due also to a number of complicating issues influencing the allocation of rights to use *mataqali* land and permanent cash crops already growing on the land, or the use of such land for the cultivation of quick-maturing cash crops. It is not infrequent for the use of such resources to be denied to some members of the *mataqali*. The ostensible reason for this denial is that resources are inadequate for the use of all who have some claim over them. In other cases the land may be inadequate for the cultivation of subsistence crops. Increasing aspirations among villagers have led to a reassessment of the value and significance of land. As a consequence of this process land becomes a scarce commodity in the eyes of those who hold the decision-making powers regarding its allocation for use by members of the *mataqali* and other villagers in general.

And so economic factors invariably and unavoidably underlie the social issues leading to migration to the towns. Resources can indeed be inadequate for all members of the *mataqali* to live a happy life and to satisfy all their requirements; particularly for those with young families to raise, the need for education for the children cannot always be met satisfactorily in the village where resources are scarce. And so migration to the town is often taken in the hope that a job will be found to enable the provision of education for the children. In other situations, the children may have graduated from a small village school to a high school in town, requiring the parents to move to the town in search of a job in order to provide all the necessary support to the children.

Migration to the towns then is not the result of a single factor. Neither is it the result of an unthinking move. When the villager finally decides to move, he has considered a number of issues and

more than one factor has weighed in his mind before he finally decides on the move. Depending on the circumstances of each case, one consideration could outweigh all others in influencing his decision, so that the minor factors could be regarded as supportive in their role. At times land matters may be crucial, though these also tend to affect the economic and social life of the potential migrant, so that a complex of factors finally causes the decision to migrate. Also a minor social disagreement will have ripples in the economic sphere and together these can finally lead to migration to the town.

### **The scale of townward migration**

The extent of migration to town from the rural areas among the Fijian population is not possible to measure precisely, largely because of lack of data and because migration is an on-going thing, and there is no widely accepted definition of what constitutes a migration. Some villagers constantly move between the village and the town because of their social and economic role in the village. This requires a visit to town every three months or so, and such visits could last a few weeks or more. Should such a visit be considered a migration, especially when the villager does not, in the process, establish himself in the town? He is really, in such cases, only a regular visitor, a sojourner, coming to town for specific purposes. Others come to town when there is a big social occasion like the Hibiscus Festival or a visit to Fiji by a member of the Royal Family, when the visitor arrives in town long before the particular occasion and may stay on a fair while after the festivity before he finally returns to his village.

There is no doubt at all that Fijian migration to town areas has intensified over the last twenty years or so. In 1956 11 per cent of all Fijians were living within town boundaries; the figure rose to 14 per cent in 1966,<sup>1</sup> and at the time of the 1976 census this proportion rose to more than 15 per cent. There was also a parallel increase in the Fijian component of the urbanised population from 27 to 31 per cent during the period 1956-66;<sup>2</sup> the proportion remained at 31 per cent in 1976. Some of this increase since 1956 has been due of course to natural increase in the Fijian urban population. But there is no doubt that a most important cause is migration to town from rural areas, in search of work and educational opportunities.

At the time of the 1966 census the provinces of out-migration for Fijians were Rewa, Kadavu, Tailevu, Lomaiviti, Lau and Ra. The Suva urban area was and will continue to be the major attraction.

Rewa and Naitasiri experienced a net migration gain of 10,185, most of which was received by Suva. The bulk of Suva migrants came from Kadavu, Lau and Lomaiviti, which together experienced a net loss of 9,610.<sup>3</sup> Other urban locations in western Viti Levu like Lautoka and Nadi are areas of net in-migration among Fijians. This trend has intensified during the decade 1966-76, and is a reflection of the greater activity in the urban areas, and their apparent economic and social attraction as perceived by the migrants. The relative lack of utilisable resources, real or imagined, especially job opportunities in the maritime provinces of Kadavu, Lau and Lomaiviti, have played the major role in out-migration in those provinces. The factor has persisted into the 1970s as it did in the decade 1956-66, largely because of the paucity of natural resources to support their increasing population. The serious and devastating hurricanes which hit these islands between 1972 and 1975 forced people to find alternative means of sustenance away from their home islands.

In a recent study of population and environment in the eastern islands of Fiji, it was estimated that these islands may have lost no less than 10,000 people through out-migration between 1956 and 1975.<sup>4</sup> This flow was dominated by youths coming for schooling in Viti Levu and for urban employment outside these outer islands. It suggests that many families are leaving the islands mainly for destinations on Viti Levu. The same study has shown that on the island of Kabara in Lau, the population dropped from 731 to 564 during 1966-75, and that 40 per cent of the households enumerated on the island in 1966 were not there in 1975, a clear indication of migration not by individuals but by families.<sup>5</sup> Such migrations are likely to be more lasting. Land scarcity and the lack of job opportunities on the island were given as causes for these out-migrations.

As mentioned earlier, migration to the town is neither good nor bad, only the consequences could be problematic. In the rural areas, the structure of the village population, in its age and sex composition, is being affected adversely. Always there is a reduction in the active and able-bodied group, mainly males. But the increasing tendency is for whole families to migrate, thus affecting a wider range of the village population pyramid and its activities. Dilapidated houses badly in need of repair, weed infested gardens and overgrown village surroundings are normally associated with long absence from the village of the active age groups in the population. On the other hand short-term circular migration in search of employment, in many cases pre-planned and

organised in terms of work places and numbers, could lead to important cash flows to the village. Such organised work, in various government projects or even overseas in New Zealand, could give a considerable boost to the village economy, and in many cases it is associated with specific communal projects such as the construction of a community centre or a church. Such temporary absence might well be encouraged and assisted as a strategy for improving living conditions in villages with poor resources.

Despite improvements in road transport, in shipping, air links and radio communication between the remoter areas of Fiji with the centre and the other urban areas, the rural-urban migrant, particularly the circular migrant, serves to provide an important link between the villagers and their relatives in town. Because he normally comes to town and stays with his relatives for a few days or weeks, even months, he is in a good position to explain to his town relatives in some detail the true village situation. He can take back to the village reports on how his town relatives are coping with town life, and perhaps more importantly, their contribution to village welfare. However, he is really a villager at heart and may not be able to understand fully the status of the town dweller and the difficulties he faces. To these we will now turn.

### **The migrant in town**

Among Fijians today it is difficult to find people who have never visited a town. Consequently, few would be complete strangers to the urban scene. Migrants to town as a rule come and stay with their town relatives. In many cases, married migrants leaving the village permanently come on their own first, and are followed by their families later. Normally the town relative helps the migrant to find employment. For most migrants from the village who have not reached a high standard of secondary education work in town usually means a labouring job. Others may be a little more fortunate depending on the jobs available and on their educational qualification and experience, and could command less menial and better paid jobs, perhaps after a while and with some on-the-job experience. While in employment the migrant will contribute to the relative's household income in cash or in kind. If it will be a while before his family joins him, he will be sending cash, clothing and food to his family in the village. He will also do his best to accumulate some cash savings to help him set up his own household eventually. And when his family moves into town they may live with their relative or alternatively rent accommodation of their own.

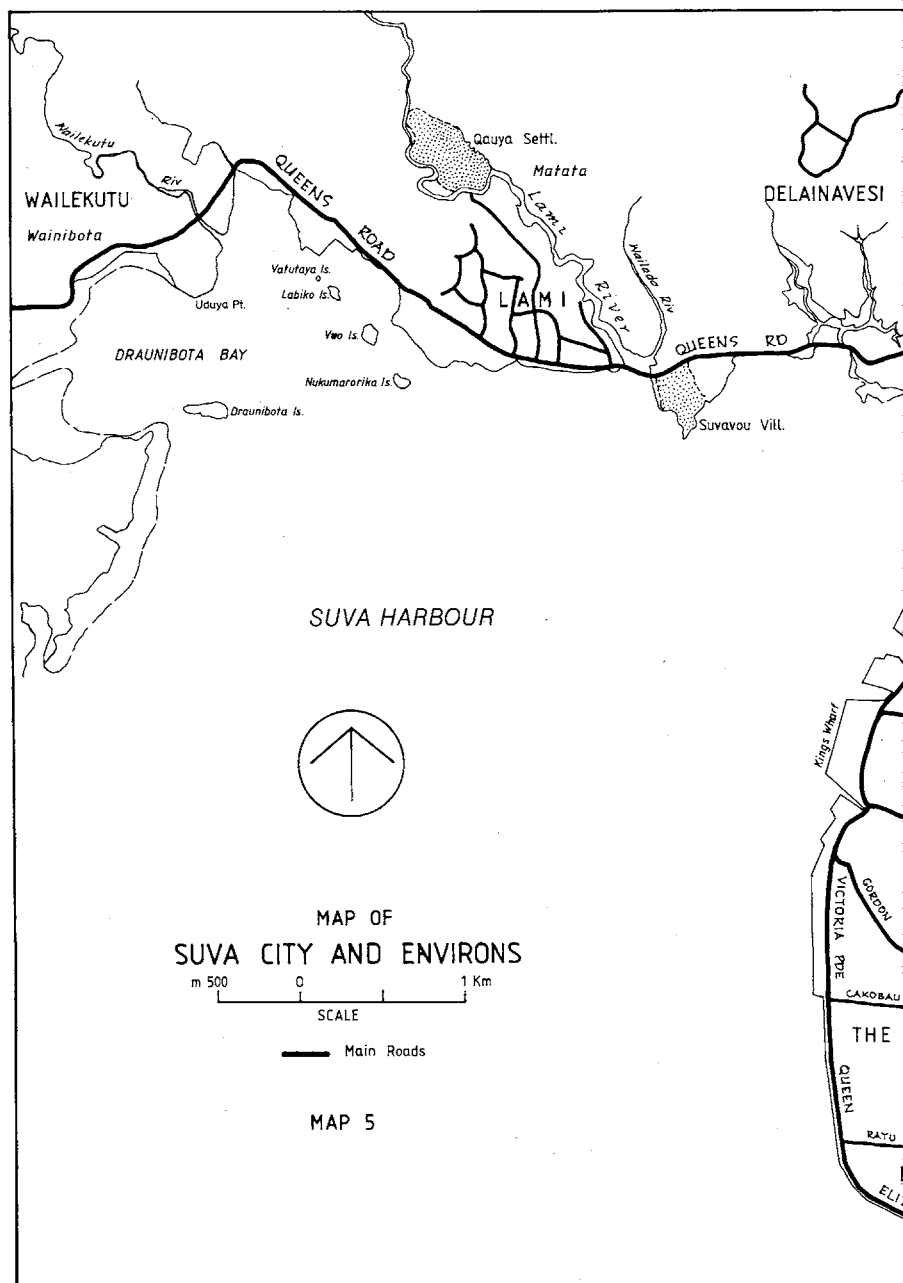


The vast majority of Fijians living in towns and in urban areas throughout Fiji are likely to be permanent residents there. Many of them when they retire will remain in the town, and visit their villages only occasionally. The acquisition of a permanent home in an urban area would appear to be a definite indicator of the migrant's decision to live permanently in town, and for many Fijians the Housing Authority's housing program provides one of the surest means of obtaining a home which he can own in the urban areas of Fiji.

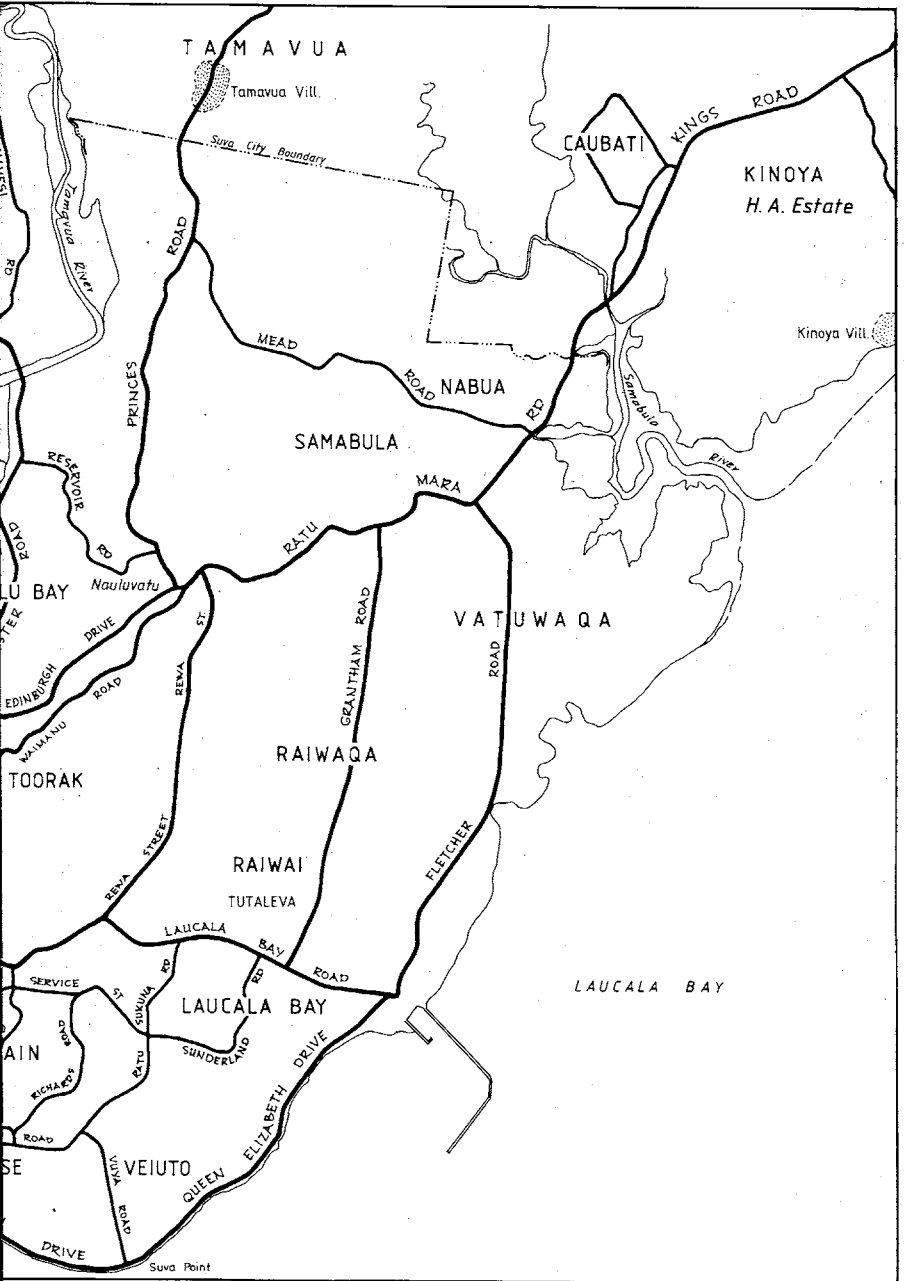
During May 1976 the Housing Authority conducted a socio-economic survey of 200 tenants in its Raiwaqa Housing Estate (Map 5). The sample was chosen at random and of this total 117 were Fijians, the remainder being Indian and others. Although it cannot be claimed that the sample was representative of Raiwaqa, it nevertheless is large enough to indicate some of the features of the estate and its population. Though the information collected was incomplete, it was extensive enough to enable some general comments to be made on the estate itself and its wider implications on urban drift among Fijians.

Of the 111 Fijian household heads who indicated their province of origin, 18 per cent came from Lomaiviti, 13 per cent from Lau, and 11 per cent from Kadavu, giving a total of 42 per cent from the maritime provinces. The province of Tailevu contributed 13 per cent, Rewa 9 per cent while the provinces of Naitasiri, Bua, Cakaudrove, Macuata, Ra, Ba and Nadroga accounted for numbers ranging from 1 to 5 per cent. An interesting development is the fact that no less than 10 per cent of the household heads were born in Suva and have lived in Suva all their lives. Their parents were migrants but they themselves cannot justifiably be regarded as such. They were born and have been brought up in Suva; they are probably unfamiliar with the villages and have little or no intention of returning to them, quite close to Suva in some cases, when they retire.

When questioned about the reasons for coming to Suva initially, only 101 household heads responded meaningfully. Fifty-one per cent gave the search for employment as the reason for migration to town; 25 per cent gave the search for education leading to employment as the cause of their migration; 8 per cent came to support their children's education; 9 per cent on job transfers to Suva; 5 per cent for medical treatment, while 2 per cent came originally to visit their relatives and stayed on and were later joined by their families. Thus employment and education would appear to be the major causes of migration to the town among Fijians, and



Map 5 Plan of Suva City and environs



in this sample they accounted for the move to Suva of 84 per cent of the household heads.

Of the 51 per cent who came in search of work, one half came from Kadavu, Lau and Lomaiviti and 5 per cent from Rewa. These figures add weight to the contention that the maritime provinces are areas with poor resources, and whatever resources there might be are inadequate for the resident population and are not easy to exploit for cash gains (e.g. cash cropping on forested land) compared with wage labour in the urban areas such as Suva, Nadi and Lautoka.

If we ignore the twelve Fijian heads of household who were born in Suva and have lived in Suva all their lives, ninety-five gave information on the length of their stay in Suva. Of this total 35 per cent have lived in Suva for eleven to twenty years, 26 per cent for twenty-one to thirty years, while only 4 per cent have lived in Suva for thirty-one years and more. Although this last category is small by comparison with the others at present, there is no doubt that it will increase in future. Already four household heads in the sample have retired and are not returning to their home villages. Because they have bought homes in this housing estate, it is reasonable to assume that they will spend the bulk of their years of retirement in Suva, and will be joined by others already living on the estate. Even out of seven Fijian public servants once employed at levels higher than the bulk of Raiwaqa residents, and who retired in the last five years, not one returned to his village; all chose to live in Suva and most found other employment.

The long period of residence in Suva of the household heads indicates that they have spent some time in other parts of the city, because most of them were allocated their own present Housing Authority accommodation between 1960 and 1970. Of the ninety-four households who indicated their previous places of urban residence, 84 per cent moved to Raiwaqa from within the city, 7 per cent from within ten miles of the city, while 9 per cent moved from beyond this radius. Of the proportion who moved from within the city to their own homes in Raiwaqa, 24 per cent were already living in the general vicinity of Raiwaqa, some sharing Housing Authority accommodation with their relatives. This is an important factor in Fijian urbanisation and particularly in the establishment of the migrant. Although not peculiar to Fiji and the Fijians, it is noteworthy that the estate is performing an important role in enabling the attainment of permanent residence and home ownership by a large number of Fijians in the urban scene.

It is inevitable that the role the estate is playing in providing accommodation to would-be permanent town residents will affect the composition of the households. Of the 116 households that responded to questions on household composition, 37 per cent were nuclear families consisting of the parents and their children only; while 63 per cent contained also other relatives of either the husband or wife or both. This sample represents a total population of 720 people of which 26 per cent were kin of the household head or his spouse. The average size of the household was 6.2 persons which is slightly less than that obtained in a survey in the same area in 1973 by Harré when the figure stood at 6.4 persons per household.<sup>6</sup> The Housing Authority survey showed that 33 per cent of the total population of the sample were of school age, giving an average of two children of school age to each household. Thus the need for schooling, the costs associated with providing a reasonable education for the children, and the size of the household are factors which bear heavily on the welfare of all urban dwellers. All this shows that the prospect of employment was taken for granted by the immigrants, but this expectation has not always been fulfilled, especially in recent years of international economic crisis from which Fiji has not been spared.

### **Job seeking and unemployment**

Changes in the economic and social bases of Fijian society have introduced some degree of instability into the village. The development of cash cropping, manufacturing, service occupations, and government employment have all encouraged and led to the growth of wage labour, mainly for individual gain. All these conditions have resulted in or encouraged population mobility in the rural areas, and this mobility is largely towards the urban areas.

We have seen that most Fijians who migrate to town come in search of employment. Most who come from the village and other rural areas, because of their lack of skills employable in the urban scene, do not find a job immediately. And very often they remain unemployed for a long time. Some will visit various job sites and ask for work if they are bold enough. But the majority will use their network of social relations to find out if some job, suited to their experience and inclination, can be found. Most who migrate to town in this way come without the faintest idea of the employment position in the town. Because they are unlikely to possess any particular skill in great demand, it is unlikely that such migrants

will find employment easily, if at all. And if they do, it is likely to be some menial, routine and temporary work and not well paid. But at least such jobs help to meet household expenses, particularly if the migrant has to support his children's education; the income thus earned serves a very useful purpose.

One example of migration from rural to urban areas which needs to be treated in the context of employment is the recruitment of labourers from the village to the cane fields of the two main islands during the cane cutting season from May to December each year. Although strictly speaking such movements in search of work are not townward, they are associated with a definite task and its work pattern, which are geared to activities of urban centres. Employment of this sort is often organised on a village and communal basis for specific projects such as a church, a community centre, or a village housing scheme, and has been quite successful. Such movements could be regarded as a special feature of townward migration that has played a significant role in Fijian development in many parts of the country. An extension of such movements is work in New Zealand which is nearly always organised on a similar basis and for similar objectives.

The other major group of Fijians who come to town for work are the school leavers. This category often poses more problems than those who come straight from the village. The school leaver may find a job if his education and training have prepared him for the work he wants to take up. If he has not been trained for any particular skills, it will be very difficult indeed to place him in any gainful employment. Thus he will find or be led to believe that his schooling has not been very useful in preparing him for later life. This raises questions regarding the existing curriculum and its relevance for suitably equipping the school leaver to earn his keep when he leaves school. When such school leavers fail to secure a job in town, they are disillusioned very quickly. Such persons easily fall into disrepute and create difficulties with the law. They also make up a large proportion of the young Fijians who end up in prison for petty crimes. And because of this they are quickly rejected by their parents and relatives. Although unemployment lies at the root of the problem, it is not the sole factor in the whole situation, because other influences such as home circumstances will come to bear when a young person finds himself in such an unenviable position.

In many urban Fijian households, there is always a floating population of unemployed relatives. The sample the Housing Authority interviewed at Raiwaqa is no exception. Out of 720 persons in the sample, only 212 or 29 per cent were employed; this

figure gave an average of 1.8 workers per household. The number attending school was 238 or 33 per cent while 110 or 15 per cent were young children not of school age. This left 161 persons able-bodied and unemployed. And so on average there were 1.3 persons unemployed in each household in the sample surveyed or 22.3 per cent of the total population in the sample were unemployed. This percentage is somewhat less than that obtained by Harré in 1973 when he found that 32.3 per cent of the employable adults in his Raiwaqa sample were unemployed.<sup>7</sup>

Because the houses in the estate were made for workers whose income did not exceed \$70 per week at the time of allocation, the incomes of those people living in the estate at the time of the survey by the Housing Authority could not have been radically out of line with this stipulation, especially for the tenants/heads of households. Of the ninety-five household heads who gave information on their income, 47 per cent earned less than \$40 per week, 37 per cent between \$40 and \$70 while 16 per cent earned amounts ranging from \$71 to \$200 per week. Clearly those earning more than \$70 per week did not earn this amount at the time they were allocated Housing Authority accommodation, but only since they moved into the estate. The position changes somewhat if we look at the weekly income per household. Of the same ninety-five households, only 20 per cent earned less than \$40 per week, 30 per cent between \$40 and \$70 and 50 per cent between \$71 and \$200 per week. The average income per week of household heads was a little over \$48, while the average per household rose to over \$79 per week, and the average income per head of population was a little more than \$10 per week or \$520 per annum. These wages appear to be much better than those earned in copra areas; for example at Waciwaci in Lakeba, Lau, the median income per family dependent on farming in 1975 was \$398,<sup>8</sup> while for the Raiwaqa sample the lowest per household was \$520 and the highest \$10,000 per year.

### **Housing**

Income, security of employment, and access to land and finance determine housing possibilities everywhere. And in this regard the Fijians are no exception, for they must cope with these factors. But on the whole they, together with the less advantaged sections of the Indian community, have particular difficulties as regards access to land and finance. Housing among urban Fijians falls within a fairly wide range of categories. There are those who have been forced by their circumstances to live in dilapidated shacks and *bure*; others in

wood and iron buildings; then there are the workers in the housing estates; and the more affluent class who have built their own executive type homes in some of the high class residential areas of the main urban centres. In view of the peculiar difficulties of housing for Fijian urban residents, many of whom as we have seen are neither totally town nor totally village-oriented psychologically, it is worthwhile to look in some detail at some case-histories.

One of the well known Fijian urban settlements in the 1960s was Raiwai, in Suva. It no longer exists as a separate entity today for it has been taken up and redeveloped by the Housing Authority's housing program. The settlement contained mainly Fijian migrants from Rewa, Kadavu and Lomaiviti, on which basis the settlement was divided and organised. It consisted of 6.8 hectares of land the property of Morris Hedstrom Limited, who issued tenancies at will to three original tenants, who brought in other residents as unofficial subtenants. In 1965 the land was sold to the government for housing development. And at its peak about 1963, Raiwai had 115 structures, 113 families and a population of 654 persons. It appears that the growth of Raiwai resulted largely from financial pressure, when people moved there from the more expensive parts of Suva. For many Raiwai residents little or no rent was paid. Those that were employed were in either low paid jobs or worked only spasmodically; the average household income stood at a little over \$13 per week in 1970.<sup>9</sup> And with an average household size of 7.7 persons, the average income per head per week of less than \$2 leads to the conclusion that most households had to struggle in order to live. Wage labour was not sufficient to provide a reasonable means of livelihood, let alone the construction of a suitable and adequate home. Houses were mainly thatch *bure* of a type and construction quite inferior to those found in the traditional village, and most of them small in size. At the same time, from the viewpoint of Morris Hedstrom, the owners of the freehold land, to whom profit remains the main purpose of their existence, the Raiwai land cannot be sold to those who cannot afford to pay the price. However, the land could be used for low cost housing by the government. This arrangement would be of assistance to Morris Hedstrom's tenants who could be accommodated through the government's housing program. This was done in 1965, and the development of the housing estate at Raiwai has resulted in the slow disappearance of the settlement and many of its inhabitants have moved into the Housing Authority's accommodation in Raiwai and Kinoya. And so through a conscious policy of housing development by the government, a Fijian urban





Plate 4 Substandard housing in urban area

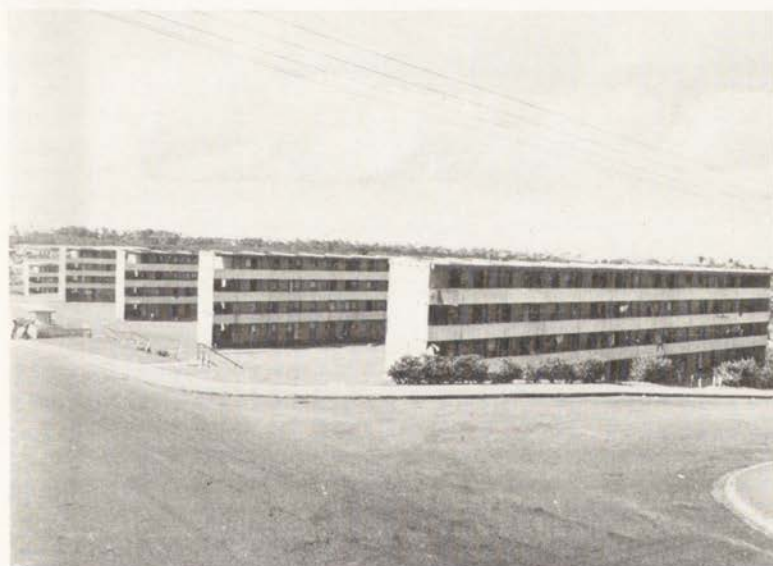


Plate 5 Housing Authority Estate—Raiwaqa

settlement of substandard quality has disappeared and has been replaced by worker housing that is not exclusively Fijian, but of a type and quality far superior to the shacks of fifteen years ago.

Quite close to Raiwai and towards the inner city is the settlement of Tutaleva. This is on 14 hectares of land leased by the Crown to the Suva City Council in 1969 for 99 years. The Suva City Council proposes to develop this piece of land as a park and recreation area, although no definite and detailed plans have been prepared. Here live about 200 Fijians, mainly low paid workers earning between \$30 to \$50 per week, some of whom had been squatting on the land before the Crown issued a lease to the Suva City Council. Housing in Tutaleva is substandard and in some cases insanitary; but it is what the people say they can afford under the circumstances. Most houses are of old pieces of timber, masonite boards, flattened drums, rusting corrugated iron, and cardboard. In 1973 the Suva City Council issued eviction notices to thirteen households in Tutaleva, but it was not until March 1976 that the council decided to enforce these notices. There has been a test case in which the court ruled in favour of the Suva City Council.

It seems unreasonable and inhuman that the Suva City Council is enforcing the law without a proper plan for the development of the area; besides it does not appear that the council was taking the initiative to find alternative homes for the residents of Tutaleva. It seems likely that the government will not allow these people to be put into the streets without alternative accommodation being provided.<sup>10</sup> The Suva City Council on the other hand is taking a legalistic stand on the case: it is enforcing its title, and in the process shows lack of appreciation of the social and human problems of the residents it now wants to evict. But this is an interesting stand which is impossible to reconcile with the lack of action taken by the Suva City Council to remove the substandard housing, with its health hazards, in various parts of the city such as Samabula and Edinburgh Drive. The way these squatter settlements have been treated by the Suva City Council would defy any logical analysis and explanation.

In various parts of Fiji a number of Fijian settlements have grown up on the outskirts of declared towns. Two such examples, well known to many, are Kinoya and Qauya settlements on the outskirts of Suva and Lami respectively (Map 5). The origin of Kinoya village goes back about forty years when Fijians from Noco in Rewa moved to the present site. They formed themselves into a village but it could not be proclaimed a Fijian village because they were occupying land which is part of Naitasiri Province. In

mid-1976 Kinoya village had a total population of 208 persons (103 females and 105 males), of which 104 were children including those of school age. There are thirty-two households whose homes are of wood and iron with two *bure* built in traditional style. The standard of housing is poor and indeed not very different from the squatter type accommodation one finds in Tutaleva. The houses range in size from small wood and iron lean-tos (3.6 m × 3 m) to larger structures (9 m × 4.5 m) There is overcrowding in many of the homes. All household heads work in Suva, and despite the people's claim to village status, their settlement is really a dormitory settlement for metropolitan Suva. Recently, the construction of the major sewage treatment plant for the Suva peninsula near the village is claimed to have caused drainage problems during very high tides. Some mangrove patches adjacent to the village have been reclaimed as part of the construction and earth work associated with the sewage treatment plant. The people claim that this work has caused the blockage of drainage channels thus leading to flooding during spells of heavy rain and high tides. However, one point that should not be overlooked is that the village itself is on 1.2 hectares of flat land that is not only adjacent to the sea, but is also very low lying and could well be only about 0.5 metres above sea level. Such low relief can cause drainage problems anywhere especially during periods of high spring tides.

On the other side of the peninsula, north of the new town of Lami and just outside it, is the Fijian settlement of Qauya; Kinoya is relatively homogeneous in composition, because the bulk of its residents can claim traditional connection with the original settlers, and they continue to see themselves as Rewans; the same cannot be said about Qauya which contains people from virtually all parts of Fiji. Qauya has grown largely because of the need for cheaper accommodation than that available in the various residential sections of Suva. And since the landowners were willing to give their land on a traditional basis, after the usual presentation of *tabua*, kerosene and soap by the migrants, it did not take long for the settlement to grow. Today there are 170 households in the settlement of which seven are non-Fijian. The total Fijian population could well be in excess of 1,100 persons.

Again Qauya is clearly a dormitory settlement whose residents find work in Suva, many of them in low paid, manual occupations. Housing standards reflect this, but there is little use of traditional material, particularly thatch, largely because of its scarcity. Wood and iron buildings are most common, some of them quite substantial, and these indicate the length of stay of the owners and

the households' financial capacity to erect such structures. Some of these have flush toilets and their own piped water supply which comes from the government main. At the same time Qauya has its share of problems arising out of the rapid growth of such urban settlements. There is overcrowding in many homes and associated unemployment, leading to anti-social behaviour. Sanitary conditions need to be improved substantially in terms of better drainage, refuse disposal and water supply, for not every family has its own water tap. An attempt needs to be made to improve settlements like Qauya and Kinoya. They need proper planning, the co-operation of the people concerned, and a real desire to improve their living conditions. To do this will also need substantial input from sources outside the village and in this context it would appear, because of the meagre means of the people concerned, that only the government and its various agencies have the capacity to do something to improve the living conditions of these people.

There is another category of Fijian urban settlement that has taken a distinctive turn in its development. This is Nabua settlement which is organised as a traditional Fijian village. The settlement was established after the hurricane in 1952 when homeless Fijians in Samabula and other areas approached the government through the Fijian Affairs Department for assistance. The government gave them land on which to build their houses, with assistance from the Public Works Department and the Fijian Affairs Department for land clearing, levelling and so on. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the government decided to build houses in Nabua for renting to Fijians in an attempt to improve living conditions in the village. The government is committed to a policy of maintaining Nabua as an exclusively Fijian settlement; this policy is not likely to change. In 1975 the government decided to transfer the houses to the Housing Authority, which has been responsible for the collection of rent and the maintenance of the homes, and the general administration of the village through a village committee and *turaga ni koro*. Plans are under way to subdivide the existing village so as to enable each tenant to buy the home he occupies if he so wishes; it is quite likely that most tenants will want to buy these homes. Plans have also been prepared and some of the work has begun, to subdivide properly the remaining areas of Crown land adjacent to Nabua for further Fijian settlement. The setting aside of this area for entirely Fijian settlement is a positive policy that recognises the permanence of Fijian urban residence, and the need to meet the Fijian's peculiar requirements away from his natural and traditional village

environment. This sort of development should be encouraged where and when the people want it.

At the time Nabua was stabilising, about the late 1960s, there was concern among Fijian leaders about the condition of many Fijian villages near or adjacent to towns. Such villages included Nausori, Lami, and Suvavou near Suva and Namoli in Lautoka. There was concern about the general deterioration in the standard of housing in such villages; drains were not maintained regularly, if at all, and were rapidly becoming health hazards. This situation resulted in part from the fact that the Fijian villages in urban areas are not part of towns and cannot be governed by town by-laws and regulations regarding housing and health matters. Although they come under the village health by-laws of the provincial council such regulations were not always adequately policed and enforced. So after consultation with the landowners at Namoli, in Lautoka, the villagers generally and the government, it was decided that the village land should be dereserved and subdivided into housing lots. The people formed themselves into a Co-operative Landholding Society which held the individual titles on their behalf. The Housing Authority agreed to lend them \$200,000, with which sixty concrete houses were built. The loan was repayable over twenty years at an interest rate of 7 per cent per annum with a government guarantee. Each home has two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. The government took a debenture over all the assets of the society as its security. In order to repay the loan the landowners at Namoli agreed to assign irrevocably their rent money to the Housing Authority through the NLTB until the entire loan is repaid. Work started during the last quarter of 1969, and the homes were completed in January 1970.

Namoli is a new experiment in Fijian urbanisation. In this case a Fijian village, which served essentially as a dormitory village to Lautoka, was dereserved and subdivided into a residential suburb of a town. Through this process Namoli ceased to be a formal and proclaimed Fijian village. However, it is doubtful if the people themselves fully intended the development to work in this way, for they continued to operate as a village and perform its necessary chores. Perhaps they used the procedure as a device through which to improve their living conditions. Since then no other Fijian village near or within a town boundary has followed the Namoli example, largely because of the lack of a sizable and regular income which could be used to build homes or repay any housing loans. However, this does not mean that ways and means cannot be found to improve housing in Fijian urban villages.

There is no doubt that the work of the Housing Authority has brought the ownership of good standard permanent homes within the reach of wage earning Fijians in urban areas, especially in Suva and Lautoka. They now own or occupy about a half of all the housing units, including developed land, made available by the Housing Authority and the total is certain to increase in the future.

The efforts of the Housing Authority, especially in Raiwaqa, have been criticised on the grounds that they have encouraged overcrowding and anti-social behaviour. This criticism needs to be looked at closely. Housing Authority homes are built to suit the income of the workers, that is those who earn \$70 or less per week. The vast majority of those people who apply to the Housing Authority for housing earn \$30 to \$50 per week. Thus the Housing Authority has had to build to suit the workers' demand for housing, and especially what they can afford to pay. Because of the low wages and the large number of applications made to the Housing Authority for accommodation this organisation has had to build some four storey units in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These contain single room flats each with a total floor space of around 22 square metres per unit including a separate kitchen-shower-laundry. With an average household size of six persons, it works out at 3.6 square metres per person or 4.5 to 5.4 square metres per adult (if we take two children as the equivalent of one adult). These figures are about 15 to 20 per cent higher than the standard space allocation per adult set by the government low cost housing units in Hong Kong where there is real overcrowding.<sup>11</sup>

Overcrowding in the Housing Authority's housing estates is the result of social relations and kinship links working on a housing policy that seems to be directed mainly at providing housing to suit the needs of the nuclear family. For the Fijian at least this housing practice does not take account of the fact that an urban worker, once established, is likely to receive his relatives and is expected to accommodate them, at least for a while, if they are on a brief visit to the town or until they are able to find their own accommodation.

Raiwaqa had a population of 8,523 in 1966;<sup>12</sup> the total by 1976 could be around 12,000. Overcrowding has certainly not reached the proportions that obtain in cities like Singapore and Hong Kong, but densities of about 1,250 persons per hectare, which one finds in the high rise units in Raiwaqa, do create problems. It would be a wonder if social problems like drunkenness and rowdy behaviour and hooliganism did not arise in such places, as such behaviour is symptomatic of the pressure created by placing a large number of people in a limited area of land. It is very likely that in order to

avoid repeating this kind of situation the Housing Authority will place greater emphasis on the provision of developed sites on which the tenants can build the houses they desire and can afford. Such an emphasis will demand more land for housing, and in the urban areas of Suva and Lautoka this invariably means Fijian land, to be leased and developed for housing on terms beneficial to the landowners and suited to the housing requirements of the workers.

As for the better paid Fijians in towns, the company executives and the better paid civil servants, many of them now own their homes on the various high class residential subdivisions that have been developed during the last two decades, in places like Tamavua and Samabula. Greater affluence and greater development in the urban areas are likely to lead to an increase in the number of Fijians owning their own homes in the urban areas of Fiji in the years ahead. This development is likely to lead to an increasing proportion of Fijians coming to town and living in town on a permanent basis.

### **Some wider implications**

There is no doubt that Fijian rural-urban migration has intensified over the last twenty years; the next twenty years will not see a slowing down of the rate of urbanisation in the Fijian population. It is recognised that rural life must be improved so that the disparity between rural and urban living is at least narrowed. It is important that Fijians realise that life can be worthwhile and enjoyable also in the rural areas, that they derive from it wider social and economic satisfaction.

However, it would be foolish to believe that migration from the outer islands and the inaccessible interior to the main urban centres will cease completely. There will always be the village and island whose resources are limited, where opportunities are strictly circumscribed and from which will come migrants in search of jobs and other openings.

The social network normally associated with village life will be transferred to the town, and will perform a useful role for the new migrant to settle in and find a job. This network is also the cause of the presence of a large floating population of unemployed relatives, many of whom are likely to cause economic pressures in the homes of the poorly paid Fijian urban workers. This sort of situation often leads to undesirable unsocial behaviour.

The rapid expansion of the urban population especially outside the declared town boundaries has resulted in the appearance and growth of 'villages' and settlements in peri-urban areas. Associated

with such settlements are poor housing, insanitary conditions and overcrowding. They demand co-operative effort for proper rehabilitation, and the kind of support which only the government can provide. The growth of such settlements in an unplanned way is certainly taxing the capacity of urban services and poses afresh the real alternatives and values provided to the Fijian through urban migration. This question is particularly pertinent when the urban migrant is invariably unsuited by training and inclination to the better paid jobs, and is therefore forced to accept lowly paid and menial work. He is often untrained, uneducated and unprepared for the conditions in which he finds himself in the town. For what then has the Fijian been trained? This question we will now try to examine.



## *The Other Road: The Fijian and Education*

### **Attitude to education**

The general and basic attitude of the Fijian to education is that it provides a means of attaining a better life. And very often this means life in the urban areas. The belief is widely held that education alone will provide the key that will unlock the riches of the world beyond the narrow confines of the village. Education will widen the villager's contacts; it will allow him to appreciate and even master the foreigner's ways, thus giving him an opportunity to link the village to the affairs of the wider world. Through education, it is believed, the Fijian will be better able to grasp the good things in modern life that have for long been beyond the reach of his ancestors. At the same time an educated Fijian is expected to pass on such benefits obtained through education to his immediate family, and possibly to the village in general.

We have seen that many Fijians come to town to provide an education for their children; others come in search of education themselves. They regard educational facilities in the urban areas as superior to those in the countryside. Fijian parents are prepared to change their mode of livelihood in order to be able to provide a good education for their children. Not only that, Fijians regard the provision of a good education for their children as an obligation to be fulfilled even beyond the means available to them, no matter how limited their resources might be.

The education system has been criticised for its emphasis on academic subjects. It has given many Fijian students what may be termed a 'clerk's education', which has encouraged them to aim for white collar jobs. At the same time the content of the school curriculum has been based on overseas material which has little relevance to the local scene in which the student will live and work when he completes his schooling.

But what kind of education do Fijian villagers want for their children? This is a question that is not always clearly perceived. Education is desired; its form is not clearly appreciated and its ultimate end product is even more unclear to the Fijian parent at

village level. More often than not the end of education as conceived by the Fijian parent is a permanent job in one of the urban centres. In this way it appears that in general terms the education of the Fijian was really leading him to a permanent urban life and there was little the educational system could do to retain him in the rural areas. To assess the position fairly it is necessary to review the education system as it affected the Fijian over the last decade or so.

### **The extent of Fijian education**

During 1965 the Fijians accounted for 41.3 per cent of the total primary school roll of 93,983.<sup>1</sup> By 1975 the Fijian proportion had risen slightly to 43.3 per cent out of a total of 135,092.<sup>2</sup> This increase from 38,852 in 1965 to 58,363 in 1975 resulted from population increase during the previous decade. During the same period 1965-75 the proportion for other races also rose, especially for the Indians who accounted for 51 per cent during the decade; it rose from 48,647 in 1965 to 69,525 in 1973.<sup>3</sup> At the secondary level the Fijians accounted for 26 per cent of the total roll of 7,566 in 1965.<sup>4</sup> By 1975 the actual number of Fijian secondary students had increased to 9,330 from 2,031 in 1965, or 33 per cent of the total secondary roll of 28,072.<sup>5</sup> Put in another way, the Fijian proportion of the secondary roll increased at an average rate of about 35 per cent per annum while the total secondary roll rose by about 27 per cent per annum during the decade 1965-75. This rapid increase in the Fijian proportion could be attributed to the establishment of junior secondary schools in the rural areas, most of which are managed by Fijian committees.

In 1965 there were 666 agencies involved in the running of schools in Fiji.<sup>6</sup> Of this number 286 or 43 per cent consisted of Fijian school committees;<sup>7</sup> by 1970 the total had risen to 703 of which perhaps 45 per cent were Fijian. The establishment of junior secondary schools in recent years may have raised the number of Fijian educational agencies to around 340 in 1975. An important feature of Fijian schools is that more than half can be reached only by sea; they are located on more than fifty-five separate islands, many of them far from the main administrative centres and therefore not easy to supervise adequately. Most of these authorities consist of committees comprising villagers selected from one or more villages who jointly support a small village school whose rolls range from 100 to 250 pupils, but mainly around the lower of these two figures. Because of the number of schools involved, their spread and the shortage of trained teachers, it has not always been possible to staff fully many of these isolated Fijian

schools. This has meant the hiring of untrained teachers and the running of composite classes by the few trained teachers available, both of which have serious limitations. In 1965 there were 625 untrained teachers throughout the country; almost one per educational authority; the number had increased to 1,193 in 1975.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, many of the facilities in the small village schools in the outer islands and interior villages are often less than desirable, so that largely because of the lack of teaching equipment the children are not and cannot be given the proper guidance so necessary in their schooling. And where fees are paid, especially in the secondary schools, this poses an added difficulty to Fijian parents.

It is not surprising therefore that these difficulties have had an adverse effect on the progress of Fijian students throughout the school system, resulting in a high rate of wastage. In 1963 there were 5,674 Fijian students in Class 1; by the time this group reached Class 8 in 1970, only 5,041 were left—a wastage rate of 11.5 per cent.<sup>9</sup> For the Indian students the wastage rate during the same period was 29.6 per cent, although the actual number of students that reached Class 8 in 1970 was higher than for the Fijians by 235. The average wastage rate for the whole country was 21 per cent. The situation has not improved and has persisted into the 1970s. Not only that, the wastage rate has in fact increased as students progress into and through the secondary school system. In 1969 there were 4,776 Fijian students in Class 8; only 1,895 entered Form III in 1970 giving a wastage rate of 60 per cent. For the period 1972-3 the wastage rate for Class 8 entering Form III had dropped to 42 per cent; it was down to 35 per cent for 1975-6. For the same periods the percentages for the Indian component dropped from 31 per cent in 1969-70, to 23 per cent in 1972-3 and 21 per cent in 1975-6. Although there has been some improvement the Fijian wastage rate is still uncomfortably high.

The position becomes even more desperate in the secondary schools. Of the 1,168 Fijian students who were in Form III in 1967 only 364 reached Form VI in 1976. These figures give a wastage rate of 80 to 90 per cent. The alarming status of Fijian education relative to other communities is brought home by these figures. In terms of high level manpower now and in the future, the weak position of the Fijian is seen also by comparing the number of Fijians in Form VI for the years 1970, 1973 and 1976 with those of other communities. This is set out in Table 4. For these three years the total number of Fijian students reaching Form VI was less than one-third the Indian total and a little more than one-fifth the total for the whole country. Put in another way, of the 6,449 Fijian

students who started schooling in Class 1 in 1965, only 364 reached Form VI in 1976. Of the 8,837 Indians who were in Class 1 in 1965, 1,141 reached Form VI in 1976 (Table 5). These figures give a wastage rate of 94 per cent for Fijians and 87 per cent for Indians.

**Table 4**  
**Racial Composition of Form VI Students, 1970, 1973 and 1976**

Year	Fijian	%	Indian	%	Others	%	Total
1970	213	23	533	59	159	18	905
1973	179	18	741	70	131	12	1,051
1976	364	22	1,141	67	190	11	1,695
Total	756	21	2,415	66	480	13	3,651

*Source:* Figures supplied by the Ministry of Education, Suva.

**Table 5**  
**Retention of Class 1 Cohort 1965-1976**

Year	Class/ Form	Fijians	Indians	Others	Total
1965	1	6,449	8,837	1,007	16,293
1966	2	6,038	8,354	906	15,298
1967	3	5,995	8,321	895	15,211
1968	4	5,770	8,055	886	14,731
1969	5	5,622	7,796	853	14,271
1970	6	5,579	7,489	830	13,898
1971	7	5,343	7,709	848	13,893
1972	8	5,673	6,673	807	13,153
1973	III	3,380	5,089	568	9,037
1974	IV	3,516	5,876	563	9,955
1975	V	2,140	4,062	531	6,733
1976	VI	364	1,141	190	1,695
Form VI roll as % of Class 1		5.6	12.9	18.9	10.4
Form VI roll as % of Form III		10.8	22.4	33.4	18.8

*Source:* Figures supplied by the Ministry of Education, Suva

Although the wastage rates are not very different the difference in the number of students reaching Form VI emphasises the disparity. The sixth form is the usual pool from which high level manpower is drawn for training in specific skills, and in the professions. The Fijians already have a handicap in that they are fewer in number at this level. Unless the wastage rate throughout the secondary school system is reduced drastically it is unlikely that the supply of high level manpower among Fijians will improve markedly.

The educational difficulties and handicaps which face the Fijians have a serious effect on the students' examination results at all levels. In the secondary schools entrance examination, of the 2,262 Fijians who sat in 1965, only 709 or 31.3 per cent passed, compared to the 862 or 41.1 per cent Indians out of a total of 2,098 who sat the examination.<sup>10</sup> For the Fiji junior certificate in the same year, 166 Fijian students or 28.8 per cent out of 576 passed, while 520 Indians or 43.3 per cent out of 1,201 passed. In the New Zealand school certificate examination 83 out of the 139 Fijians passed while 345 out of 616 Indians passed the examination in 1965. And at the university entrance level 17 of the 41 Fijians and 45 of the 68 Indians passed the examination in 1965. Clearly then, although there is a comparable level of achievement among Fijian and Indian students at the secondary school entrance examination, the Fijian level of achievement begins to show a marked decline in the more senior examinations like the Fiji junior certificate, NZ school certificate and NZ university entrance examinations. By 1970 the number of Fijians passing these examinations had increased numerically; however, the proportion compared to the Indian students was still relatively low. Of the 1,968 Fijian students who sat Fiji junior in 1970, 890 passed, while 1,803 Indians passed out of 3,268 who sat the examination. At the NZ school certificate level 210 Fijians passed out of 528 who sat while 484 out of 1,602 Indians passed. And at the university entrance examination level, 45 out of 202 Fijians passed while 167 out of 501 Indians passed that examination. These disparities have persisted into the 1970s. By 1975 the Fijian position in terms of examination passes had improved only slightly. In the Fiji junior examination of the 3,365 Fijian students who sat the examination 1,711 or 49 per cent passed, against the Indians' 52 per cent out of 5,631 who sat. At the NZ school certificate level, 357 Fijian students or 18 per cent passed out of 1,912 who sat the examination as against the Indians' 960 or 26 per cent out of 3,714 who sat. At the NZ university entrance level 76 Fijian students or 26 per cent of 293 passed compared with the Indians' 299 or 33 per cent of the 912 who sat the

examination.<sup>11</sup> These figures show a slow increase in the number of Fijian passes in the various examinations since 1965, and an even slower increase in the percentage pass rate. The relatively low rate of Fijian success becomes clearer if we see it as a percentage of Indian passes. At the Fiji junior level, Fijian passes in 1975 were 58 per cent of the Indian figure; at the NZ school certificate level the total number of Fijians passes was only 37 per cent of the Indian total, while the NZ university entrance level the proportion dropped to 25 per cent.<sup>12</sup> The position seems fairly obvious; too few Fijians compared to other communities progress through the school system especially the secondary system, and pass the necessary examinations which are taken as prerequisites for entry into higher levels of training and employment in the private and public sectors.

It is clear then that there is a wide disparity in educational achievement between Fijians and other communities in Fiji, and this disparity is likely to persist into the 1980s. The figures quoted above are sure signs of imbalance and point to obvious social dangers now and in the future, if nothing is done to reduce the imbalance and disparity. This disparity shows itself also in the professional, managerial and executive fields where Fijians are outnumbered by Indians by about five to one.<sup>13</sup> Also there is some difficulty in finding suitably qualified Fijians for higher and responsible administrative positions.

### **The causes of the disparity**

There is no simple explanation for the poor showing of Fijians in the educational field, measured in terms of examination results and in the poor showing of Fijians in the various professional fields. Writing in 1969 the Fiji Education Commission identified the following factors which hamper Fijian educational advancement:

- (a) the scatter of Fijian schools, leading to ineffective staffing and teaching;
- (b) difficulty of supervision by the authorities because of (a);
- (c) isolation of Fijian teachers in rural schools, without intellectual stimulus to help their own development;
- (d) because of the logistics many Fijian students are forced to be boarders; this adds to the burden of cost, and the boarding school environment does not help ready adaptation to the freedom of university life;
- (e) severe shortage of Fijian primary teachers with appropriate scholastic qualifications;

- (f) rural poverty makes the payment of fees very difficult, and for the school committees to maintain adequate standards in rural schools;
- (g) the conditions in the *koro* are not conducive to study; there are few lights in the village, children often walk long distances to and from school and there is little or no privacy in the homes.

The Commission rightly points out that the last factor can be solved easily and quickly by providing places for study in village halls and in the churches. 'But (a) to (d) are built-in while (e) and (f) are only susceptible to relatively slow improvement.'<sup>14</sup>

In addition to these issues the Education Commission claimed that a number of intangible factors contribute to the problem of Fijian educational development. It is said that the social background of the Fijian is a disadvantage in his educational progress. It also appears that in general and in contrast to Fijians, Indian parents make sure their children do their homework after school. Fijians appear to show up better in work requiring short bursts of energy rather than those needing steady application of effort. Though the authoritarian rule is weakening, there is as yet no autonomous discipline to replace it at the village level. And money management at village level is still weak. All these characteristics change slowly and have a bearing on the progress of Fijian education.<sup>15</sup>

The Education Commission also took the view that boarding schools have not helped; they have slowed down the maturation of Fijian students; this has affected their performance in the permissive atmosphere of the university. This appears to be a problem of adjustment in which the boarding school experience of Fijian students has not helped them in their advancement. Then the lack of competition with others in the entirely Fijian schools could be regarded as a clear handicap. And because the Western style of thought provides the basis of teaching in schools, and because English is used as the medium of instruction, the Fijian whose native language is structurally different from the English language has found his studies handicapped.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Fijian is far more different from English than is Hindi, which are both Indo-Aryan languages.

It is not difficult to agree with most of the issues raised by the Education Commission as factors causing the slow progress of Fijians in the educational field. The geographical spread of Fijian schools is a hindrance to supervision by the authorities and ensures the isolation of teacher and pupil from the stimulus of new ideas.

However, the commission's criticism of the boarding school as a factor for the slow maturation of Fijian students cannot be completely sustained. It is true that boarding schools increase the burden of the school committees and the parents who have to pay the boarding fees, but the discipline and the authoritarian approach of the boarding school cannot be dismissed as entirely bad. Boarding schools encourage the early attainment of independence of mind and thought by the student, of course within certain predetermined limits of behaviour. He is encouraged more and more to think for himself, and at the same time to work satisfactorily with others in the school. At an early stage he learns to meet through his own efforts certain standards of punctuality and in this way he begins to realise the needs of the school community, to which he must adjust his own personal wishes and demands. All these are valuable lessons which he learns early in his boarding school life and should help him when he finally leaves school. Indeed they can be regarded as an early training in the proper application of time and effort which should assist in later adjustment to the needs of the outside world. The Education Commission referred to 'moving accounts of what it means to be lost in a free world!' The post-boarding school world is free, but one will be lost in it only if one does not apply properly one's training in the boarding school, particularly the training encouraging independence of mind coupled with an internal discipline geared to the attainment of the overall school objective. The discipline of the boarding school and the punctuality associated with it, if properly utilised in later life, should yield valuable dividends, as many have proved to their satisfaction.

Criticism of the boarding school system as a cause of the slow progress in Fijian education is usually made with reference to the two government boarding schools at Lodonu and Matavatuco in Tailevu North (Map 2). These are Ratu Kadavulevu and Queen Victoria Schools with a joint roll of around 800 students who are almost entirely Fijian. It is often said that these two schools are too far away from the cultural and educational stimulus so necessary for the broad educational development of the student, that only an urban environment like Suva can offer. There is some ground for this criticism although it does not seem too weighty. The boarding school system should not be criticised but rather the location of the school, although the two are related. The choice of site for the two schools was perhaps quite suitable twenty-five years ago. However, in the 1970s the location of these two schools, fifty kilometres away from Suva, is proving a handicap. But this is not an insur-



mountable problem. Access to the cultural and educational life of the city should be improved in order to enhance the overall development of the students at both Ratu Kadavulevu and Queen Victoria Schools. This seems vital if the students are to familiarise themselves with aspects of town life they are likely to find problematic in their adjustment to the real world when they finish their schooling.

### **The solution?**

The Education Commission made a number of general recommendations which would be of particular assistance to Fijians. These included the establishment by government of junior secondary schools in the rural areas, the localisation of the curriculum, the improvement of teacher training and conditions of service, and a campaign for pre-school and adult education to improve the attitude to and conditions of study in the villages. The commission also supported the proposal to move the top two streams at the all-Fijian Queen Victoria School to a new multi-racial secondary school at Nasinu.<sup>17</sup>

But in terms of special assistance to Fijian education, this invariably means more government scholarships to Fijians. The commission agreed that 50 per cent of scholarship funds be allocated on a parallel block basis; that is Fijians will compete with Fijians and Indians with Indians for their quota of scholarships. It was not well disposed to the idea of spending this money on 'repeaters' on the basis that money thus spent would be wasted, and that the provision would encourage a repeater mentality among Fijian students. These reservations are sound in themselves, but the commission seems to have missed one point. Some Fijian students find difficulty in succeeding in the first year of university study, especially overseas. They often pick up well in their second year, given the necessary support. By the second year such students have adapted to the foreign atmosphere of the overseas university and very often do well in their studies from then on. There is also the category of Fijian student who has been struggling along privately, after his scholarship was discontinued, until his final year, at which point he ought to receive some assistance at least in recognition of his success 'under his own steam'. The commission finally recommended that 50 per cent of the scholarships be allocated to Fijians, including repeaters, which point it agreed to with some reservation. And if there should be an insufficient number of Fijian students to take advantage of the funds available, the money

should be spent on other educational needs, such as more free places in secondary schools.

These provisions the commission recommended should apply for nine years in the first instance, with a review in the sixth year. And if there is no marked decrease in the disparity then the whole position should be reviewed.

Most of these recommendations have been implemented. Since 1970 no less than fourteen junior secondary schools have been established by purely Fijian authorities in the rural areas, with substantial government support in terms of funds, equipment and staff. The commission recommended that six large and fully equipped junior secondary schools should be started and supported fully by the government. If this recommendation had been followed strictly, local initiative would have been stifled and many Fijian students in the rural areas would have been denied the opportunity for secondary education. Besides, those six junior secondary schools would not have covered the whole country adequately. The localisation of the curriculum has progressed well, although it will take time to institute entirely local examinations to replace the NZ school certificate and the NZ university entrance examinations. Teacher training has improved with new diploma and degree courses at the University of the South Pacific. A teachers' college opened in Lautoka in 1978. But the results of these developments are not likely to be felt until the 1980s.

The policy that has attracted considerable criticism, from non-Fijians and Indians in particular, concerns the allocation of places and government scholarships at the University of the South Pacific. The policy is clear: 50 per cent of the scholarships will be allocated to deserving Fijian students in order to bridge the gap in educational opportunities between the major races. Of the 184 Fiji scholarship and bursary holders in 1965 36 per cent were Fijians, 41 per cent Indians, and 23 per cent others. By 1975 the Fijian population had deteriorated to a serious level so that of the 560 scholarship and bursary holders 35 per cent were Fijians, 52 per cent Indians and 13 per cent others.<sup>18</sup> The scholarship allocation was designed specifically to redress this imbalance. Also the granting of awards to suitably qualified Fijian teachers on an in-service training basis for university study is proving useful in this regard. Even after the policy has been implemented for some years, we find that at the beginning of 1977 in the University of the South Pacific, 82 Fijian students and 99 others were enrolled in the Preliminary II courses, while 39 Fijians and 61 others were taking degree courses. It is certain that if this policy were not in force,

many fewer Fijians would be enrolled in these courses at the University of the South Pacific.

Over the years there has been a shortage of suitably qualified Fijians to undertake university studies under the new scholarships allocation policy. This is a reflection of the low pass rate at the NZ university entrance examination, and the fact that some Fijian students who passed this examination did not wish to go to university; they found employment immediately on leaving school, either by choice or by force of circumstances. When the Fijian scholarship quota of funds was not used up, the balance was used on other Fijian educational items. It was not until 1977 that the Fijian quota was used up, and a few Fijian students missed out on scholarships,<sup>19</sup> a situation which is likely to be accentuated in the future as the standard of Fijian secondary education improves. This situation should not be allowed to continue; it calls for an increase in the allocation of funds to cater for all qualified Fijian students who wish to proceed to university. This is essential if the already widening and alarming disparity between Fijians and others in terms of high level manpower is to be reduced.

The critics of the policy claim that the measure discriminates against non-Fijians, Indians in particular, who were themselves quite vocal in denouncing the policy. In the circumstances the policy cannot be regarded as discriminatory because it aims to help the weaker section of the community in the educational field. Clearly, Fiji is far from being the only place in the world where in order to diminish the disparities in what one might call 'environmental opportunity', it has been found necessary to use 'positive discrimination'. India does it for the 'Untouchables', and the United States of America for the Negroes. The need for this kind of policy becomes obvious if we compare on a racial basis the number of graduates from the University of the South Pacific during the period 1971-6. Of the 374 students who graduated during this period, 23 per cent were Fijians, 48 per cent Indians, 10 per cent others from Fiji, and 19 per cent from the other Pacific Islands.<sup>20</sup> If the present trend were allowed to continue unchecked, the time would come when very few Fijians could attend the University of the South Pacific. This would surely be a paradox, that when university education is brought closer to home, one major section of the community cannot benefit from it, partly because of the way scholarships are allocated, and because their own resources will not allow them to pay for their university education in any substantial way. Fijians may be pardoned for saying that in view of the recent liberalisation in the Agricultural

Landlord and Tenants Act, where leases are issued for 30 years in the first instance, and such a measure is likely to benefit many Indian tenants, this criticism against the policy on the allocation of university scholarships shows ingratitude for Fijian generosity. Indeed it shows a certain degree of insensitivity to Fijian aspirations that could lead to a feeling of insecurity among Fijians: a fear of the day when an Indian dominated political party gains control of the reins of power in this country. The criticism of this policy by Indian leaders came at a time when the country was going to the polls in March 1977. In view of this one could probably regard the criticism as politically motivated and in the vein of political opportunism. No doubt it was responsible in part for the swing in Indian votes away from the governing Alliance Party during the March general elections. It also shows a marked lack of statesmanship on the part of Indian politicians who have criticised this policy. And from the Fijian viewpoint the Indian stand in this matter could put back multi-racial understanding between the two major races for some years.

For a long time there has been a lack of emphasis on the needs of the non-academic students; and the lack of vocational training has been a weak point in the educational system. Of course, the situation is fraught with great difficulties. Country people are likely to consider irrelevant to the needs of their children academic book-learning, but if a practical and vocational bias is introduced into the curriculum of rural schools, they are likely to regard it as second rate. This ambivalence or perhaps confusion in the needs of education requires expert public relations and a clear analysis of the educational needs and resources of the rural areas. Also tradesman's training is badly needed in the urban environment; no doubt something is being done, but more is needed.

The new emphasis on technical education is bound to benefit the Fijians generally. The courses being run at the Derrick Technical Institute and those that will be mounted at the Ba Technical Centre will undoubtedly be of value to Fijians who take courses there. However, these are likely to be people who have had a reasonable level of secondary education, and are destined for urban employment. In a rural setting, Ratu Kadavulevu School in Londoni, Tailevu has been running a number of valuable trade courses in carpentry, metal work and agriculture that are of much value to students in later life. However, it seems that many students who go through such courses find their way to urban centres for employment there.

It seems then that there is merit in giving serious consideration to starting suitable technical courses in junior secondary schools, aimed at those students who are not likely to proceed beyond that level. The students will return to the village and a suitable training in technical skills will be invaluable both to themselves and in their attempt to better Fijian living conditions in the rural areas. I am thinking particularly of skills in house building, the repair of household appliances such as stoves, motor mowers, benzine lamps and so on. Such skills cannot fail to be very useful in the rural areas. Although the government is implementing a policy of establishing multicraft centres, they ought to be extended not only in number but also in the range of activities they involve themselves in. This will tax government's capacity to provide adequate staff, but it may be possible to start in a small way initially, and in any case a definite push should be made in the provision of suitable staff. It may be possible to consider the use of existing qualified personnel in other government departments if the program of vocational training at the rural level is to be pushed with some vigour.

A number of other policy choices have been pursued by the Ministry of Education, and their combined effect is to pay particular attention and to give greater support to the education of Fijians. These include the allocation of building and hostel grants to school committees, the remission of fees in secondary schools, the payment of fees by the government for Classes 1 to 6, and the granting of a transport subsidy to assist the daily travel of students to and from school. These areas of educational support are available to all schools, but it appears that a special effort is being made to lighten the burden of Fijian parents in their individual and collective effort to provide a good education for their children. This sort of policy can be justified on a number of grounds. It aims to help the weaker community attain a better place in the life of the country, and this is an investment for stability in the future. Classrooms and hostels built of permanent materials are undoubtedly desirable and a good atmosphere is conducive to better learning. The allocation of punts and outboard motors to assist in the transport of students, especially in the outer islands, is a most welcome subsidy; so is the provision of free and partly-free places in the secondary schools and fee-free education for Classes 1 to 6. All these factors can be regarded as environmental in nature for they provide the conditions and surroundings for the education of the Fijian student. The core of the problem is the student himself. It is for him to adopt a conscientious attitude to his

schooling, with a determination to give of his best. Without this I am inclined to think that all the external support that may be given to the Fijian student will only come to naught.

**The teacher: an agent of change**

The teacher has an important role to play in the community in which he lives far beyond the confines of his classroom and school compound. This is particularly true in the rural schools isolated by distance and the lack of communication facilities with the major urban centres. Very often the local school teacher is the only person with a reasonable standard of education in his community. The local people go to him for advice on all sorts of matters: they go to him when there is an accident in the village; they discuss village development projects with him. In this context the teacher is placed in a strategic position in terms of village attitude, which he is well placed to influence. This raises the point concerning the education of teachers, which must be broadly based. It may be desirable to give him a sound general grounding in social change and development policies, at least an awareness of the issues associated with the villagers' attempts to move into the modern world, through education and other avenues. This would be additional to his training to give him competence as a classroom teacher.

Fijian teachers posted to rural schools invariably teach in districts in which they are strangers. This requires of them considerable tact in dealing with the local populace, but after a while, mutual confidence is usually gained. But in some situations, teachers might over-indulge in the hospitality of the local community and over-do the socialising process to the extent that their classroom work suffers. Complaints are then made to the authorities by the school committee about the teacher's performance, and this often leads to his transfer to another school. Perhaps there are the odd cases of teachers who have changed schools quite often because of this kind of difficulty. It is unfortunate, however, that difficulties of this sort have arisen, and criticism of them may be valid if one considers the grave responsibility entrusted to teachers, Fijian teachers in particular, for the education of the Fijian race. This kind of criticism was made recently when it was stated that present day teachers are not as dedicated to their work as were teachers in previous years; teachers are more materialistic in their outlook. This criticism is not groundless, but it seems to be a criticism of a large minority. It is not surprising if a large proportion of Fijian teachers are becoming materialistic in their outlook on life; it would be surprising if few of

them have developed this attitude, in view of their contact with a wide range of local socio-economic situations during the course of their posting from one school to another. And besides materialism is a major feature of the modern world, and Fiji is not immune from its influences.

Fijian teachers have had their professional association—the Fijian Teachers' Association—for almost fifty years. But so far this association has concentrated on improving the welfare of members in relation to salary and conditions of service. In this regard it has succeeded in obtaining better conditions of service for its members. It is only in recent years that the Fijian Teachers' Association has been involved in organising in-service courses to improve the professional competence of its members. This is a welcome development that is not only overdue, but should be stepped up considerably in future. The Fijian Teachers' Association must be seen to contribute also to improving the professional competence of its members, and not only operate as a union whose primary objective is to improve the take-home pay and fringe benefits of Fijian teachers.

### **Fijian sacrifices for education**

One cannot ignore the significant efforts Fijian parents are making in order to provide an education for their children. They will sacrifice certain objectives and dispense with certain essential items of living in order to pay school fees or contribute to the school building fund. All this is done because there is a strong desire to improve the standard of education for children.

We have seen that parents will migrate to towns in order to find jobs that will allow them to be close to their children's school, and at the same time give the children the necessary support. Many children live with relatives and attend schools in urban areas. In many instances throughout Fiji, villagers will spend considerable effort to raise money in order to improve the education of their children. Funds will be collected for building new classroom blocks. Groups of villagers will leave their village to cut cane on contract in the cane areas for raising school funds; they may even go as far as New Zealand for this purpose. Very often the members of the village employed in urban areas are approached formally to contribute to the educational efforts of their village, and they are usually not found lacking in their support. In certain parts of Fiji about 60 per cent of the total income is spent on social advancement in the village, on housing and educational projects which are of lasting benefit to the village.<sup>21</sup> In many instances

parents will forgo expenditure on items of popular consumption in order to accumulate sufficient cash to pay for boarding school fees and school uniforms for their children. Such sacrifices are commonly made by Fijians because they regard the provision of a good education for their children as an obligation they cannot avoid and which should be paid at any price. At the same time such efforts are made because it is hoped that the children, through education, will be able to bring a better life to the family and this should more than compensate the parents for the sacrifices they have made in order to educate their children.

In recent years fund raising efforts have been common in all the fourteen provinces. Many provinces have held annual festivals for fund raising, and a large proportion of the money collected in this way has gone towards education projects, either to meet capital expenses such as buildings or the school fees of pupils from the province attending secondary school elsewhere in Fiji.<sup>22</sup> Most provinces that have raised funds in this way have collected sums ranging from \$20,000 to \$80,000. The preparations for such fund raising efforts have taken much time, but they have been worthwhile to the extent that they have become annual events. Often such efforts begin at the village level, and there is a sense of inter-village and inter-*tikina* competition that ensures the participation of most village residents. At the same time the support of the urban residents of the provinces is always forthcoming in moral and financial terms. And very often the town residents of the particular province contribute the largest sums to such communal fund raising efforts.

### **Education for what?**

It would seem obvious and indisputable that the current education system and its curriculum prepare the Fijian for a life away from his village. At least it does not appear to be providing in any substantial way the kind of education needed for village living. Many if not the majority of Fijian parents and their children see education as a legitimate means of leaving the village. Life seems to be too humdrum in the village, and access to the good things in life does not seem to be readily available while living there. Thus it is considered that in order to obtain such amenities as are available outside the village, one has to either work in the town or attain a standard of education that will enable one to command a level of employment that will bring such amenities within one's reach.

The school system appears to emphasise preparation for life in town. It does not do much to show the value of village and rural



living. It might usefully be adjusted so as to help the pupil see the changes taking place in the countryside, and at the same time help him to prepare himself for life there. This is important in view of the large number of Fijian students who do not go beyond the Form IV level in secondary school and are forced to find a living in the urban areas. The school system does not prepare them well for a life in town, and at the same time, it fails to give them a good grounding in the basic skills they will need to be effective units in the rapidly changing rural areas.

However, much effort is being made to make the school curriculum relevant, but it will be some time before the effect of the new development is seen and proved to be useful, despite the introduction of new courses in modern studies and the greater emphasis in the curriculum given to the Fijian and the South Pacific environment. Although some technical education is provided at present, it is essentially an education for employment in various technical fields in the urban areas; there is no room as yet for employment in the rural areas for such students of existing technical institutes who successfully complete their period of apprenticeship. And if the early school leavers are to contribute usefully to life in the villages and towns, then a new orientation is needed in the school curriculum. This is especially critical for Fijians, because education can open the opportunity to a meaningful and effective participation in the economy and life of Fiji.

## 6

# *The Fijian and Economic Opportunity*

Economic development among Fijians in contemporary times can be identified as a number of broad periods each with distinctive characteristics. The years from 1945 to 1958 saw Fijian economic development, especially land development based on the village program of work. Developments during this period were largely communal in their approach, and because of their link with the village program of work emphasised the production of subsistence crops like cassava, *dalo*, bananas and assorted vegetables. Copra and bananas were the main cash crops. At the end of this period economic development officers were appointed to the Fijian administration so as to concentrate on the formulation of specific development proposals in various parts of the country. The next period ran until the late 1960s, when development was based on set schemes and particular crops. This was the period of land subdivision and development. It was also the time when the coconut subsidy scheme was implemented. The third period could be said to have started about 1970 when a project approach gained prominence, with encouragement being given also to individual enterprise. However, since 1945 a number of developments have occurred like the co-operative movement, the provincial council attempts at economic development, and the efforts by numerous Fijians to be involved more and more through commercial ventures of their own in the cash economy. But before some of these ventures are reviewed, a broad look at Fijian economic activity seems desirable.

### **Economic activity**

When commenting on the economic contribution of the Fijians in 1959, Spate remarked that:

against the Fijian half-share of copra and whole share of bananas must be set Indian dominance in cane, the most rewarding crop with export values twice those of the two put together. There is also the ever visible evidence on increasing Indian wealth from secondary industry and services.

Although the Fijians by and large are a good deal better off than the great majority of small cultivators in Asia and Africa—and even parts of Europe—they have no way of knowing this; all they can see is an originally immigrant community, 50 years ago as a whole much poorer than themselves but now making the economic running. Economically they are weakest of the three major communities.<sup>1</sup>

In very general terms the position has not changed markedly twenty years later, although there have been some improvements in the Fijian economic position in some areas of activity. New lines of economic development have been instituted involving some Fijian participation; new areas of policy have been advanced by the government since independence in 1970; but on the whole the Fijian remains economically the weakest of the three major communities.

At the time of the 1966 population census, 56,154 Fijians were recorded as being economically active of which 45 per cent were engaged in subsistence agriculture with some or no cash crops and 20 per cent in other primary industries such as commercial farming, mining and forestry.<sup>2</sup> Of the 58,705 Indians economically active the proportion in subsistence agriculture was negligible, while 51 per cent were mainly in commercial agriculture.<sup>3</sup> And of the 31,326 people engaged in secondary industry, construction, commerce, transport, hotels and entertainment, there were 61 per cent Indians, 25.6 per cent Fijians, and 13.4 per cent others.<sup>4</sup> By 1976 of the 50,363 persons engaged in manufacturing, commerce and transport, 58 per cent were Indians, 32 per cent Fijians and 10 per cent others.<sup>5</sup> These figures reflect greater development in the intercensal period, but particularly since 1970. But in these categories of occupation the dominance of the Europeans, part-Europeans, Chinese and Indians in the managerial, executive and supervisory grades, with 58 and 24 per cent respectively of such grades, with only 11 per cent Fijians in the managerial group in 1966, persisted into the 1970s. Moreover, in the skilled worker category the number of Fijians was less than half that of the Indians—2,016 to 5,424.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting too to note that the proportion of Fijians engaged in specialist agriculture had increased from 12 per cent in 1956 to 26 per cent in 1966; this proportion may well have risen to between 35 to 40 per cent by the time of the 1976 census. Notable too was the decline in the proportion of villagers with no cash crop from 31 per cent in 1956 to 25 per cent in 1966; it may have dropped further to near 10 per cent by 1976. There had been improvements also in the cane sector

where the number of Fijian cane farmers trebled between 1956 and 1966, and by 1969 of the 15,600 cane smallholdings, 2,700 were farmed by Fijians. Largely because of the development of new cane areas, the total number of Fijian cane farmers could very well have been around 3,500 in 1979.

Clearly, Fijian development in cash cropping since 1960 is significant, although there is still room for further improvement and expansion. Fijian coconut groves have expanded remarkably in the 1960s, largely as a result of the government's subsidy scheme, and this has resulted in the entry into the cash sector of an increasing number of villagers in the 1970s. There have been developments also in other areas of cash cropping. Cocoa was dominated by Fijians and in many cases it was grown with bananas which have completely disappeared as an export crop; but poor prices in the world market saw the decline of cocoa cultivation among Fijians. With the expansion of coconut growing have come cattle as an aid in coconut grove maintenance and also as an important source of cash to some villagers. At the same time a number of Fijian cattle schemes have been developed on rolling land in eastern Viti Levu. Although this line of development has taken time to establish itself, it has proved to be an important commercial activity to those engaged in it, particularly those near the main urban market of Suva. Growing urbanisation since 1960 has increased the demand for root crops and vegetables in the main centres such as Suva, Lautoka, Labasa, Ba and Nadi, where produce marketing has grown as a major source of cash to many Fijian villagers near such urban markets. Similarly the cultivation of root crops has expanded in places like Waibau and Lomaivuna in eastern Viti Levu, and at Nadrau, Navai and Nadarivatu which have specialised in vegetable production for both the urban markets and the tourist hotels in north and western Viti Levu. Such developments can be associated with the greater extension activities of the Department of Agriculture in the 1970s.

Obviously, 'marketing is one of the most intractable of the purely economic problems hampering Fijian development.' In order to help remove this problem the government set up the National Marketing Authority (NMA) in 1971. It aims to assist in the marketing of produce from the remote areas in the interior of Viti Levu and the outer islands. Its main objectives are to provide an accessible and guaranteed market to rural producers, maintain prices at reasonable levels, and in this way combat inflation. The extension arm of the Department of Agriculture was to have played a leading role in the whole marketing process. Extension workers

were supposed to encourage farmers to grow more root crops to sell to the NMA, and arrange transport for such produce, especially produce from the outer islands. All this was part of the effort to boost production in the rural areas. Hardaker has noted a major inconsistency in the objectives of the NMA.<sup>8</sup> The maintenance of a reasonable price is not necessarily what the farmers desire; they are more likely to sell their produce where returns will be high, and this is not in keeping with the aim to keep down inflation. Also they want to be in a position to sell their crop when it is ready. This has not always been possible through the NMA, and has discouraged many farmers from selling to that organisation. Many farmers including Fijians who used to sell their produce to the NMA now sell in the Suva market.

No doubt the NMA faces a dilemma in price fixing in seeking to provide growers with an attractive marketing opportunity while simultaneously holding down retail prices. Present prices do not provide a strong incentive to farmers throughout the country. Some products are highly seasonal. The NMA might consider paying more during the off-season period and less during the period of relative surplus. This might help to ensure continuous supply during the year.

There is little doubt that Fijian farmers will grow crops that will give them the best return and where markets are assured. This is the kind of rational behaviour that is typical of the so-called economic man. The old unqualified belief that Fijians will not meet obligations is no longer valid in the 1970s.

### **The co-operative society**

In terms of introducing imported consumer goods to the rural Fijian population, the co-operative movement has undoubtedly played the leading role. More than anything else it has done the most to introduce a knowledge of commercial transaction to the remotest villages and islands. Thousands of village co-operative officials have taken government-sponsored courses in co-operative book-keeping and accounting to a level adequate for the daily transactions of village co-operative stores.

The co-operative movement has reached the length and breadth of the entire archipelago. There is no doubt that co-operative stores have assisted in instilling among villagers a sense of commercial participation. They have also played an invaluable role in the distribution of consumer goods and in the marketing of a number of basic commodities such as copra and *yaqona*. However, their economic bases vary considerably, for these depend so much on the

marketable resources of the people concerned. Their rise and fall, and their relative strength, must inevitably depend on the price structure of their main cash source and the price of commodities they sell to their members. On the whole, the economic base of Fijian primary co-operatives is weak. This seems to be the result largely of their major function as a distributing agency and the fact that many purchase their goods mainly from retail sources and not directly from the supplier/manufacturer or from overseas. At the same time their individual market is small in size and in most cases confined to the village, and in any case the effective market for each primary co-operative store seems to be on an average no more than 200 to 300 persons.

Despite the improvements and expansion over the last thirty years, a number of problems still beset the co-operative movement. There is a shortage of management skills at the village level, and this has led to the control of co-operative stores being in the hands of a few village people, who in some cases, have taken advantage of their position to feather their own nest—a problem that has existed since the beginning of the co-operative movement in Fiji. And despite the training given by the Co-operative Societies Department to village store officials, the limited number of people at village level who can benefit from such training courses, together with their limited potential, means that it is difficult for their training to progress beyond a very rudimentary level. Although the number of village store officials who can draw up a balance sheet has increased over the years, they are unable to proceed beyond this stage. This will undoubtedly mean that the village co-operative will remain consumer oriented in its basic objective and function, while assisting to facilitate the marketing of the people's produce to the major urban markets.

And marketing still remains an intractable problem with which the co-operative movement is trying to grapple. The problem of marketing is most critical in the outer islands of Lau, Lomaiviti and Kadavu, which depend so much on local shipping for the maintenance of a regular supply of consumer goods and for the sale of their produce. In those areas too the co-operative movement has developed furthest, and costs are likely to be highest, particularly because of the distances involved and handling costs. In an attempt to organise the primary co-operative societies at village level and in order to gain for them some important bargaining and trading strength, secondary co-operative associations, comprising primary societies, have been formed on an island, *tikina* or provincial basis. These associations are now handling the bulk purchasing of

popular consumer commodities for the primary societies which in turn buy their requirements from the association. It is a matter of simple economics that the association must meet its overhead costs, which are passed on to the primary societies through higher prices of consumer goods. And it does not take long for the villager to realise that the same goods selling in their village store, bought through the co-operative association, are much cheaper when purchased in any of the retail outlets in Suva. Although the formation of such secondary co-operative associations imposes a financial burden on the primary societies and their members, direct grants by the Co-operative Department, in cash and in kind have helped to keep overhead costs at the barest minimum. Where roads have been constructed, the department has provided vehicles to assist in the distribution and movement of goods, people and produce. The value of this official support to the co-operative associations will lie in its capacity to reduce costs further, although it is already serving a useful role in facilitating the distribution of goods among rural Fijians. And the support it has received so far from Fijians is due largely to the official sanction given to it and the support it receives in cash and in kind from the government, without which it would appear to hold little attraction for the rural people. There is a danger that it may not be able to reduce the cost of consumer commodities to the village if overheads are not maintained at an acceptable level; and steps, like direct import from overseas or purchase from manufacturers, must be taken early to avoid this danger, and in order that the support the movement already commands is not eroded.

### **Some major new developments**

Since 1960 there has been considerable economic awakening among Fijians. The Fijians and their leaders appreciated fairly early and quickly their declining relative economic status in the face of development around them, especially the growing visible wealth of urban areas, to which they contributed as consumers, without any stakes as owners. There was keen realisation of the need to do something, that their salvation must be largely within themselves, and that some internal readjustment was urgently called for in their own social and administrative organisations if they were to cope effectively with and attain a satisfactory place in the affairs of Fiji. Such a situation brought home to the Fijians the need to utilise existing avenues and internal links and their institutions, in a broad measure of self-help that must be underlined by self-management, self-reliance and self-discipline. But such attitudes and habits take

time to filter down from the top of the hierarchy to the lowest levels. Also, their spread and the speed with which they are accepted has not and cannot be uniform throughout the country. But they have been accepted as essential first steps in the overall general development of the Fijian people, and without such first steps little else can be achieved.

Additionally, there has been a keen awareness by the government of the generally weak economic position of the Fijians. Although the Fijian is not poor, he has resources such as land which cannot be converted or developed rapidly into cash. At the same time he faces the problem of managing such resources so that these can realise for him the ingredients necessary for success in the wider field of commerce. But the government has not been entirely inactive in trying to obtain for the Fijian a better share of the economic life of Fiji. However, there are difficulties partly because of the complexity of the Fijian situation itself and in part due also to the unfavourable circumstances with which Fijian ventures must compete particularly with those already well established in the local commercial scene. Realising the weak position of the Fijian in commerce the government has been committed to a policy of promoting the direct participation of the Fijian people in the commercial life of the country.

### **Land settlement**

During the two decades after 1945 land settlement by the *galala* started to gain some momentum, despite the lack of official support for the movement. Some Fijians moved out of the village and lived on their own *mataqali* land or on land they borrowed from relatives and others. Rising population, the increasing disparity in economic status between Fijians and others, and the need to increase agricultural production for local use and for export demanded that a new approach to development should be taken. This led to the establishment of the Land Development Authority in 1961. By 1964 more than a thousand new farms were established, mainly in Viti Levu. Lomaivuna alone had more than 200 farms established for banana cultivation by 1965. The coconut subsidy scheme had done much to push the program of land subdivision in the outer islands. At Waibau no less than seventy-two blocks were subdivided and allocated by 1962. Although only tenancies-at-will were approved initially the lots were properly surveyed and individual titles issued in most cases. But in nearly all the coconut subdivisions, no negotiable titles were issued.



Particularly on the set schemes in Viti Levu, such as Lomaivuna and Waibau (Map 2), land clearing was pursued with some vigour but the failure to find a remunerative crop with an assured market led to discouragement and the slowing down of progress. Land settlement anywhere needs a strong professional organisation, detailed soil survey, research and proper testing of crops. These preconditions did not exist in the Land Development Authority, and by 1967 the organisation began to be run down because the objective of increased agricultural production was not being achieved. The senior sections of the organisation were absorbed into District Administration while the Agriculture Department took over its field staff and the responsibility for the schemes.

#### **Waibau subdivision**

The subdivision at Waibau was undertaken in 1959 by the NLTB, with the approval and support of the landowners and land development organisation of the central government. Indeed the views of the development staff of central government were necessary before lots were allocated to particular individuals in the



Plate 6 Waibau farmers, ginger crop

settlement. Although the subdivision was undertaken at a time when the Land Development Authority was not yet established, its objectives were similar to those of other settlements established later by the authority. The aim was to produce root crops and vegetables for sale in Suva; bananas and cocoa were to be grown as cash crops for export.

Between 1957 and 1958 twenty Fijian settlers, mostly from Lau, made formal presentation of *tabua*, mats and kerosene to the landowners at nearby Vatuvula and Sawani requesting them to

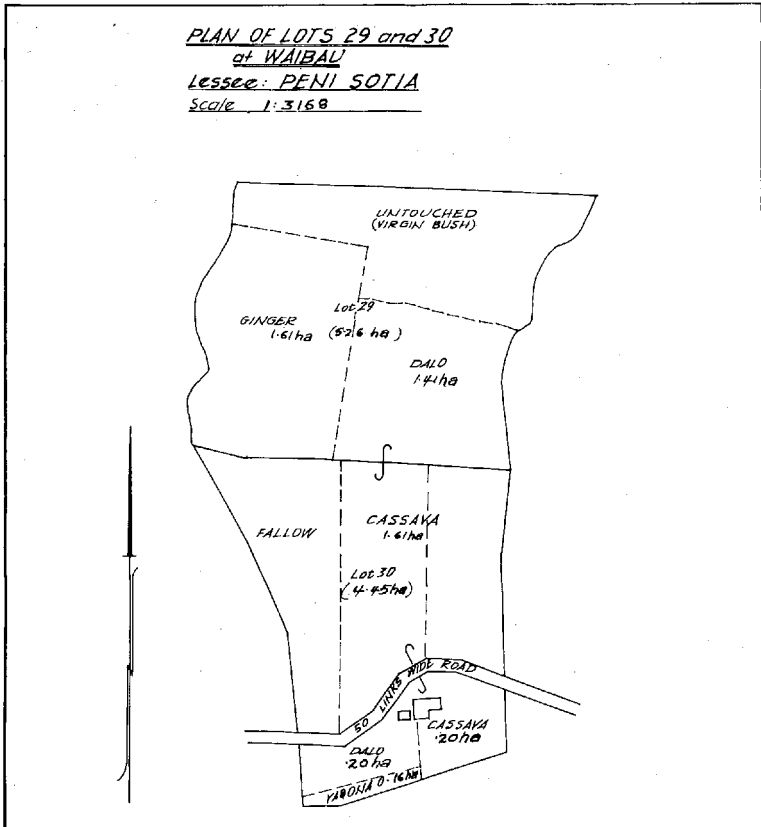


Fig 2a Plan of Lots 29 and 30 at Waibau. Lessee Peni Sotia

allocate land for cultivation. These early settlers lost no time in clearing the areas allocated to them by the landowners and by the time the NLTB formalised the allocations and subdivided the area in 1960, the settlers were already established. Today there are seventy-two lots ranging in size from 4 to 12 hectares. In many cases, especially on the lots near the Sawani-Serea road and on the main road through the subdivision, the initial forest cover has been cleared, and the land is under a system of rotational cropping. With the granting of formal leases for thirty years at \$1 per acre per year the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board advanced money to help the tenants build their homes.

The settlers concentrated on the production of root crops and bananas. With the disappearance of bananas as an export crop in the late 1960s, the sale of root crops in Suva market and to the NMA became the main source of cash to the settlers. In the early 1970s some of the original tenants, because of ill-health, the difficulty of paying rent arrears in the absence of rewarding cash crops, sold their leases to Chinese farmers, of whom there are three in the subdivision, and to other Fijians. These Chinese farmers developed intensive farming and produced *dalo*, cabbage and beans for the Suva market. About this time the market for ginger in North America was opening up. They lost no time in switching to ginger as their main cash crop. It was not until 1975-6 that some Fijians in Waibau started growing ginger; they now find their effort rewarding. Five case studies will illustrate what has happened in specific cases (Fig.2).<sup>9</sup>

### *Peni Sotia*

Peni came originally from the village of Qalikarua in Matuku, Lau. He is in his late fifties. Peni was educated at Vatuloa Government School in Lakeba, Lau, and also at Suva Methodist Primary School reaching class 7; then he transferred to Lelean Memorial School, Davuilevu where he learned carpentry. On leaving school at the end of 1935 he joined the engineering section of the Public Works Department. During World War II he served with the Merchant Navy. He was demobilised in 1945, when he returned to the PWD, but this time as a carpenter, where he remained until 1957. In that year he left the PWD to take up land in Waibau as a farmer. He was one of the original tenants in the subdivision. Peni owns Lots 19 and 30 in the subdivision with a joint area of eleven hectares. His rent of \$27 per year is up to date. He lives with his wife and niece on

his farm. As a pioneer he has had to clear his block of virgin bush. He receives some assistance from his relatives who come to stay with him for brief periods.

Peni's house is fairly spacious, one of the largest in the settlement. It is built of wood and iron, with internal toilet, a large sitting room that is well furnished, and a large kitchen. He borrowed \$4,800 from the FDB in 1965 for the construction of his house. He borrowed another \$800 in 1969 for land clearing. He is up to date in his loan repayment.

Like other farmers in Waibau Peni grew *dalo*, cassava and vegetables as his main cash crops. He sold in the Suva Market and to the National Marketing Authority. But since 1977, with the expansion in the demand for ginger in the North American market Peni moved to ginger as his main cash crop. In 1977 he produced 0.8 hectares of ginger; in 1978 he will harvest 1.6 hectares of this crop. In addition he has 1.4 hectares of *dalo*, two hectares of cassava and ninety metres of *yaqona*. This gives a total of four hectares under cultivation. The rest of his land is under fallow (Fig. 2a). Peni hires labour from the locality at times, but mainly for the cultivation and harvesting of ginger. From his 0.8 hectares of ginger in 1977, Peni earned a gross income of \$6,000; after production expenses were met he was left with a balance of some \$4,000 of which \$2,500 was paid as a deposit on a small truck he uses to transport people and produce from Waibau and other areas to Suva and Nausori.

Over the years Peni has spent his surplus income to buy shares in various enterprises which have offered their shares for sale to the public. He is now involved in a local marketing venture that aims to link up with an overseas firm in the export-import business. Others in the settlement are likely to join this venture. If the venture succeeds it could open up other avenues for the sale of produce from Waibau.

There is no doubt that Peni has the initiative and drive to do things to improve his own conditions.

### *Jone Dau*

Jone comes from Mualevu, in Vanua Balavu, northern Lau; he is in his mid-fifties. He occupies Lot 20 which has a total area of 5.5 hectares. His rent of \$13 per year is up to date, although he has had some difficulty in meeting his rent commitment. With him are his wife and their eight children, one of whom is married. Other relatives come and stay with

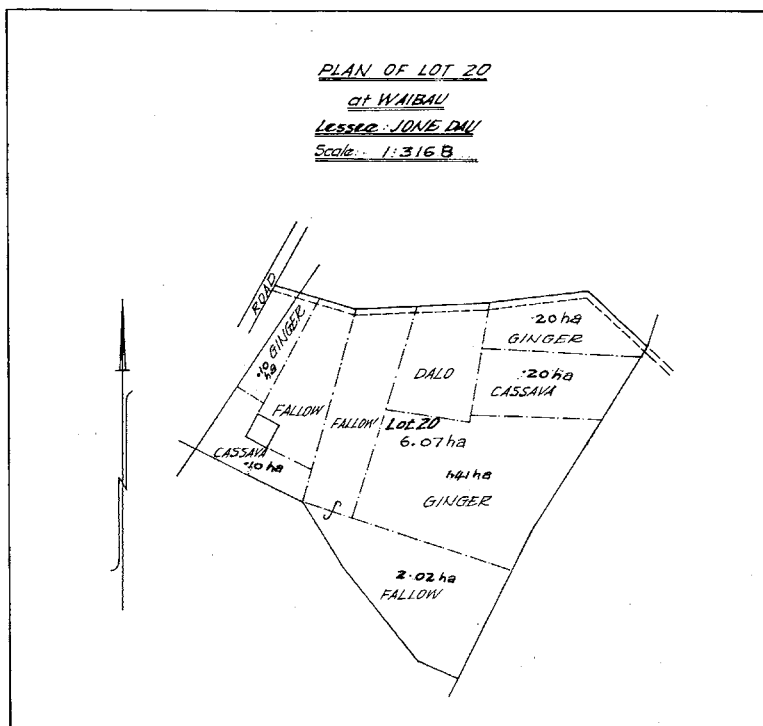


Fig 2b Plan of Lot 20 at Waibau. Lessee Jone Dau

them at times and help on the farm. Jone left village school fairly early. He served in the Solomons during World War II and returned to the village when war ended in 1945. In July 1960 Jone took up his land in Waibau. *Dalo*, cassava and vegetables sold to the NMA and in the Suva market have been his main source of cash. Out of his savings over the years he bought \$2,400 worth of materials—timber and roofing iron—for his house. He borrowed part of the money from the Fiji Development Bank about ten years ago; at the time there was no access road and he had to carry the bulk of the material over about 5 kilometres of rough and muddy track.

In 1961 Jone borrowed \$300 from the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board for establishment. Another \$1,000 was

borrowed in 1969 to extend his cultivation. In 1975 the Fiji Development Bank loaned him \$600 for the establishment of 0.5 hectares of *dalo* and in 1977 he was given a further \$1,500 for ginger cultivation. Obviously, Jone appears to be a satisfactory client of the Fiji Development Bank.

In 1977 Jone sold \$8,000 worth of ginger. Production cost was about \$3,500 including labour, fertiliser and transport, leaving a net income from ginger alone of at least \$4,500. Like many other farmers in Waibau he does an 8-hour day, five days a week on his farm, and on the sixth day he takes his produce of vegetables and root crops for sale in the Suva market. He goes to Suva once a week to sell produce and replenish his supplies.

In 1978 Jone planted 1.2 hectares of ginger, forty metres of *dalo*, seventy metres of cassava, 20 metres each of kumala, cabbage and french beans. He keeps two head of cattle to help in weed control on his farm (Fig.2b).

Jone plans to diversify his land use. He wants to start a piggery, and later poultry. His savings from ginger might be spent on these projects. He owns a small generator which he uses to pump water for cleaning ginger during the harvesting season.

### *Samuela Voro*

Samuela, an ex-serviceman, is a relative of the owner of Lot 52, Viliame Salabogi, who also lives on the farm. This lot was allocated to Are Toka in July 1960, who transferred it to the present tenant in June 1971. Samuela moved to the block in 1973. He comes from Tovu village in Totoya, Lau. Samuela is 63 years old; he attended village school on his home island and left early. He has held various labouring jobs in Suva including work on the Kings Wharf. He has been on the trader *Enna G* which travels between the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand. His main crop in 1977 was *dalo* from which he earned about \$235. In 1978 he is cultivating 140 metres of ginger, seventy metres of *dalo*, twenty metres of *yaqona* and 0.8 hectare of cassava (Fig.2c).

Samuela wants to expand his production of ginger and root crops, but he does not have the financial backing to do so. The house he occupies, of wood and iron, was built for \$1,000. His wife helps him on the farm regularly; their children are grown up and married, but relatives and friends come in at times.

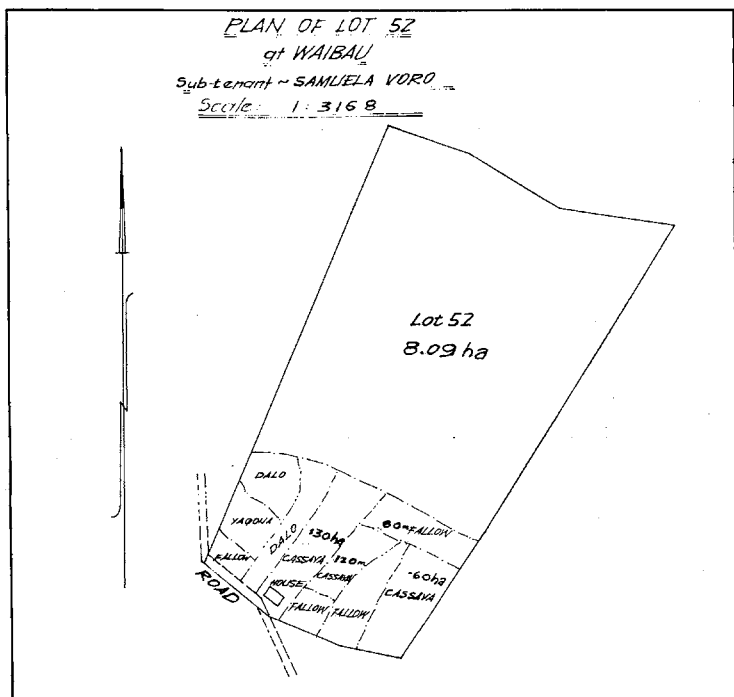


Fig 2c Plan of Lot 52 at Waibau. Sub-tenant Samuela Voro

The fact that he has only usufructuary rights on a *vakavanua* basis limits his activities on the land because he has to consult Salabogi before any new development takes place on the farm. Rent arrears on this lot were \$19.26 at the end of 1977. He cultivates only about one-third of the lot and pays his share of the rent to Salabogi.

#### *Pita Gasa*

Pita comes from Ono-i-Lau. He owns Lots 6 and 16 with a total area of 8.8 hectares. Lot 16 was allocated to Filipe Tabua, his father, in July 1960 who transferred it to Gasa in October 1970, when Gasa first moved into Waibau. Lot 6 was given to Jone Pera in July 1960 and was transferred to Gasa in October 1974. He lives on the farm with his wife and three

children, one of whom goes to school, and the other two, a son and a daughter, help on the farm. Gasa has had very little formal education. He is an ex-serviceman. His savings from the sale of root crops enabled him to build his house for which the materials cost \$1,000 in 1967.

In 1977 he earned \$1,115 from the sale of ginger of which about \$500 was spent on fertiliser, transport and labour. He

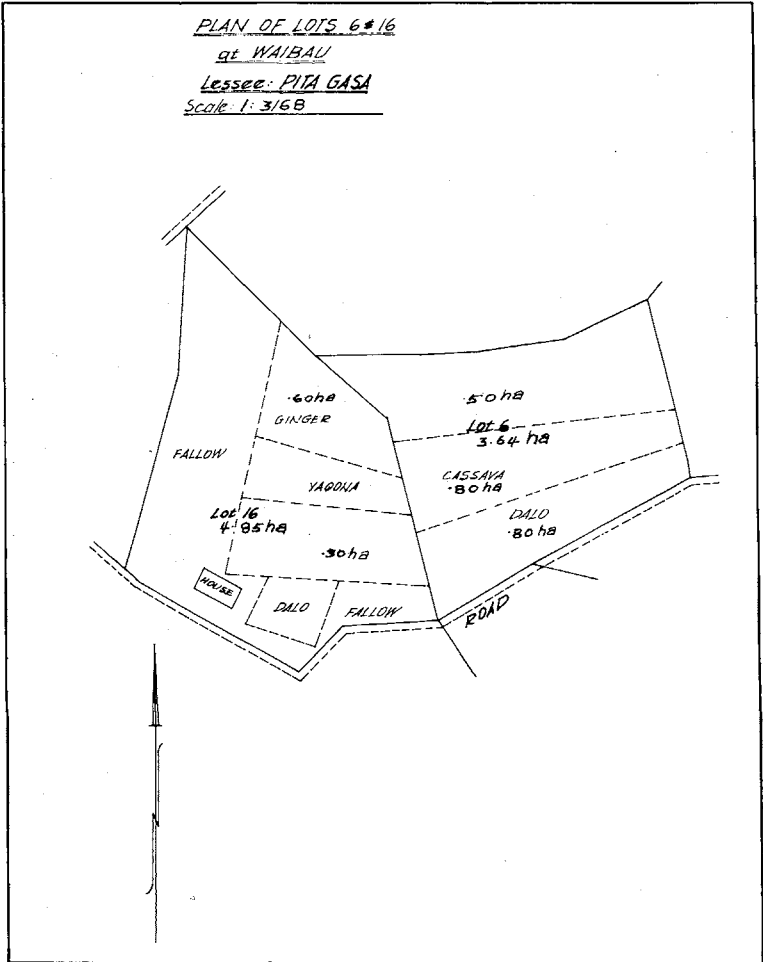


Fig 2d Plan of Lots 6 and 16 at Waibau. Lessee Pita Gasa



sells root crops and vegetables quite regularly in the Suva market. Gasa's rent is not in arrears.

In 1978 Gasa is cultivating 0.8 hectare of *dalo*, 1.1 hectares of ginger, 0.8 hectares of cassava and 0.3 hectare of *yaqona*; the remaining 7.2 hectares of his land are under fallow (Fig.2d).

*Alipate Vodo*

Alipate comes from Oni-i-Lau; he is in his mid-fifties. He is the occupier of Lots 14 and 15 with a total area of 8.4 hectares. His rent is paid up to date. He lives on his farm with his wife, one son and two daughters. Alipate has held various labouring jobs in Suva since discharge from the army

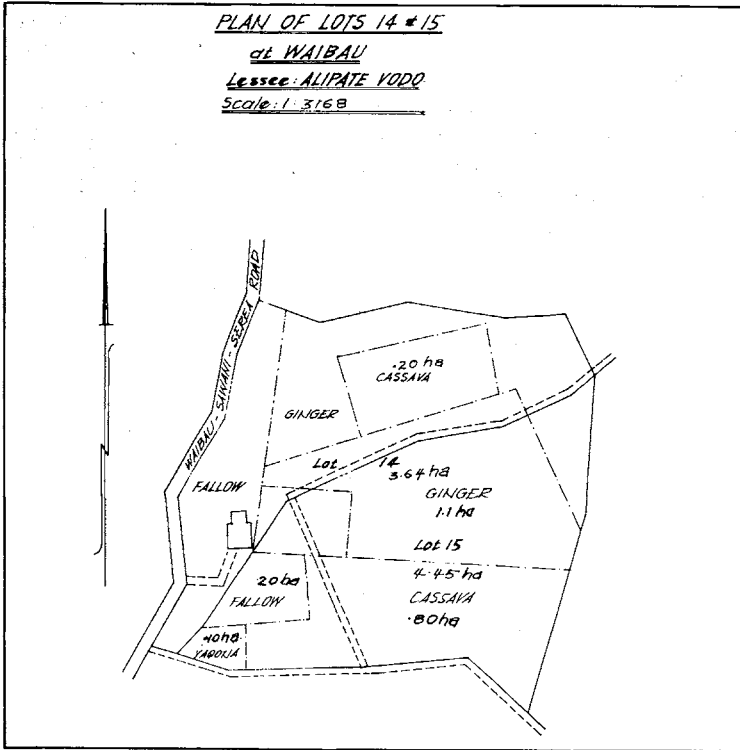


Fig 2e Plan of Lots 14 and 15 at Waibau. Lessee Alipate Vodo

after World War II. He settled on his land in the mid-1960s and with his savings built a home of timber and corrugated iron for \$2,000. He sells root crops and vegetables regularly in the Suva market. In 1977 he earned \$4,500 from ginger of which \$1,300 went towards labour, fertiliser and transport. After other household costs were met, he was left with a net income of \$3,000. During 1978 Alipate is cultivating two hectares of ginger, forty metres of *yaqona*, 0.2 hectare *dalo*, one hectare cassava, and ninety metres of *kumala*.

Alipate was a shareholder in the Moce-Ono Co-operative which was established in Waibau in the mid-1960s and is not operating now through lack of support. It was obviously easier and more convenient for members to buy their supplies from Suva weekly, after each market day (Fig.2e).

### **Provincial economic development**

Fijian efforts on a provincial basis to promote their economic advance are not new. However, for a long time such efforts have not been very effective because of a number of factors; notable among them are the lack of management skills at the provincial level, the lack of an infrastructure necessary to the success of economic development in the provinces, and the absence of a clear plan of operation. The attempts at economic development within the province and by the province in the 1960s had small beginnings. They involved small agricultural and fishing projects in their early days. Some funds were allocated for this purpose from the central government through the Fijian administration and were allocated to the provinces for advance to worthy and deserving groups and individuals.<sup>10</sup> And the projects which were financed depended on the particular circumstances of the provinces and the people who could be assisted. In most cases they involved root crop development for the urban market, small fishing schemes, and the purchase of planting equipment like ploughs for sugar cane farmers. But in most cases, because of the problems noted above, such projects did not attract much success and could not be sustained, so that little or no sign of their activity remains today.

By the mid-1960s provincial councils were already viewing their economic position with some concern. This feeling encouraged the search for avenues of raising finance for general development, and particularly those avenues that would encourage maximum participation by the people of the province. This led to fund raising efforts through festivals, focusing the provincial effort on a particular time during the year in which each segment of the people

of the province would submit their contribution to the overall effort. In this way, large sums of money, from \$20,000 to \$80,000, were collected. Such fund raising efforts tended to strengthen the traditional links within the province which were used as the basis on which funds would be allocated and accumulated throughout the villages of the province. The spirit of inter-district competition, clean rivalry, and generosity were strengthened and they were largely responsible for the success of those fund raising efforts. Funds raised in this way have helped to finance the provincial administration in times of difficulty, when rates collected have been inadequate to keep things going. One might well ask why funds collected largely for developmental purposes should be used to maintain an administration from which the people gain little direct benefit. This point needs serious thought, and discontinuation might well be considered, so that funds raised for development are spent on development projects. At the same time, and more importantly, such funds have enabled some provincial councils to invest in a number of viable and rewarding ventures in the tourist industry and other commercial concerns.<sup>11</sup> They have also helped in a number of major educational projects, especially in the financing of junior secondary schools in the rural areas, and have helped pay the school fees of Fijian students at secondary level. Bearing in mind their limited and somewhat generalised objectives, these fund raising festivals have been effective and successful. Up to 1976, the Fijian people have raised more than half a million dollars in this way, and a number of successful and cash earning investments have been made from the funds raised through provincial festivals. Some provinces have been assisted by funds raised in this way to establish provincial companies.

An extension of the provincial development concept, especially in the field of investment, is the establishment of the Cakaudrove-Bua-Macuata Holding Company. This is based on the three provinces on the islands of Vanua Levu and although its origin is fairly recent, it already owns a number of houses in addition to shares it now holds in one of the largest commercial ventures in Fiji. Only time will tell what these provincial ventures will achieve.

### **Fijian Investments and Development Corporation Ltd (FIDC)**

Discussions on the establishment of the FIDC started in 1968. It was born of the desire to form and operate a venture that was entirely Fijian, in order that something worthwhile be done to show that the Fijians were entering the commercial life of Fiji. It does not take long to realise that the total Fijian cash earning is substantial.

These incomes come from land rent, timber and gravel royalty, copra earnings, and wages. On a rough estimate, the total was placed at about \$10 million per year in 1968. It was hoped that if an entirely Fijian venture was started, some of this income, which went to purchase consumer commodities, could be channelled for worthwhile investment. And so the decision was taken by the Council of Chiefs for the formation of the FIDC. On 2 April 1969, the corporation was registered under the Companies Ordinance. The authorised share capital of the corporation was fixed at \$2 million, and at the time of incorporation, 3,135 shares at \$1 each were already taken up, and another 50,000 shares of \$1 each were being offered for public subscription.

The terms of reference of the corporation are so wide that it can participate in a very wide range of economic activities, including investment in existing operations and the development of new ventures. So far, after eight years of operation, the FIDC has invested in the tourist industry, in the sale of petrol and motor car servicing, the production of roofing iron, nails and other building materials; these three projects are on a joint venture basis, with FIDC retaining the controlling interest. Although the FIDC has been in operation for eight years now, the collection of shares from Fijians, particularly those who receive large sums of money periodically from land rent and royalties, has not been easy. By the end of 1974 the total issued capital of the corporation was \$130,175 of which the FAB held 80 per cent. Although the corporation did not make a loss in the period 1969-74, profits have been low. Perhaps it will be necessary for the FIDC to enter into a field that will be profitable, and on its own, before it can expect to attract large sums of investment income from a large number of Fijians.

After only eight years of operation, it is probably too early to judge the success or otherwise of this venture. But perhaps some preliminary remarks may not be out of place. The hope for investment by a large number of Fijians in their own organisation has not materialised. Perhaps Fijian income, though large in national total, is comparatively small on an individual basis, and therefore cannot be spared for investment purposes. Perhaps the bulk of Fijian income is already committed to various social and family needs and only a drastic adjustment in family priorities will allow investment in the FIDC. There may be some quiet doubts on the feasibility of an entirely Fijian national corporation because it has not been tried before. A large number of Fijians could have been unprepared to put their money into something untried and unknown, without realising that no gain can be expected without

some risk being taken, and especially in the field of commerce. But the future could be bright particularly in the building materials aspect of the FIDC's operations, and especially if a large proportion of the Fijian market in this area is captured. This will need a marketing strategy that has the drive and the persuasive power to attract the bulk of the Fijian market. Some incentives may be necessary. Then there is the possibility of starting and owning wholly a venture that can be made profitable. In this way it might be possible to increase the financial support given to the FIDC by the Fijian people.

### **Sugar cane farming**

The commercial cultivation of sugar cane is an area of agricultural activity in which the Fijians have shown little interest for a long time. The reasons are partly historical, and partly due to the difficulty of obtaining cane contracts in the past, and the fact that the established cane perimeter has not expanded significantly until recently. However, over the years a number of Fijians have entered the sugar industry as cane farmers, so that by 1969, of the 15,600 cane smallholdings 17 per cent were held by Fijians. Cane production from Fijian holdings varied considerably, but the general trend throughout was one of declining yield and a reduction in the acreage under cane. This obviously meant neglect and the unavoidable conclusion was that Fijian cane farmers were not conforming to the routine requirements of the cane crop. In many instances Fijian land leased to Indian tenants for cane farming, when they reverted to the Fijian owners on the expiry of the lease, were untended and suffered the same fate as other Fijian cane land.

Because of this situation the CSR Co. decided in the early 1960s to conduct a special campaign among Fijian cane growers, advising them on the spot in the procedures of good cane husbandry. This intensive extension work demanded the full-time attachment of an extension officer of the CSR to Fijian cane growers. The scheme was successful while it lasted; but when the official extension worker was withdrawn Fijian cane production declined again, and continued to decline.

This was the situation when the attention of the FAB was drawn to the matter in 1973. The board assessed the situation and concluded that Fijian cane farmers needed some motivation and the necessary support in terms of equipment required for the proper cultivation of the crop. The rest was the effort of the farmers themselves and at the right time. This led to a series of meetings with Fijian cane farmer representatives in the provinces of

Ba, Nadroga-Navosa, Ra and Macuata. The board made available to these provinces \$50,000 to be used as a revolving fund on a loan basis to cane farmers for the purchase of equipment like ploughing bullocks, harrows and ploughs which many Fijian cane farmers lacked but needed badly for the proper working of their farms. The program worked through the provincial staff, who were given some special training by the sugar company in the requirements of good cane husbandry. It has taken some years for the program to show results. But it was clear that by 1976 Fijian cane production in Ba, Ra, and in Nadroga-Navosa, the established cane areas, was already looking up; marked increases were already being recorded and the future, especially for the farmers concerned, seems quite bright. This improved performance can be regarded as the result largely of the changed attitude of Fijians to the cash economy. Fijians now realise that the market economy has its own rules, and only by adhering to them can they hope to enter effectively into it and obtain the benefits expected from it. Moreover, the need for cash among Fijians, including cane farmers, is such that no available opportunity for making money will be passed over lightly, even if it means conformity to the routine needs of crops like sugar cane.

At the time the FAB scheme for assistance to Fijian cane farmers was being implemented, plans for the extension of cane land in Vanua Levu were already being formulated. This is in the Seaqaqa area of Macuata. It is planned to plant by 1980 up to 4,800 hectares of cane in this area which will settle 800 farmers who will eventually produce 200,000 tons of cane annually. So far more than 400 families have been settled, of whom about 55 per cent are Fijians (Table 6). From the viewpoint of cane production the scheme seems to be working as planned. Heavy development costs are envisaged especially for the clearing of thick bush. Because of the poor ferruginous latosols and red-yellow podzolic soils which dominate the *talasiga* land of Seaqaqa, moderate to heavy applications of superphosphate, sulphate of ammonia and potash fertilisers will always be necessary to maintain high production. Many Fijians who have been settled in the Seaqaqa cane scheme appear to be doing well. Many of the good farmers are averaging around 100 to 125 tons of cane per hectare, while two or three are achieving 150 to 165 tons per hectare. The success of the scheme from the point of view of productivity will require such yields to be maintained constantly in the future. In order to encourage Seaqaqa farmers, the Fiji Development Bank, which has taken over the cost of land development as advances to the farmers, has proposed to deduct

the cost of development from the cane proceeds over a period of fifteen years. The government has also succeeded in obtaining food grants from the World Food Program for distribution to farmers.

If we take a 6 hectare cane crop on one of the Seaqaqa farms at an average of 75 tons of cane per hectare, this gives a total of 450 tons of cane. At \$20 per ton at least, this gives a gross income of

**Table 6**  
**Seaqaqa Subdivision as of mid-February 1978**

Subdivision	Total areas (ha)	No. of blocks	Average size (ha)	Tenants		Total
				Fijian	Indian	
1 Navakasobu	437.6	26	16.83	18	8	26
2 Korolevu	665.2	34	19.56	34	—	34
3 Dradramea	374.4	9	41.60	—	9	9
4 Naviavia	68.0	5	13.60	—	5	5
5 Natua	1,018.4	51	19.96	3	48	51
6 Devo	182.0	9	20.22	7	2	9
7 Savulutu	506.8	25	20.27	5	20	25
8 Tadravula	672.0	15	44.80	13	2	15
9 Tikilo	475.2	25	19.00	21	4	25
10 Vunavere	1,091.2	53	20.59	1	52	53
11 Kawakawavesi	438.8	20	21.94	1	19	20
12 Bureiseni	277.2	17	16.30	2	15	17
13 Sauniduna	390.8	27	14.47	2	25	27
14 Dagau	281.6	18	15.64	—	18	18
15 Vuda	612.0	27	22.67	27	—	27
16 Vunitarawau	456.4	30	15.21	—	30	30
17 Lalakoro	170.8	13	13.19	7	6	13
18 Korovuli	1,124.0	42	26.76	41	1	42
19 Naseva	726.4	16	45.40	16	—	16
20 Vakatawanitabua	440.8	9	48.98	4	5	9
21 Navai )		32		14	18	32
22 Navudi )	1,328.0	33	20.43	11	22	33
23 Qaraniqoli	212.0	7	30.28	7	—	7
24 Buavou	1,114.4	45	24.76	45	—	45
25 Vunimako	1,516.0	59	25.69	57	2	59
26 Rokosalase	388.0	16	24.25	16	—	16
Total	14,958	663	22.56	352	311	663

Source: Land Use Section, Agriculture Department, Labasa.

\$9,000 a year. The cost of cane cutting, transport, fertiliser, and loan repayment instalment could be 50 per cent, leaving a net income of at least \$4,000. Of course, this level of income requires considerable effort, and dutifully following the advice of the technical officers involved in the Seaqqa Scheme. However, it is a far cry from the cash income of about \$150-200 per annum farmers in the area previously earned from rice and vegetables. Moreover, the scheme plans for crop diversification, which will include citrus, pineapple, and cocoa. Originally, the Fiji Development Bank was to take all cane proceeds in the first three years. This has been changed so that, if the farmers agree, the cost of development will be recovered over fifteen years. There seem little doubt that given effort by farmers, the right advice by technical staff and its acceptance by the farmers, and a loan repayment policy by the Fiji Development Bank that encourages effort by the farmers and gives them an incentive, the Seaqqa Cane Scheme should prove successful. A few case studies will illustrate the situation much more clearly.

#### *Korovuli subdivision*

Korovuli was one of the early subdivisions in the Seaqqa Cane Development Scheme (Table 6). It contains 42 lots, each with an average size of 26.8 hectares. Four *mataqali* from Korovuli village had agreed to the inclusion of 1,124 hectares of their land in the scheme in 1974. Of the forty-two blocks in the subdivision seven belong to three villages in Kadavu, seven to individuals from Lau, twelve belong to the landowners, one to an Indian and fifteen to Fijians from Vanua Levu. Only three of the twelve farmers from Korovuli village live on their blocks; the remainder work their cane farms from the village. It would seem that there is no marked difference in the level of production and farm maintenance of the Korovuli villagers, but those farmers from outside Korovuli seem to be doing much better than the landowners. Some case studies will help to clarify the situation.

#### *Matereti Vuli*

Matereti is one of the twelve people from Korovuli who is cultivating cane; he is 23 years old and lives in the village. He has been employed with the Land Use Section of the Agriculture Department, Labasa for the past three years and is involved as a labourer in the subdivision of land for cane at Seaqqa. Previous to that he did one year with the NLDC



cane estate as a labourer. Matereti left school some seven years ago; he reached class 8 at Naduri Primary School.

It is clear that to Matereti, cane cultivation is a part-time occupation. He works on his 10 hectare farm during the weekends. But with his wages from paid employment he is able to hire labour from the village to help in the maintenance of his cane farm. His father helps him a little, but because of old age he is unable to do much in this regard.

Matereti's first cane crop was planted in 1975 when he cultivated 4.4 hectares. This was harvested in 1976 with a yield of 380 tons. At \$24 per ton Matereti's first crop earned \$9,120. No money was paid to him because all this amount was taken up by the Fiji Sugar Corporation and the Fiji Development Bank to meet the cost of development and cane harvesting. The first ratoon of 4.4 hectares was harvested in 1977 yielding 270 tons, and at \$24 per ton gives a gross return of \$6,480. With the new loan policy of the Fiji Development Bank, where it takes only \$800 of the proceeds from the first crop, when the new arrangement is accepted by the farmer, Matereti should get a net income of about \$2-3,000 from his 1977 cane crop, and after the FSC have deducted fertiliser cost.

The Fiji Development Bank has approved a loan of about \$18,000 to Matereti, of which amount he has used \$10,000 for cane development. He owns one pair of bullocks, one plough and harrow.

Matereti sees no major advantage for cane farming in living on his block of land. He can still cultivate his farm while living in the village. Matereti is the youngest of two brothers and two sisters. He is the only one who is left in the village to look after their aging parents. The other brothers and sisters have married and left the village. His *mataqali* has only 6 hectares of coconut planted in the early 1960s; this is clearly insufficient as a source of cash to meet all the family's needs. This is the main reason why Matereti decided to seek wage labour four years ago and to plant cane in 1975.

### *Netani Vatu*

Netani Vatu is 51 years old, and comes from Nabalebale, Wailevu West, Cakaudrove. Netani has a large family of three sons and six daughters, all of whom are married with children of their own. His elder brother too has a large family. But his *mataqali* land, though large in area, is rugged and has

only 2.4 hectares of coconuts, which are more than 50 years old. Netani claims he has lived in the village all his life. He thinks that life in the village is good provided people work together and resources are adequate for family needs. When these conditions do not apply in the village, people are likely to look for them elsewhere. Because of inadequate land, and because he was not given any land of his own he decided to come to Seaqqa in the hope that he would be given some land for cane farming.

Netani came to Seaqqa in early 1975 and through relatives in Korovuli was allocated a block in that subdivision. In 1977 he harvested 357 tons from 5.2 hectares and in December that year he planted another 2.4 hectares. He hopes to harvest 7.6 hectares of cane in 1978 and has also planted some vegetables for his own use. In mid-1977 he was joined by his wife and a son who helped him in the work. The FDB allowed him a loan of \$12,000; he has used about \$10,000 of this amount. Recently his son was also allocated a block in the subdivision. He has not accepted the new terms of loan the FDB has formulated; in fact he does not seem to understand it.

#### *Solomone Delai*

Solomone is 34 years old and comes from Tailevu South. He is a graduate in forestry, and after three years with the Fiji Forestry Department he left the service, largely, as he claims, because of the uncertainty of promotion prospects. In 1975 he planted 4.8 hectares of cane of which 1.2 hectares had to be replanted. He harvested 491 tons from 3.6 hectares in 1976; this was harvested again in 1977 as 3.6 hectares of first ratoon with a total yield of 286 tons or 57.5 tons per hectare. He attributed this sharp drop in yield to lack of fertiliser and poor maintenance during his absence from the farm for about six months in 1977.

The Fiji Development Bank has given Solomone a loan of \$11,800 for farm development of which \$7,800 has been spent. Like other farmers in Korovuli the high development cost was due largely to heavy bush clearing which in the early stages of the scheme was paid by the hour and not by the acre. He is unsure of the advantages of the new FDB loan arrangement. Originally the FDB was to collect all proceeds for three years in order to recover its loan as quickly as possible. The new arrangement should make things much better. But in Solomone's case he is not certain if he wants to

be tied to the FDB for fifteen years in view of the fact that his lease, like others, is only for thirty years, and renewal is uncertain. Solomone's debt to the FDB has been reduced to \$5,000.

Solomone hopes to accumulate sufficient capital from cane farming to enable him to build a permanent home in Suva. Because of the uncertainty of renewal of leases at the end of thirty years, it is unlikely that Solomone will build a permanent home on his cane farm.

#### *Sosiceni Saro*

Sosiceni is 34 years old and comes from Namalata village, Kadavu. The block he farms is one of two held on behalf of his village as part of the village's effort to raise funds for village development. Early in 1975 a small group of four men from the village came to establish the farm and planted 3.6 hectares of cane which was harvested in 1976 yielding 246 tons. In the same year, a further 1.6 hectares were planted so that in 1977 out of the 5.2 hectares harvested the total yield was 520 tons. Only 0.6 hectare was planted in 1977 bringing the total to be harvested in 1978 to 5.8 hectares.

According to Sosiceni all decisions regarding the use of cane proceeds rest with the people in the village; he was there only to do the work on their instructions. Much of the proceeds from cane has been spent on loan repayment. Both the lease and the cane contract are in Sosiceni's name; he has authorised the FDB to pay all cane proceeds to the village bank account.

#### *Simione Ratu*

Simione is in his early twenties. He is one of the landowners from Korovuli who has taken up cane farming. He left school about five years ago after reaching class 6 when his father was too old and he was forced to leave school, being the eldest son. Since leaving school he has worked for the PWD and the Land Use Section of the Agriculture Department. He lives in the village and cultivates his cane from there. He says it is easy to cultivate one's farm from the village, but one must not follow others aimlessly.

Simione planted 2.8 hectares of cane in 1975 from which he harvested 150 tons in 1976. Another two hectares were planted in 1976 and 1.2 in 1977, in which year he harvested 190 tons from 4.8 hectares. He expects to harvest six hectares in 1978.

From the point of view of the landowners he thinks that the Seaqqa Cane Scheme is a good one because it gives them new and regular sources of cash through land rent and cane proceeds. Rent money should enable the construction of permanent homes in the village. The scheme also allows landless people to obtain land for commercial farming. Tenants from outside Korovuli help the village in fund raising and on various social occasions, and for these reasons he is quite prepared to allow an extension of leases at the end of the first thirty years. In any case some Korovuli *mataqali* land remains outside the scheme, and this should ensure sufficient land remains for the use of the landowners in future.

### **The pine scheme**

For a long time the rolling to gently sloping grass and scrub lands in western Viti Levu appeared to offer little potential for development. Its soils are dry and poor and offered little hope for agricultural development. The bulk of this land is Fijian owned. The major breakthrough came after an investigation by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of lands in north-west Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. In 1971, the FAO recommended that a large-scale afforestation project based on pine could be viable (Map 2). It would need no less than 53,600 hectares of land under pine, of which 20,000 hectares must be planted by 1978. From a small nucleus of about 4,000 hectares already planted in 1971, this meant a rapid expansion program of about 2,280 hectares of new pine planting a year between 1971 and 1978. It also meant considerable expenses in terms of labour and road construction costs of about \$1 million a year.

By 1980 the project will have borrowed \$12 million. Already the Commonwealth Development Corporation has agreed to lend \$10 million to the scheme; it is hoped that all debts will be cleared by 1989.

It is expected that major earnings from pine will commence about 1982 when major logging work will begin and a chipping industry will have been established. These developments will of course require considerable injection of capital. The scheme has already gained substantial assistance from New Zealand aid funds and Fiji government grants; it is certain that these sources of assistance will continue for some time in the future.

For the Fijians whose lands have been taken up, and will be taken up in the pine scheme, the benefits are many. Rental for a 60-year lease is based on \$1.25 per hectare per annum on planted

land, and 25 cents per hectare per annum on unplanted land. This means a rental income in excess of \$60,000 per year when the whole area is fully planted. At the same time there is a premium of \$3.12 per hectare paid to landowners when their land is taken up in the scheme; this is effective from the issue of the approval notice by the NLTB. Fijian landowners will also be paid 3 per cent of the value of the standing crop at the time of felling, with a minimum payment of \$50 per hectare, whichever is the greater, at a rotation of twenty years and pro rata for longer or shorter periods. And there is provision for the review of lease conditions every ten years.<sup>12</sup>

The project is indeed a bold one. It indicates the faith of the people and the government in the project and the particular commodity. The government has now formed a statutory body in the Pine Commission to be responsible for the overall management of the scheme. On it sit representatives of the government and the landowners, with an official majority for the time being. It is intended that as the commission's indebtedness is reduced there will be an increase in the landowners' representatives on the commission, so that eventually they will hold the controlling position. This will take time, together with the training of the local people in every facet of the industry to a point where they can manage the whole operation. With this objective in mind, the government is committed to the policy that it is developing the land for the benefit of the owners, and that after recovering its cost, any profit from the scheme belongs to the landowners, who will decide what should be done with it. The direct participation of the people in the expansion of the project, and particularly in some of the major operations like logging, should begin in 1982. It is important that they commence investing their rent income in a way that will enable them to obtain equipment that will allow them to operate certain integral parts of the scheme to their own advantage.

### **Cattle grazing**

Cattle grazing schemes for beef production have been undertaken by Fijians on an individual basis in parts of south-eastern Viti Levu since the early 1960s. But they have all involved relatively small acreages, considerably less than 400 hectares in each case. In all cases the land has been cleared of its thick secondary forest and consequently the cost of land development per hectare has been high. And progress has been slow. The most recent developments in this field are markedly different from this.

The latest cattle grazing scheme involving Fijians is in Saivou, Ra Province, north-east Viti Levu (Map 2). In this area the Uluisaivou Beef Cattle Scheme, involving 36,614 hectares of native land and 10,146 hectares of Crown land, has been implemented. The area has a scattered Fijian population of 2,100 located in 37 villages who belong to 117 *mataqali*. It is intended that native land be leased for fifty years for grazing purposes at a rental of 25 cents per hectare for unoccupied land, and reassessable every five years. Much of the area is rolling grassland with pockets of cultivable land suited to maize and sugar cane. When fully developed rent income to Fijian landowners should be around \$45,000 per year.

A New Zealand government team conducted the feasibility study for the project and recommended its implementation, with considerable financial support by the New Zealand government. The bulk of the stock is to be supplied by New Zealand, together with management personnel, up to a total value of \$NZ1.4 million of which about one-third will be paid to the Fiji Development Bank to be lent to the project as an interest free loan. For its part the Fiji Government will provide local counterpart staff, office space, housing, and the necessary infrastructure and some stock, the total value of which is around \$712,900. The introduction of stock began in 1976 and will continue up to 1979. It is expected that when the grazing side of the scheme is fully developed, it will have more than 11,000 head of cattle valued at \$1.27 million. There are plans for arable farming and the extraction of indigenous timber.<sup>13</sup>

The management of the scheme is under the control of the Uluisaivou Corporation whose board consists of representatives of the landowners, the NLTB, the Department of Agriculture, the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and Rural Development, and the Fiji Development Bank. The corporation was formed under the authority of the Land Development Ordinance, 1961. The shares of the Fijian landowners in the corporation are based on the acreage of their land included in the scheme. Incorporated under the Land Development Ordinance, the corporation's constitution has been drawn up in such a way that it can involve itself, if necessary and desirable, in a wide range of enterprises.

Although the scheme is still in its developmental stage, it is undoubtedly of considerable value to the people whose lands are included in it. The approach used here could form the basis of similar projects to be based on Fijian land in other parts of Fiji. Although there was some delay and difficulty in obtaining the consent of Fijian landowners to the use of their land in the project, once they grasped the benefit to them of the scheme, through land

rent and profits, their agreement was forthcoming without too much difficulty. Like the pine scheme this is a bold approach to land development initiated by the government for the direct benefit of the landowners as large-scale primary producers. It will take some time before the landowners are able to manage the scheme themselves. Much training and dedicated hard work on the part of those employed on the scheme will be necessary before outside management is discontinued. This poses a challenge to the landowners, but they should not rush into it prematurely. They should also refrain from attempting to draw too much unearned cash benefit from the scheme in the early stages of its development because it will take time before it becomes fully operational and viable; either of these courses of action will only place in jeopardy the viability of the whole project.

### **Tourism and Fijian development**

Fiji's tourist industry has taken considerable strides since the early 1960s when only 18,255 visitors arrived in Fiji in 1962. By 1976 a total of 169,000 visitors came to these islands; this figure had declined from 186,000 in 1973. For a long time the Fijian people had no direct stake, as owners or as shareholders, in any tourist venture. Equity holding by Fijians in the tourist industry is a new thing. The main source of benefit to the Fijians lies in employment in tourist hotels, in entertaining groups, tour operation and as sales hands in stores selling tourist goods. These areas of employment are not unique to the Fijian people.

For a long time the tourist industry has tried to project the image of Fiji as a peaceful holiday destination, of lovely beaches, and happy smiling Fijians. In fact it is the happy go lucky attitude of the Fijian, his ever ready smile, that have loomed large in much of the advertising material used to attract more and more tourists to Fiji. Additionally, the hotels in which they hold shares are not necessarily the most successful, largely because they do not have the connections with the organisations that bring in tourists to Fiji. The dependence of the industry on the Fijian image is seen in the way Fijians employed in the industry are deployed. Normally, Fijians are found at the reception and tour desks, the bar, the dining room, the entertainment groups including the house band, and as porters. These are areas in which there is maximum contact between the tourist and the hotel workers. It is assumed that Fijians will be polite and cheerful with guests thus ensuring their maximum enjoyment and the maintenance of the Fijian image as a happy and contented person. This pattern of employment gives some

indication of the outside investor's idea of the Fijian, and perhaps his preference to employ more Fijians in his tourist plant, especially in the jobs mentioned above. In a multi-million dollar resort recently built, 59 per cent of the staff were Fijians, 33 per cent Indians and 8 per cent others.<sup>14</sup> But very few Fijians were employed in the top managerial group, which is dominated by Europeans and part-Europeans. It is only recently that suitably qualified and trained Fijians have been taken on at the senior staff level.

When the tourist industry started to gather momentum in its development, it was hoped that it would open up other avenues in the local economy. This has not in fact occurred to the extent expected, and certainly needs to be seriously studied and steps taken to put things right. Although there has been significant development in local handicrafts, much of the benefit from which accrues to Fijians for the sale of tapa, basketware, mats and wooden carvings, 90 per cent of tourist spending still goes to imported goods, hotels, restaurants and transport. Indeed it has been claimed that tourists come to Fiji in foreign aeroplanes and ships, they travel in foreign-owned coaches, they stay in foreign-owned hotels, and eat imported food and drink imported liquor. Although this stereotyped summary is not entirely correct today, the chain of foreign-owned tourist operations in which the visitor gets caught up has not diminished.

It has been said that the tourist industry will give impetus to the development of agricultural commodities needed to support the industry. This has been so to a certain extent, but unfortunately much of the food eaten by tourists in the large resort hotels is imported from overseas. This is an area that calls for detailed investigation, the results of which could be useful to local decision-makers.

Much has been said about the effects of the tourist industry on Fijian custom and tradition; that the industry has resulted in the degrading of certain aspects of Fijian custom. For example, the full *yaqona* ceremony is performed only to persons of high rank with due dignity and style. Those that are performed in certain resort hotels, according to many observers, are an abuse of custom, in the shoddy costumes worn and the lack of decorum in the preparation and presentation of the *yaqona*. All this is true enough, but it is often ignored that the particular *yaqona* ceremony belongs to the people who perform it; they decide how they will perform the ceremony; they too will decide who they will honour it with. Although there should be no room for shoddy costumes in such ceremonies, this idea should not lead to the adoption of a uniform





Plate 7 Tourists in Suva Street

and inflexible pattern of ceremonial performances that will in the end kill Fijian initiative in the field of cultural adaptation and change.

In tourist entertainment one finds the use of non-authentic costumes creeping in. At the same time songs and dances are taking a line of development away from the traditional, in that they are composed quickly to meet the tourist market where the people

entertained do not understand the finer points of Fijian culture. Thus we find dances whose attraction lies in the music without the graceful action, and the words do not tell a story that is linked to Fijian local culture history. Despite all this certain Fijian communities seem to have done well financially in entertainment and the proceeds from this type of involvement in the industry have contributed to the improvement of living conditions in the village.

However, there is a new and keen awareness not only by the Fijians and their leaders but by others involved that the Fijian must be brought more and more into the mainstream of the industry. The NLTB in its tourist leases is taking a lead. There is also a need for existing tourist operators to open their doors more widely to greater Fijian participation on equity terms that will extend Fijian involvement to a greater degree than at present. This sort of policy would ensure the greater security of the industry internally, and continued Fijian support for it as it depends so much on Fijian good will. Where the alternatives are either to alienate that goodwill or to develop and enhance it, there can be only one rational choice.

### **Fijians in the transport business**

The public transport sector is dominated by Indians as bus and taxi operators. A few Fijian bus companies were established in the last twenty years but most have been unsuccessful. Transport operations require a high level of management skills, initiative, a close watch on detailed financial matters, and the keeping of proper records. In the early 1970s the people of Rewa Province established the Rewa Bus Company. Two buses were bought to run scheduled services between Suva and Lokia landing. The company faced stiff competition from the very beginning: other bus companies serviced the same route from Nausori to Suva. Unfortunately the qualities noted above were sadly lacking among the management staff of the Rewa Bus Company and the service was discontinued. This does not mean that provincial companies cannot and should not play a part in this field or any other field. It does mean, however, that management is quite critical to the success of such ventures. This has been proved by the Cautata Bus Service and the Tabua Taxi Co-operative; below is a brief account of their operations.

#### ***Cautata Bus Service***

This bus service was started in 1952 in a truly self-help way. The villagers collected funds communally for the purchase of a bus to help in the transport of their produce to Nausori and Suva. From

very small beginnings they now operate five scheduled services between Cautata, Nausori and Suva. In their early days, before they bought their first bus, they were uncertain of getting a place in the Indian-owned bus which ran from Bau to Suva. They also claim that in the early years of their operation, they were not permitted to pick up passengers on the route between Cautata and Nausori and between Cautata and Suva. Their representation in the right quarters enable them to pick up passengers on the routes served and this was crucial to the viability of their operation.

In the early years of the Cautata Bus Service, the FAB gave some advice and accounting services to help the village in record keeping and so on. As business expanded, the need for professional advice became apparent. They then sought the assistance of an accounting firm who now audit their books. In 1977 they borrowed \$23,000 from the Fiji Development Bank for the purchase of another bus bringing their total fleet to seven.

The buses are serviced and maintained at the village by village mechanics. This is done in the open and there is a clear need to establish a proper garage. Government assistance could probably be usefully directed to this aspect of the village's bus operation.

There is a management committee of ten which oversees the operation of the bus service. The committee meets monthly and the affairs of the venture are explained to the villagers at frequent and regular intervals. This is a vital management practice which keeps villagers abreast of the activities of the bus service. Most committee members are experienced men and women; two of them are civil servants who live in the village and commute daily to work in Suva and Nausori.

Total monthly takings are around \$6,500 or \$75,000 annually. After expenses have been met, including loan repayment to the Fiji Development Bank, there is a net profit of around \$5,000 a year.

Cautata has a sound traditional leadership which has combined with the skill and experience of educated young men who are managing the affairs of the bus service. In this way modern leadership and training seem to have overcome the management problems similar Fijian enterprises have faced in the past, and there is also the continuity in leadership which is so necessary in such ventures. In part Cautata's success as a bus operator can be attributed to sound management and the support of a large number of Fijians and others who commute daily from the village itself and the nearby areas to Suva and Nausori to work. Cautata's example should provide the kind of inspiration all other Fijian ventures should try to emulate.

*Tabua Taxi Co-operative Society*

This co-operative society was established in 1976 by fifteen Fijian taxi operators. Two decades ago, very few Fijians owned taxis. In recent years the position has changed dramatically largely as a result of the government's aim to bring more and more Fijians into the commercial field. The Fiji Development Bank's assistance scheme to Fijian commercial ventures has done much to help Fijians enter the taxi business.

From fifteen members in 1976 membership of the society rose quickly to twenty-six in 1978. The society initially operated a base in the commercial complex near Raiwaqa market and with a loan of \$28,000 from the Fiji Development Bank a two-way wireless communication system was installed in nearly all cars. In mid-1977 the society moved to its present base at Raiwai, a service station site subleased to them by an oil company. The oil company built a service station and installed two fuel tanks each with a capacity of 2,000 gallons. The society sells petrol to its members and to others. Each tank is replenished at intervals of about two weeks. Three girls are employed by the society each on an eight-hour shift to receive requests for the hire of cars, and a clerk keeps the accounts and other records. Each member pays \$200 shares on entry to the society and \$12.50 per week, of which \$7 goes towards the

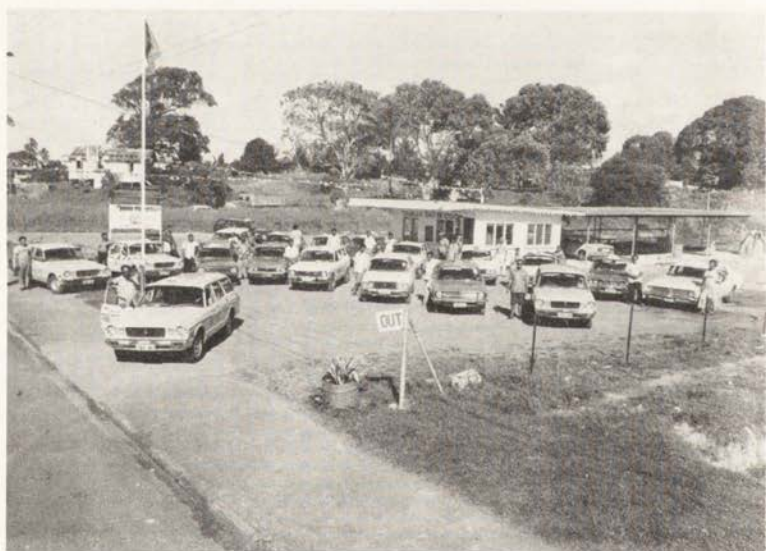


Plate 8 Tabua Taxi Co-operative

repayment of the society's loan with the Fiji Development Bank; the remaining \$5.50 goes to meet staff wages, water rates and electricity. This amount is paid also by members whose cars do not as yet have wireless sets. The society also owns two taxis which are self-financing; they earn enough to meet the wages of their drivers and contributions to the society. Separate accounts are kept for petrol sales, members contributions and administration, and the society's two taxis. A committee of seven members including a chairman, a secretary and treasurer, are responsible for the day to day management of the society. They meet every week and explain to members the affairs of the group once every month.

Members of the society are fairly diverse in their experience and educational background. They include retired civil servants, motor mechanics, carpenters, people with clerical, administrative and some accounting background. This range of experience is clearly an asset to the society.

Apart from the weekly subscription to the society, what each operator makes he keeps. Cars belong to individual members of the society. This seems a highly satisfactory arrangement and it is probably what has helped to keep the society together, apart from the members' collective loan commitment to the Fiji Development Bank, and their urge to make a success of their co-operative venture. They want to show Fijians that something can be done to prove Fijian success in the commercial world. There is also the fairly regular and frequent review of business by the management committee and the fact that members are kept fully informed of the operations of the society. At each monthly meeting details of finance and administration are explained to members. Leadership does not seem to present a problem in the society, and the committee seems conscious of its responsibility to members; it is fully aware of its accountability in this regard. Proper records are kept and this is a vital point that many Fijian enterprises have failed to meet. The society plans to establish a motor car maintenance section. And given the existing expertise, management skills, members' faith in their own enterprise, outside sympathy and help, the future seems optimistic.

### **Hydroelectric power development**

The development of hydroelectric power in the interior of Viti Levu could be considered one of the largest development projects to occur in Fiji in the last 100 years. No doubt it is going to have wide ranging repercussions not only in the national economy, but also

throughout Fijian society, far beyond the particular Fijian proprietary units whose lands are required for the project (see Map 2). The high cost of imported fuel in recent years, and it is likely to rise in future, has prompted the development of hydroelectricity in central Viti Levu. Investigations have shown that it is both physically and economically viable. It has also become necessary to develop hydroelectricity if the future demand for power is to be met and at reasonable cost. It has been estimated that the demand for power in Viti Levu alone was around 31.7 MW in 1976; it has been estimated that it will be around 117.2 MW by AD 2001, and hydro development seems the most economical way of meeting this demand. No less than \$250 million will be required to develop hydroelectric power in central Viti Levu. This money is to be borrowed largely from overseas lending institutions.

Approximately 1,550 hectares of land in central Viti Levu will be required for the hydroelectricity project. This area contains valuable timber stands, good farming land, and sites considered sacred by the native owners. If the Fijian owners of the land are to agree to give their land for the project, then the future of these items needs to be carefully considered. Timber can be extracted for commercial purposes, preferably by the owners themselves, or an organisation in which they are involved. Good farming land that will be flooded by the lake will need to be compensated for. Then there are the sacred sites, some of which may have to be flooded as well. It is clear that there is no turning back and the project must proceed; this makes vital the need to explain fully to the people the necessity for the development to proceed uninterrupted. This is not easy because many of them will find it difficult to see why part of their group identity, as landowners, must be submerged in the interest of the nation. They have to sacrifice part of their history and culture for the good of all.

The determination of what is fair compensation for the use of land in central Viti Levu for the hydroelectric scheme is not easy. Striking an economic value for the land, or the unimproved capital value (UCV) is not difficult. The land is undeveloped and inaccessible at present, and it will not be surprising if a fairly low UCV is struck for the land already identified for the scheme. A figure of \$100 per hectare as the UCV for the hydro land is possible. Such a figure would compare with about \$250 per hectare for coconut land, and \$2,500 to \$5,000 per hectare for urban land in and near Suva now being sought for residential and commercial development. The land that is needed for the scheme is to be put to industrial use, and the owners of the land could ask for a valuation

that takes account of this fact plus its scarcity. At the same time, consideration must be given to sites that form a part of local traditional culture when computing the level of compensation. Arriving at land values acceptable to all will not be easy.

There is one other fundamental issue: should the land be leased or sold to the government? Section 5(1) of the Native Land Trust Ordinance does not permit the alienation of native land, except to the Crown. And from the point of view of the government, this alternative would seem desirable. The Fijian owners might agree if the price is right, because the sale price has to be invested and only the income from this investment can be drawn by the native owners. Another alternative is a long-term lease on the land, and a rental rate that will take into account the overall industrial use of the land. This could also mean a royalty payable to the Fijian landowners based on the volume of electricity produced by the project. From the point of view of the Fijian landowners a long-term lease would seem preferable because income could increase with the increasing capacity of the project. The landowners would also avoid the need to find suitable investments which could yield dividends that will satisfy all concerned, if they are to sell the land outright.

Now that the project is definitely underway, it is important to determine the aspects of construction and so on in which the landowners particularly, and the Fijians in general could be directly involved as contractors. The implications of this project are wide-ranging and complex. A lot of money will be spent on this development, and it is vital that the Fijians benefit, especially the landowners, both directly and indirectly not only during the construction phase but also after the whole work is completed.

### **Copper exploration in Namosi**

Various parts of the interior of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu have attracted mineral prospectors during the last fifty years or so. As a result of a general geological study in the 1950s the government obtained a clearer picture of the mineral potential of central and eastern Viti Levu. In order to ensure that this part of the island would be subject to thorough and satisfactory exploration, it was closed for prospecting in the early 1960s. In 1967 the availability of the region for prospecting was advertised and the Namosi area was given to Central Mining Finance Ltd, a subsidiary of the Anglo-American Mining Corporation. Field reconnaissance began in 1968 and by 1970 drilling started at Waivaka and Waisoi (Map 2). By this time no less than \$500,000 had been spent by Anglo on

exploration work. Since 1972 the company has expanded its drilling activities. It has been established that there is a large low grade porphyry copper ore body in Waisoi West; a small body of higher grade ore exists in Waisoi East. Amax Exploration (Aust.) Pty Ltd joined Anglo-American in 1971; they soon confirmed the existence of a porphyry copper deposit in the Waisoi area. But much more drilling needs to be done before a decision is taken to start a mine. Amax now holds the controlling interest, with 51 per cent of the shares in the prospecting company.

The arrangements for the use of native land by prospectors as campsites were fairly loose in the early period of exploration. This was in keeping with the temporary nature of their work and the uncertainty of the whole operation, until it was proved beyond doubt that a mine could be viable. As the exploration work progressed, particularly as more detailed investigation became necessary, with the need for more land for accommodation and offices, the whole arrangement had to be placed on a more definite and equitable basis. This was done in mid-1971 when the prospecting company was asked to pay \$100 per annum direct to the landowners for each camp site and \$20 per annum for each helicopter refueling station. These rates were reviewed annually so that by 1976 the company was paying to the landowners up to \$500 per year per camp site and \$75 for each helicopter landing site and storage area. The landowners are also compensated for fruit trees destroyed during exploration and they receive royalty for timber cut from their land. The timing of the payment of timber royalty was a source of friction between the landowners and the company. Initially, the company undertook to arrange for the measurement of stumps by an official of the Forestry Department within two months of cutting. This was probably in recognition of the difficulty of access into Namosi. But two months seems a long time, and proper planning of activity on the part of the company should allow the measurement of the trees before they are actually cut.

As for the payment of compensation to the landowners, Amax has said that 'under the Fiji Mining Ordinance it is not legally necessary for Amax to make goodwill and compensation in order to prospect on *mataqali* land, but we respect the rights of the landowners and hope to obtain majority approval for our continued exploration activities.<sup>15</sup> This view seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the law relating to native land, and the rights which the Fijian landowners believe to be theirs. The Mining Ordinance may allow a prospector access to certain areas of land



included in his prospecting licence. But to the Fijians, the same licence cannot determine the conditions under which native land may be used by a prospector for accommodation and offices. If Amax persists with this sort of thinking in their dealings with the people, they will be showing the kind of ignorance and arrogance that can only lead to strained relations with the landowners in the future. It is hoped that they will continue to 'respect the rights of landowners', especially if and when a mine is established.

Apart from compensation for camp sites there have been other benefits to the region as a result of the activities of the company to date. Some aspects of exploration work have demanded the use of local labour. It has been estimated that no less than \$44,000 in wages was paid by Amax to workmen from Namosi. Funds have been provided by the company to the Namosi Junior Secondary School. A nursing station established by the company at the Waisoi Camp also serves the villages of Namosi and Waivaka. The company also contributed \$250,000 towards the cost of constructing the road into Namosi. This road will not only help the company's exploration program, it will give the area an access it has needed for a long time. The timber mill recently installed by the company will produce timber for its own needs and for the junior secondary school. Much of the food supply for the exploration camps comes from the Namosi region, especially vegetables and root crops paid for at Suva retail prices.<sup>16</sup>

According to Mamak the majority of the people in Namosi village would be willing to lease their land to a mining company, but they will want an assurance that sacred sites and good gardening land will not be disturbed.<sup>17</sup> Most of this group want shares in the mining company and some cash compensation. These preferences must be given serious consideration by the company. It is possible to determine some relative degree of sacredness when considering old village sites. However, the reverence attached to the *yavutu* might not be compromised by Fijians in Namosi, as elsewhere. The question of shareholding in the mining operation, if and when it should eventuate, should not be dismissed lightly. This notion is based on the Fijians' belief that they own not only the land but also the rocks beneath the surface of the land. This belief is at variance with the law, and will need to be handled carefully to avoid serious repercussions. The importance of local equity participation in any future mining operation is therefore a vital concern particularly for the Namosi landowners and for Fijians in general. Not only that, after the decision to establish a mine has been taken, a host of other matters will arise. These include the

provision of infrastructure like water, power, roads, port development, housing for workers and the establishment of urban services that will inevitably be demanded by the mine. Landowner and Fijian involvement in the provision of these facilities and services must be given serious and detailed consideration. The people of Namosi have set up their own company, Namosi Holdings Ltd, which was registered in 1974 to carry on business as timber merchants, saw millers, and as agents for the marketing of local produce. It seems that the majority of the people of Namosi support their own company. Given some expertise this is the group, and any others that the people might form, that ought to take advantage of the commercial opportunities that will arise from the establishment of a mine in Namosi.

### **Motivation and incentive**

The basic motivational factor now pushing the Fijians is the desire to participate effectively in the cash economy of the country. The need for a money income is now felt more keenly than ever before, for there are many items which only a cash income can buy. For the Fijian urban dweller a cash income is essential for his livelihood. It will obtain consumer items, housing and education. And in the rural areas a cash income will provide better standards in these aspects of living.

There is no doubt that Fijians in many walks of life have taken advantage of the opportunities that have presented themselves for involvement in the cash economy in a significant way. They have invested in land development projects, in transport facilities such as taxi operation, and in real property. They have banded together on a co-operative basis for some of these ventures while in others they have formed companies and corporations and in still others they have acted individually. Like the pine scheme some of these investments are long-term in nature, while others like taxi operation bring returns rather more quickly, with a higher risk element. But all these are in the nature of investments in the cash sector of the economy to which Fijians must adjust and whose rules of operation the Fijians must learn quickly, perhaps the hard way. In this way the Fijians will realise that their salvation lies more in their own hands than with others. Outside factors will help, but they must be receptive to, and be able to utilise the assistance provided by, external input.

In order to provide the most advantageous conditions possible for the development of Fijian enterprises the government has directed the Fijian Development Bank to lower its lending rate of

interest to Fijian clients from 10 to 8 per cent, especially on commercial and industrial projects. In this way \$1.6 million has been lent to 296 Fijians in the twelve months to June 1977. And in line with this move, a Business Opportunity and Management Advisory Services Unit was established in the Ministry of Fijian Affairs to assist Fijian entrepreneurs formulate their projects for loan application to the Fiji Development Bank. At the same time the unit will provide technical advice to existing Fijian businessmen who need their advice and assistance. So far the unit has assessed 1,500 Fijian projects to September 1977 of which 25 per cent have been granted loans by the bank. Admittedly, despite the success of the sorts of projects discussed so far, the Fijian is far from holding a commanding position in the commercial economy of Fiji. His absence is most marked, in terms of ownership, in the large and growing service sector and secondary industry including the tourist industry. However, the fact that he is beginning to enter in a significant way in some sectors of the commercial economy of Fiji indicates that something can be done and is being done to bring him into the mainstream of the country's commercial life. To succeed will require not only his individual and collective will: he must also make the necessary effort; he must receive some necessary training, and conform to the rules of commerce. This may require, in some situations it will demand, some internal adjustment of his social relationships so that the needs of economic and commercial progress are not lost sight of; only the Fijian can decide in situations of this sort and he must be bold enough to make the necessary decision consonant with the economic requirements of the particular case.

It is clear that more needs to be done in the economic field on a number of fronts if the Fijians are to hold a significant place in the commercial life of Fiji. Perhaps certain areas of commercial activity ought to be reserved for Fijians. This is an area in which the Business Opportunity and Management Advisory Services Unit could be more active in identifying the areas of positive action. The information and experience it has accumulated so far should be sufficient to give it the grounds from which it could move into new areas of Fijian economic enterprise.

## *Philosophy and Policy of Development: Rural and Urban*

Development efforts in Fiji as elsewhere have aimed at the optimum use of available physical and human resources. The land provides the major physical resources, and efforts have been made to try to ensure they are developed to maximum advantage. Then there has been the need to educate and train the necessary manpower, to equip it to mobilise the natural resources effectively. By the end of the 1960s it was becoming increasingly clear that it was vital to moderate the increasing income disparities within the Fiji society. Thus it was not enough simply to increase national income; how this income is distributed to reduce the disparities in living standards between rural and urban populations became a fundamental objective of policy. These objectives are made more difficult to achieve because of the physically fragmented archipelago and the rugged terrain of the two main islands, which give rise to isolation and problems of closer social and economic integration between the centre and the periphery. These policy objectives became even more emphasised in the 1971-5 plan period and in the next, when it was recently stated that:

the main beneficiaries of policies aimed at achieving more equitable distribution of income and wealth will be the rural population generally and the Fijian population in particular. Powerful economic forces have tended to concentrate economic activity and hence prosperity in the urban centres—especially Suva and Lautoka. This concentration has tended to perpetuate existing business and commercial specialisation along ethnic lines. A major objective in the Seventh Plan period and beyond will be to decentralise economic activity by location and broaden involvement by race and to enhance opportunities, material living standards and the social and cultural amenities of the rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

### **Rural development**

Rural development has been regarded as a series of integrated measures, aimed at improving the productive capacity and living

standards of people who live outside urban areas and who depend on the exploitation of the soil. This includes those people engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and rural industries and handicrafts, trade, commerce and services in the rural areas. Whatever measures may be adopted, the improvement of living conditions in the rural areas will depend basically on increasing the productivity of the land. And in order to do this effectively it will be necessary to:

identify potential growth centres in rural areas which will become focal points for agricultural, industrial, social, communication and other developments. In this way it is hoped that many of the amenities peculiar to the urban sector can be enjoyed by rural folks, thus minimising the drift of population from rural to urban centres.<sup>2</sup>

The rural development program started in 1969 and its main broad objectives remain unchanged as follows:

- (a) to stimulate rural communities to seek their own improvement, to express their needs and find ways to meet them by their own efforts and resources; where genuinely desirable and practicable, to enable them to receive technical, financial or material assistance particularly where economic benefits would result;
- (b) to involve the rural communities more closely in the preparation and implementation of the rural sector of the national development plan;
- (c) in the absence of a comprehensive form of rural local government, to provide a framework for consultation and co-operation on development matters among all people living in rural areas;
- (d) to co-ordinate the work of existing agencies in the rural areas towards achieving development objectives.<sup>3</sup>

The basic question that should be asked is this: how does each of these objectives apply to the Fijian situation? To answer this question adequately, each of these broad objectives needs to be assessed in some detail in order to determine how far rural Fijians are responding to these objectives.

#### **Stimulation of rural communities**

The fundamental aim in stimulating Fijian groups through the rural development program is ultimately an economic one. Through economic development living conditions in the villages

could be improved substantially. In stating this objective, there could also be an implied assumption that the Fijians spend a disproportionately large amount of effort on non-economic projects. It is probably felt that they need to be motivated to move more and more towards economic goals in the allocation of their productive resources. There seems to be also the belief that they can and should use their own idle resources, if they have not been doing so, to better their own status relative to others. At the same time it is necessary to express through the appropriate official channels the people's needs, and that the people themselves find ways and means of satisfying their needs locally if possible. Assistance from outside in the solution of problems and in meeting the needs of the people is possible and available particularly when this is genuinely desired and practicable; and such assistance is directed mainly at economic projects.

A number of fundamental points arise here. The Fijian people have for a long time utilised their own resources to better conditions of living in the rural areas. Projects like church buildings and classrooms have in the past been built largely through the collective effort of rural people. They have collected funds over long periods, or sent their young men to work on specific projects in various parts of Fiji or overseas, in order to raise sufficient funds to obtain the necessary materials for such projects. There have been tremendous special social and economic sacrifices by villagers in order to ensure the successful completion of such projects. And in numerous instances projects of this sort are never recorded or known in official circles.

The need to stimulate rural communities to seek their improvement is a generalised objective which applies and is necessary in certain situations, but is merely a statement of what is in fact happening in other areas. It must also be related to local resources and what the people are prepared to undertake for their own benefit. In all this there is a need to discuss in detail with and by the people themselves the various alternative avenues to a better lot in life. Consideration should be given to the priorities for resource allocation and necessary action. The aim in such discussions must be to assist the people to identify and assess their resources and discover the best ways in which they could be harnessed for the common objective. It must be the basic role of the official and non-official agents of change to guide the people's contribution to and participation in their own development.

It is too often assumed that the village must concentrate on economic projects in working out its development program. In this

kind of assumption it is often ignored that social investments also have an economic contribution. For instance a school is not only a place for training and educating future manpower; it is also a location for organising group discussions and practical lessons in home improvement for housewives thus contributing to the raising of living standards generally in the rural areas. A river crossing will help children go to school in wet weather; it will also facilitate the transport of agricultural produce to the market. And so if emphasis is placed on economic projects in the formulation of development programs in the rural areas, this should not be one-sided; neither should the economic content of social amenities be ignored.

There is also the very vital consideration that when villagers choose to concentrate their effort and resources on a social project such as schoolroom construction, and not on an economic endeavour such as agricultural land clearing, it should not be forgotten that it is their choice. They have chosen that course of action because to them the construction of a classroom has been a felt need, perhaps for some time. And that is how they have seen their priorities and their choice should be respected. After all this is what independence is all about at the grassroots level, and rural people must be given the chance to make choices about their own development.



Plate 9 Some rural development projects: Irish Crossing

**Involvement in the national plan**

The involvement of rural people in the national development plan is essentially a post-independence phenomenon. Before 1970 national development planning was largely an official matter, the prerogative of colonial government officials. This is one significant reason why some of the projects formulated during the colonial period failed: they took no account of the real needs and wishes of the people who were supposed and indeed expected to benefit from such projects. The officials knew what was good for the people, it was arrogantly assumed, and the people should submit to superior official knowledge and wishes. With the launching of the rural development program in 1969, the approach to national development took a dramatically different path. Imposition from above by official directives ceased, and a nationwide attempt was made to consult rural people. Thus resulted a series of village and settlement meetings, in which government officials attempted to learn from village people the kinds of development projects they wished for their community. The result was a listing of projects in a general ordering of priorities. Because of the novelty of the entire approach at the time, one cannot expect the assessment of village needs to have been made by villagers in a realistic way. There was also the uncertainty of the funds likely to be available, and the time when they would be available, for the projects considered of highest priority. The time available for such discussions was also limited and projects could not be discussed in detail and in all their implications. But as a start in the process of consultation between the people and the government this was indeed an encouraging sign of local participation in national development, and participative leadership. The important requirement, to ensure that these early discussions lead to some fruitful practical results, is continuous discussion by the people themselves of the projects urgently needed and their assessment with the people by the relevant official agencies to ensure that practical means of achieving such projects are obtained.

For the Fijians this means detailed discussion at village and *tikina* levels. Such projects as are considered for implementation by the government, and those requiring government assistance, are then passed on to the provincial councils. In the maritime provinces, provincial councils decide on the allocation of government funds for projects submitted by the people and in need of such assistance before they can be implemented. But those projects to be implemented entirely by government, such as nursing stations, health centres, and jetties go before the Divisional



Development Committee, which consists of representatives from Fijian and other communities in the Eastern Division. In other parts of Fiji, the District Development Committees are the counterpart of the provincial councils in the Eastern Islands, and receive the project proposals of Fijian and other communities in their areas of jurisdiction. These projects are considered by the District Development Committees, which allocate funds for self-help projects needing government assistance, and recommended projects and priorities to the Divisional Development Committees for those that are to be implemented and funded exclusively by the government. There are four Divisional Development Committees, coterminous with the Administrative Divisions, which recommended projects to the relevant ministries for consideration and implementation. These committees also allocate the division's rural development funds to the District Development Committees, of which there are eighteen (Fig.3).

And so in this way the rural people are involved in the national development process. At the village level projects are discussed, and once approved they are submitted to higher bodies where Fijian representatives sit. Here, depending on the nature of the proposal, decisions are made whether to allocate funds for such projects immediately, or to defer them to a later time, or to

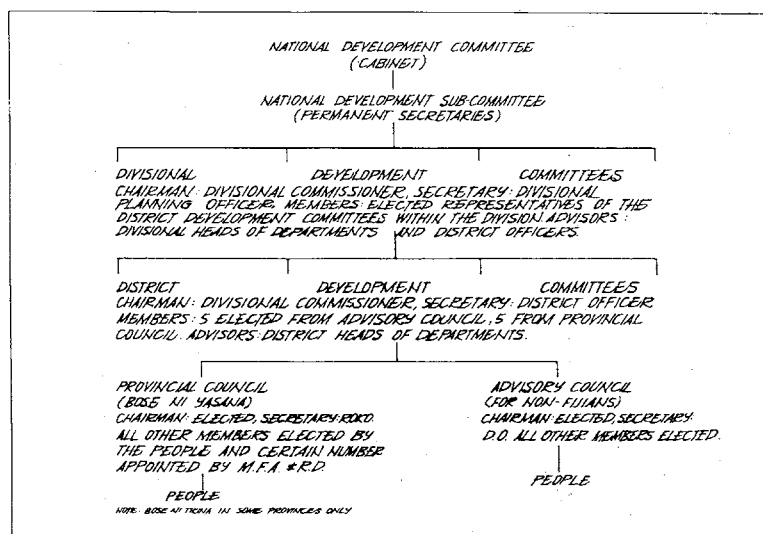


Fig 3 Rural development organisation

recommend them to a higher level of consultative body for final decision or recommendation to the government, and the implementing government agency.

There is another important way in which the people are involved in national development planning. Where funds are limited, and this is so in all developing countries, there is a need to determine the priorities to attach to particular proposals, and to projects within a program of development. This is now the responsibility of the people through the various development committees at district and divisional levels. The setting of priorities affects the expenditure of government funds, and determines the provision of particular services in different parts of the country. Through this process the people have come to realise that resources are limited and their wise use needs proper planning, a process of which they are now becoming a part.

#### **Framework for consultation and co-operation**

Fiji does not as yet possess a comprehensive rural local government organisation that is representative of all rural dwellers and which represents their collective interests to higher authority. On the Fijian side the provincial councils provide a system of local government that caters only for Fijian interests. The members of provincial councils are nearly all fully elected and they represent specific areas. They bring to the attention of council the needs of the people and areas they represent.

On the non-Fijian side, there are the advisory councils. These provide a forum in which the needs of Indians and others in the rural areas are discussed and decisions made on whether they ought to be channelled to higher authority. Over these two sets of councils is superimposed the Rural Local Authority whose area of jurisdiction is virtually the same as that of the province. This authority is created under the Health Ordinance and is basically responsible for health and building matters within its area.

In this sort of situation, therefore, where no all-embracing rural local government system exists, and where rural needs cut across ethnic boundaries, it becomes essential to create a machinery through which consultation and co-operation can be effected by rural people on rural development matters, which in most cases meet common objectives. The system of rural development committees at district and divisional levels provides a basis for consultation and co-operation. These are decision-making committees consisting of the nominated representatives from the provincial councils and advisory councils; officials and national politicians act as advisers to these committees.

The effectiveness of rural development committees has tended to depend largely on funds allocated to them for the various self-help projects which are placed before them for approval and support. But this is not the only factor, because these committees do perform an important role in the field of priority setting involving projects which it is the sole responsibility of the government to implement. Another vital factor is the appreciation of the committees' role by the members themselves. Over the years they have come to realise that they represent an attempt by the government of independent Fiji to involve more closely the people of the rural areas in their own development. And through this process of consultation and decision-making the people at grassroots will come to realise the limitation of resources with which living standards can be raised. At the same time, through these committees the rural people will appreciate more forcefully than ever before that they share common developmental needs and objectives; and that in many instances it will be advisable if not essential to pool resources to meet common wants.

In the early years of the rural development program, the members of the rural development committees displayed some degree of parochialism in outlook, and the impression may have been created that members who talked the most managed to get the most out of the committees. After a decade of activity and decision-making, attitudes have become more mature; there is now a sense of co-operation and give and take in the allocation of resources for development, and in the setting of priorities for government-executed projects. There is also a closer and keener appreciation that no government can provide all the needs of all its people at once, and that a suitable program of activity must be designed to suit the extent of resources contributed by the people and available from the government. All this is a good sign for the future, and augurs well for the evolution of the consultative machinery and for the continuation of the rural development program.

### **Co-ordination of existing agencies**

An important factor that is often forgotten is that rural development is the sum total of all activities by governmental and non-governmental organisations in the rural areas. As such it is an attack on many fronts, with one common objective in mind: the bettering of the conditions of living of the rural population. Thus the need to co-ordinate all efforts to ensure optimum results becomes vital.

Every organisation involved in the rural areas has a common objective (to improve the lot of the rural dweller) but too often they tend to focus on their own limited short-term aims and this tendency encourages conflict at times. This makes the need for co-ordinating the rural development program of such importance if conflicting advice given to rural people is to be avoided.

The need for co-ordination exists in two areas. The first is amongst officials of the different agencies who profess to have an interest in improving rural life.<sup>4</sup> There is a clear need for such officers to integrate their techniques of problem and resource analysis so that they present a common front and aim to the rural people. If this is not done the success of the projects concerned will be jeopardised, and the people confused with the objectives of all development efforts. It may lead ultimately to a distrust of the institutions involved in rural work. The other area of co-ordination is the development committees themselves. Here the needs of the different rural communities are seen together and resources of material, finance and manpower are allocated to suit the most acceptable method and approach to the problem at hand. Indeed if the co-ordinating role of the development committees is to be effective, the officials of the different agencies cannot operate in any other way but in a fashion that leads to a well co-ordinated team approach to the task of rural development.

But too often different agencies involved in bettering the lot of rural dwellers only see their own limited objectives. In itself this is not a bad thing, but the result is conflict with the limited objectives of other agencies. Conflict could also arise from the different methods and approaches to rural problems by various agencies without a clear understanding of the aims, objectives and aspirations of the rural people at a particular time. It is often not realised that things should be done because the people want them, not because certain officials think they should be done. This is the essence of rural development and official and private agencies must realise that their contributions, to be effective, must fit into and be co-ordinated with those of others and be part of an overall plan of rural development.

### **A general evaluation**

Rural development is a many faceted process at grassroots level; it is an attempt in partnership with the local people themselves to improve local conditions with the people's efforts. Through rural development the people and their representatives get the opportunity to appraise their own resources, and to set these

against their felt needs. Fijians are now beginning to realise, especially at the provincial council and district development committee levels, that resources are limited and no organisation, including the government, can hope to provide at once everything the people want at any one time. At the village level though, there is still at times a sense of unreality in terms of what can be provided in the light of available funds and manpower.

It is true that there has been a tendency to emphasise social infrastructure in the entire program and critics have claimed that economic projects should have received greater emphasis. This may very well be so; but we should not forget that things are done as a result of the people's choice expressed through their representatives and not because an official agency favours particular lines of action. The projects that have been implemented were desired by the people; the rural development program is the people's program, and official and non-official agencies must perform a facilitating role. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that even so-called social investment projects do have an economic function and contribution in the field of rural development.

An important requirement for the success of the program is the smooth co-ordination of all efforts and contributions, from both official and private agencies. Unfortunately, this has not always been so, for the emphasis placed inevitably on departmental or agency objectives, and personality differences, have posed difficulties. The co-ordinating role of administrative officers is frequently ignored; often they are seen by professional departments more as a hindrance than anything else. Thus at times the tendency is for each side to over-react and over-rate their own role without paying due regard to the best way in which they could interact so as to achieve for the people the maximum gain from the rural development program.

To be successful rural development demands integrated planning and the full co-ordination of the use of physical and human resources. It is doubtful if the rural people, or even their representatives at the district development committee level, adequately realise the essence of these approaches. If this is accepted, one can readily see the difficulty of getting grassroots people to realise that the success of rural development depends on numerous factors varying in nature and complexity. These include, among other things, a clear analysis of the resources available and the problems facing rural people, a meaningful and accepted plan of action, improved transport and marketing.

All these measures are essential for the improvement in the productivity of the rural dweller, and without these there can be no raising of his status, and his efforts can have no real meaning and value in his life.

It is expected that resources for rural development will be assessed for planning purposes on a regional basis. This will mean also the evaluation of the district development committee areas as the most appropriate units for rural planning. Such an approach will require the identification of natural foci for harnessing the resources of the region, because rural development must involve some degree of decentralisation of facilities from the main centres of population to the rural areas through regional urban centres. The studies undertaken by the UNDP Regional Planning Team during 1975-6<sup>5</sup> in this regard should provide some useful guidelines. But in order to determine the best means of developing rural regions, it will be necessary to assess in some detail the available physical and human resources. This means that if village life is to be upgraded through regional planning and rural development, then an inventory of village resources must be made because the development of the village must inevitably rest on the available resources at that level and how these can be harnessed, and supplemented if necessary.<sup>6</sup>

Rural development then must take a holistic approach. Because it involves the whole range of activities of the rural people in their own setting, it cannot avoid taking account of all aspects of life in the rural areas. An individual's basic needs include food, clothing and shelter. These are universal necessities which must be provided in order to satisfy a minimum standard of health and welfare. But the individual is part of a local and community group. With rural Fijians these groups form the basis of group action. In certain fields of activity the group determines the individual's action. This has implications for rural development, especially in project implementation where group effort can be a worthwhile way of harnessing local resources.

But in order to raise standards of living in rural areas, it is essential that a clear assessment be made of the resources available to the individual family, the family's aspirations, and how best resources can be mobilised, with external help if necessary, in order to improve the family's status. In making this assessment one should bear in mind that the family is part of a community with certain rules and obligations. It is part of a whole that is living, dynamic and ever-changing. Family needs are wide-ranging and complex for they impinge on all fields of activity. At any one time a

particular area of need could take a relatively more dominant place in the family's daily actions, while at the same time it is subjected to the competing pressures and demands both internal to it and external from the community and beyond. These are the sorts of considerations that are often overlooked in planning rural development projects. At the same time there probably is a need to view rural development in terms of individual family benefits, because if life in the rural areas is to be improved then the social and economic levels of livelihood of the family and the household must be raised. This means that the family/household should become the unit of planning and organisation in the rural development process amongst Fijians, based on the village as the basic unit of residence in the rural areas.

### **Rural and urban links**

It is too often not realised that development in one sector of a society is certain to have effects in others. Efforts in rural development will inevitably have a bearing on life in the urban areas. This makes it important that we identify and assess the nature of the links between rural and urban development.

One fundamental aim of rural development is to increase rural production so that rural society can become involved more and more, and on a continuous basis, in the cash sector of the economy. This entails the movement of people and goods from the rural to the urban areas. It demands the creating of marketing arrangements and the necessary transport infrastructure. In Fiji the National Marketing Authority is attempting to provide the necessary links between the rural producer and the urban consumer largely by facilitating the marketing and sale of rural produce by being involved itself directly in the purchase and sale of agricultural produce at competitive prices. This does not seem to be achieving the desired effects.

Increased productivity among rural people will lead to increased income. This will help rural dwellers to obtain goods, services and amenities that have hitherto been available largely to urban residents, thus making a greater demand on the commercial and distributive services of urban areas. At the same time the government is committed to a policy that will help bring to rural people amenities such as piped water and electricity that for years have been available only to town residents.

It is expected that rural development will help to reduce the drift of rural population to urban areas. To some extent this will indeed be so, and in some areas, especially where social amenities will

improve significantly and where production and income will substantially increase as a result of the rural development program, urban drift on a permanent basis can be checked significantly. But in areas of poor resources, where the rural development program cannot do much to increase and sustain greater economic production, it seems unlikely that urban drift can be stopped completely or even minimised. Indeed in these areas drift to the towns is likely to intensify, especially of young persons, leaving behind in the village older people. In the process village activities requiring the effort of younger people could suffer.

Improved productivity and high incomes among rural dwellers will stimulate the need to distribute consumer goods in the rural areas. This too will need an efficient transport system. And it goes without saying that the increased trade in the rural areas that results from this development, if it is to grow and expand properly, will require from rural dwellers skills and expertise that will enable them to provide the kinds of goods and services that rural people will need. In the Fijian village this obviously places a heavy demand and responsibility on the co-operative stores and their officials to maintain and improve transactions on a commercial level. At the same time it will require co-operative officials in the village to identify opportunities for improved cash earning for the society and its members. This will demand also proper planning of work and the foresight that will lead to increased productivity and efficient operation of activities on a co-operative basis.<sup>7</sup>

### **Urbanisation**

The process of urbanisation has wide-ranging implications. It involves basically the movement of population from rural to urban areas. The reasons for this move are many and varied, and sometimes quite complex. Urbanisation also leads to demands for jobs in the towns, more accommodation, and when these are not available, there is overcrowding leading to poor sanitary conditions, squatting and the erection of substandard homes. When jobs are not available for the increased number of migrants, unemployment rises and social unrest is likely to emerge.

The same could be said of many developing countries. It applies also to Fiji where the problem is made acute by the influx of school leavers many of whom are not trained for any specific tasks. However, they are not keen to return to the rural scene if they have been educated away from it, while those educated in rural schools tend to drift to the towns in search of jobs and better opportunities expected to be found outside the village and its immediate



surroundings. At the same time, and as a complicating factor, urban wealth seems to be more and more contrasted to the living standards in rural areas. Rural people rightly question the reasons why they cannot enjoy similar standards of living. The time may come when they too will demand that everything be done to enable them to enjoy most if not all the social amenities now taken for granted by urban dwellers. They are not yet vocal about it, but let us not think that they will remain silent for ever. Rural people including the Fijians are beginning to doubt the truth of the poet's statement that 'they also serve who only stand and wait'.

From the viewpoint of Fijian progress in the towns, it seems that the major content of policy should be the determination of the methods and avenues of increasing effective Fijian participation in the economic life of Fiji's towns and cities. It would appear that there are no particular urban policies which are directed exclusively and specifically to helping the Fijian. However, in the general development of urban services such as housing and schools, the Fijian benefits like any other community. For example housing provided through the government-supported Housing Authority is allocated on a first come first served basis.

Training in various secondary and service industries does not provide any special facilities for Fijians through which they can be assisted to acquire a better place in the commercial sector. However, the government has recently committed itself to a policy of assisting Fijians to participate in the mainstream of the commercial life of Fiji. This policy may need to be worked out in greater detail in order to identify the areas in which assistance is needed, and the kind and extent of such assistance. In 1975 the government directed the Fiji Development Bank to lower its rate of interest on loans extended to Fijian commercial and industrial ventures. This policy seems to be working quite well and large numbers of Fijians are taking advantage of it. But the general policy of assistance to Fijians, in order to succeed, requires a number of related measures in the field of training, finance, and supervision that need to be implemented simultaneously and with determination. And they need to be worked out carefully and in depth.

In order to provide a more meaningful place for Fijians in the towns, measures need to be taken to ensure that a greater number find employment in urban occupations at levels of supervisory staff and above. This is not easy because it is related to two broad areas of activity: training and job availability. Training involves a long time span because it must take account of training in the schools. This should be relevant to the real life situation outside the school.

Training after school is just as important, if not more important, because it is on the job, and will demand the application of the trainee and his commitment. Too often this is lacking with Fijian school leavers; they tend to take their job responsibilities lightly. But the times are changing and consequently attitudes to work are changing for the better. What is perhaps needed is more encouragement and guidance by some Fijian authority, perhaps by the FAB, to give the moral support that early school leavers beginning a job so badly require. At the same time the job outlet must be there and this is the joint responsibility of the private sector and the government to ensure. Once established in a particular field of employment, the Fijian must be encouraged to improve his skills and productivity, so that he can gain experience. This demands improvement in facilities such as suitable housing so that he can be placed in a position to commit himself to an urban existence and consequently prepare himself to meet its responsibilities.

The Fijian must be motivated to take advantage of opportunities for further training while in employment so that he can improve his lot. This is vital to the raising of his status, if he is not to be confined largely to the labouring and semi-skilled occupations where he is being supervised, rather than providing the supervision.

## *Administrative and Institutional Framework*

The Fijian administration has a long and honourable history, for its beginning dates back to the Cession of Fiji to the British Crown on 10 October 1874. In a despatch dated 16 October 1874 the first Governor of Fiji, Sir Hercules Robinson, reporting the establishment of the Native Department said that:

By this machinery it is believed that arrangements can be made for the efficient government of the natives without departing in any important particular from their own official customs, traditions, or boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

This was the first major policy statement regarding the basis on which a separate Fijian administration was to function and it indicated the sort of principles under which such an administration was to operate. The country was divided into provinces to be governed by *Roko* and districts were under the charge of *Buli*. Apart from the few unsuccessful attempts in the early part of this century to dissolve the separate Fijian administration, based on the mistaken belief that Fijians had ceased to obey their chiefs, the separate Fijian administration has continued to exist, and indeed the demand for its existence strengthened over the years right up to the end of World War II. And during this long period of colonial rule, the Fijian's basic desire was to control his own affairs through his own separate institutions. Coupled with this was the Fijian's abiding faith and trust that the government would always do what was good and proper for Fijian interests. And this was the foundation on which the Fijian administration was reorganised and became operative in its modern form on 1 January 1945.

While introducing the Fijian Affairs Bill into the Legislative Council on 24 February 1944, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna said that 'the purpose of this Bill is to train Chiefs and people in orderly, sound, and progressive local government better to fit them eventually for the give and take of democratic institutions'.<sup>2</sup> It was expected that the new system of administration would enable the Fijians to 'develop politically and economically along lines that are familiar and understood by us all'. Clearly then, it was envisaged that the

new administration would provide a training ground in local government matters; this it did to a certain extent for the officials, but it is doubtful if it really offered opportunities for participation in modern local government procedures to the people for the next twenty years because of its non-elective character.

It was expected that through the creation of the separate Fijian administration, the Fijians would work out their own salvation and that their administration would provide a leading role in Fijian development, at both the national and local levels of activity, and through its system of councils. The terms of such development were to be worked out, within the framework of the system, by those concerned with Fijian welfare, and most familiar with the Fijian system of things. Such an approach can be judged effectively only in terms of its methodological stand and the results it has achieved. But as Spate has said, it tended to arrogate to itself the role of sole judge of its own actions, a policy that seems indefensible in the modern world.<sup>3</sup> However, by their own administration the Fijians were temporarily cushioning themselves from the influences of the outside world, and on this basis it could be said that the approach taken was a sensible one.

All this implies a policy of gradualism in Fijian social and political change. Change was accepted in principle but it had to be worked out carefully, and the extent of the care given in this approach ensured the avoidance of drastic structural change. Modification of the Fijian administration had to be by evolution from within; such a policy was likely to ensure its continued existence, and the minimum of structural change consonant with the circumstances of the people and their needs.

An important objective of the post-war reorganisation in the Fijian administration was the question of Fijian economic advancement. It was held that economic progress should be worked out within the framework of the administration which would provide the machinery for economic development. It has been amply demonstrated that this approach is impractical. Economic development is a technical field which makes the kinds of demand on the Fijian people that are out of line with the structure and organisation of their administrative system. The inadequacy of the Fijian administration in providing Fijian economic progress during the first decade after World War II has been ably demonstrated by the *Spate Report*, which also pointed the way for the adjustment needed in order to make it a proper system of local government.

Following closely on the *Spate Report* was the report of the Commission of Enquiry 'into the natural resources and population

trends of the Colony' headed by Sir Alan Burns. This commission reported early in 1960 and recommended the complete abolition of the Fijian administration and the establishment of a system of multi-racial local government as a substitute. This was all very fine in theory but difficult to put into practice, especially when the Fijian people saw this recommendation as an attempt to attack and end their own separate racial and cultural identity.<sup>4</sup> It is almost two decades now since this recommendation was made and multi-racial local government exists only in the urban areas, while the Fijian administration continues to function separately, though modified to suit modern conditions as a system of Fijian local government. This proves the difficulty of making drastic structural changes to institutions to which a people have become adapted for more than a hundred years.

When opening the Council of Chiefs meeting in 1962 the Governor spoke of the serious falling off of provincial rates, and it appeared to him that the people were dissatisfied with their administration as constituted then. If they wanted a separate administration they should be prepared to pay for it. This view seems to be rather limited in its appreciation of the role of the Fijian administration in the overall effectiveness of government, especially in facilitating the efforts of various government departments to perform their distinctive technical functions.

However, the Council of Chiefs responded to this criticism by setting up a committee to study and recommend changes in the Fijian administration. The committee was assisted by the thorough and incisive analysis of Professor Spate. When the committee reported in 1963 it made far-reaching recommendations which were accepted by the Council of Chiefs. These included the direct election of members of provincial councils, and their transformation into rural local government authorities. The *Roko* was to become the Chief Executive of the Council and its paid servant. The council was to be allowed to formulate by-laws to be sanctioned by the Fijian Affairs Board. The Council of Chiefs saw the need to explain these proposals to the people and the late Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou was engaged to formulate the proposals into concrete terms and to tour the provinces and explain the advantages of the new scheme. This he did in 1964 and succeeded in gaining support for the proposals in all parts of Fiji. The detailed administrative and legislative arrangements were worked out during 1965-6 and the first provincial council elections were held during May to July 1967.

The administration of Fijian affairs is through a system of statutory boards and councils whose members are by and large the elected representatives of the people. These are the Fijian Affairs Board, the Council of Chiefs, provincial councils, the Fijian Development Fund Board, and the Native Land Trust Board. A general discussion of some of the functions and activities of these bodies will demonstrate more clearly the institutional context of Fijian life and thought in contemporary times.

### **Fijian Affairs Board (FAB)**

The composition of the FAB remained unchanged for about twenty years after its inception in 1945. It comprised the Fijian members of the Legislative Council whom the Governor chose from a panel of ten names submitted to him by the Council of Chiefs. For this reason, it was probably right to regard it in the 1950s and 1960s as, apart from being a committee of the Council of Chiefs, also a standing committee of the Legislative Council. This latter role was true in terms of its regulation making powers, which were ultimately to be ratified by the Legislative Council. However, reference of regulations affecting Fijians to a higher authority no longer applies today, and the board has full powers in these matters, for it now has finally to sanction the by-laws of provincial councils. But its role as a Committee of the Council of Chiefs is still valid. In terms of its composition eight members of the board are chosen by the twenty-two Fijian members of the House of Representatives, who are themselves members of the Council of Chiefs, from amongst themselves, while two other members are chosen by members of the Council of Chiefs who are not members of the House of Representatives, most of whom are representatives of provincial councils. The FAB today comprises mainly the elected representatives of the Fijian people.

There is one important point to note in the composition of the FAB. With a quorum of five and the majority of members being members of the House of Representatives, the recent dissolution of the House of Representatives in June 1977, until fresh elections were held in September 1977, meant that the FAB could not meet until after the general elections when the twenty-two Fijian members of the House of Representatives could elect their eight representatives on the Board. Although the FAB is a committee of the Council of Chiefs, it seems to be over-dependent for its existence on the life of the Parliament. For the sake of continuity and to allow urgent decisions to be made by the board between the

dissolution of Parliament and the next general elections, it is necessary that the membership of the FAB be extended to include at least one or two more representatives of the Council of Chiefs who are not members of the House of Representatives. A simpler alternative would be to allow the board through an enabling act to carry on until after the new elections.

These changes are in keeping with the times and the aspirations of the Fijian people. Unlike in the 1950s, when the FAB was an entirely nominated body, consisting largely of persons of chiefly rank, the changes introduced in the 1960s allowed Fijians not of chiefly status, the elected representatives of the people, and persons with education, experience and ability to become members of the board and to contribute to the formulation of policy affecting the well-being of Fijians. It must be stated that the paramount chiefs themselves supported these changes, which in effect played down the importance of status in the contemporary affairs of the Fijians, but placed more emphasis on the suitability of individuals for particular functions. This was indeed wise and bold leadership which placed the welfare of the people in general before the limited interests of a small group. And in the words of Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau 'We have put talent before rank. It is merit, not chiefly status that is the yardstick for Fijians today'.<sup>5</sup>

The FAB is a body corporate. This is an important change that was instituted in late 1967, allowing the board to be involved more and more in direct assistance to Fijians in the field of economic development. But in order to raise loans the board requires the approval of the Minister of Finance. Between 1945 and 1967 the board was essentially concerned with administrative matters—administered largely through the provincial councils.

The basic role of the board is to oversee the well being of the Fijian people as a whole. It considers proposals and recommendations of benefit to or affecting the interests, good government and well being of the Fijian people. Such considerations include the assessment of any draft legislation that is likely to affect the welfare of Fijians. When such matters come before the board, and especially if the board considers them 'to be of vital importance affecting the interests and rights of the Fijian people, the Board shall refer all such matters to the Council of Chiefs for consideration and recommendations'.<sup>6</sup>

The board also maintains a central secretariat and treasury to assist the provincial councils in administering their own affairs. To meet the cost of the staff involved, and the various administrative

services it provides, the board receives a subvention from the central government. The salaries of the board's staff, like the *Roko* and his assistants, and the provincial treasurers are met from this grant, which is running at about \$0.5 million annually.

Since the late 1960s the Board has become increasingly aware of the need to bring the Fijian more and more into the mainstream of the country's commercial life. With its limited resources, it has assisted individuals and groups to enter commerce. This is not an



Plate 10 Ratu Sukuna House



easy task in view of limited funds and shortage of expert staff to assess the opportunities available and to turn them into specific proposals and projects to be undertaken by Fijians. By 1971 the board realised the need for structural modification in its organisation if it was to make a major contribution to the economic life of Fijians. This led to proposals for amending the Fijian Affairs Ordinance in 1972 but for technical reasons it was never put through Parliament after the general elections in that year. Later the board decided to set up an economic assessment unit to review projects submitted by Fijians for assistance. This ultimately led to the formation of the existing Business Opportunity and Management Advisory Services which is currently operating to assist Fijians to set up ventures of their own and working in very close liaison with the Fiji Development Bank.

In recent years the FAB has tended to pay more attention to becoming involved in large commercial ventures which can give it an income that it can use to help more Fijians enter commerce. This has led to investment in various enterprises. The board has bought shares in tourist ventures and is involved in the FIDC roofing iron and building materials projects. It has also entered the field of real property by the purchase of a multistorey office block in downtown Suva, and a tourist motel, also in Suva. Though too early to judge the success or otherwise of these large investments, totalling \$2.2 million, they are clear indications of the board's determination to do something for the Fijian people. This new attitude, which is now common to numerous Fijians in all walks of life, and the formation of sub-committees to deal with economic, social and administrative matters, are adequate grounds for optimism in the future activities of the FAB.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Council of Chiefs**

For more than a decade after it was given firmer legal status in 1945, the Council of Chiefs retained its original composition: its membership was confined largely to the paramount chiefs of the major *vanua*, and the *Roko* of the fourteen provinces who were invariably of chiefly rank. About the mid-1950s an attempt was made to include in the membership of the council Fijian representatives of school teachers and medical officers. This led to the belief that, at least during the decade and a half after 1945, the Council of Chiefs stood for the preservation of the *status quo*. Writers like West have taken this view, with some justification.<sup>8</sup> But the council's readiness, even in the early 1950s, to include in its membership some non-traditional elements is indicative of a

forward-looking attitude that was to develop fully a decade later. However, the composition of the Council of Chiefs remained basically unaltered until the administrative reorganisation was put in train during the period 1965-7.

With the restructuring of the provincial councils on a more democratic basis, the Council of Chiefs itself accepted that it too must change in its composition. As the highest Fijian council in the land, it accepted the principle that representation to it must be on a wider basis. It also recognised that political development at the national level had proceeded quite rapidly in the early 1960s and in this process Fijian political awareness had both widened and intensified. Sensitive to these developments the Council of Chiefs decided to alter drastically its own composition.

In addition to seven paramount chiefs appointed to the Council of Chiefs by virtue of their position, it now includes all Fijian members of the House of Representatives irrespective of their political affiliation, senators nominated by the council, representatives of the fourteen provincial councils, and eight other Fijians nominated by the Minister for Fijian Affairs.<sup>9</sup> This was a very bold and far-reaching decision whose impact cannot be measured fully in a short time. It was bound to have implications throughout Fijian society which will last for some years to come. It certainly cannot be said that in the decade since 1965 the Council of Chiefs has been dominated by the traditional elements in Fijian society. By 1977 almost 50 per cent of the seventy-five members of the Council of Chiefs were Fijians not of chiefly rank.<sup>10</sup> It is not inconceivable that at some time in the future non-chiefs will make up the majority of members of the Council of Chiefs. Clearly then the Council of Chiefs has become an assembly of Fijian leaders from all walks of life, with divergent interests. Advice tendered by the Council on matters affecting Fijian interests should not be treated lightly because the Council is one of the strongest pressure groups on Fijian affairs.<sup>11</sup>

One of the major functions of the Council of Chiefs in the period 1945 to 1962 was to nominate Fijian representatives to the Legislative Council. With political development at the national level, leading to the direct election of Fijian representatives to the Legislative Council (commencing in 1963) and the emergence of party politics, that statutory function was withdrawn. Again the acceptance of this change is an indication of a liberal attitude to Fijian representation and Fijian political awareness by the Council of Chiefs for which few ever give it credit. Although it could be said that there was little choice but to accept these self-effacing changes,

it is a mark of wise judgement and even wiser leadership to have accepted them at the right time. However, with independence in 1970 the Council of Chiefs was empowered to nominate eight senators whose major role is to safeguard specifically Fijian interests in Parliament.

When the administrative changes were being formulated in 1965-7 the council was given the added task of nominating two members of the FAB and five members of the NLTB. In the light of the much broader basis of representation in the Council of Chiefs, these powers of nomination help to give the two boards a much broader basis of membership than was possible a decade earlier.

The Council of Chiefs is statutorily charged with the duty of advising the government on matters affecting Fijian interest.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, no bill affecting the rights and interests of Fijians can be debated by the Parliament before it has been considered by the FAB; and invariably the board refers such bills to the Council of Chiefs.

Criticisms have been made before of the conservative stand taken by the council in matters referred to it for consideration. For example there was the recommendation of the Burns Commission in 1960 regarding the gradual abolition of the separate Fijian administration. In this context the commission appeared to have had much more enthusiasm and forthrightness in its recommendation than tact. At the same time the case for abolition was not closely argued at all. It was therefore not at all surprising that the Council of Chiefs strongly disagreed with the commission's view that Fijian councils might concern themselves only with ceremonial and handicrafts. Such a recommendation failed to grasp the deep attachment by Fijians to their own institutions. Perhaps the commission wanted to take the bull by the horns, but such an approach predictably led only to the rejection of the Commission's recommendation.

In recent years and particularly in the last decade, it cannot be said that conservatism has dominated the attitude of the Council of Chiefs. The very changes that took place in the late 1960s testify to this. The council has also increasingly viewed Fijian interests not in isolation, but in the wider context of a multi-ethnic society. It has increasingly tended to see issues in the national interest. The council is well aware of the changes occurring in Fijian society, largely as a result of increasing urbanisation and contact with outside ideas and modes of thought, which have led in part to increasing political awareness, which the council itself has encouraged. The council is aware of the weak economic and

financial position of the Fijian *vis-à-vis* other communities: but it is also prepared to liberalise agricultural land laws in the interest of both Fijians and non-Fijians leasing native land. The most recent example of this accommodating attitude was demonstrated during the consideration and approval of the recent amendment to the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act late in 1976 to extend the period of lease on Fijian agricultural land from ten to thirty years.

### **Provincial councils**

Before the reorganisation in 1965-7 the provincial councils comprised essentially official and nominated representatives of the *tikina*. It was and still is the main local government body within the Fijian administration (Map 6). It was clear that even at the provincial council level, the social, economic and political influences that have affected Fijian society generally during the post-war decade necessitated a careful re-examination of the structure and pattern of authority in Fijian society and its associated institutions, particularly those closest to the people in their daily activities. In this examination it became apparent that the Fijian administration with its system of councils needed to move away from traditional to modern principles of local government, if it was to play an effective role in the political education of the Fijians, especially at the local level. More significantly, such a change was necessary if the Fijians themselves were to continue to regard their councils as relevant to their needs. Moreover, by the mid-1960s, a thorough reorganisation and the secure establishment of the refashioned local institutions at an early date were essential if Fijian political progress was to keep pace with political advancement at the national level.

Professor Spate drew attention to the ambivalence of the Fijian towards the Fijian administration and summarised the Fijian attitude (a world-wide one) in this regard as 'The Government neglects us: the Government interferes with us.'<sup>13</sup> He also pointed out the very close supervision and direction of provincial and village affairs exercised by the FAB; this situation clearly stifled local initiative. The Special Committee appointed by the Council of Chiefs in 1962 to examine the Fijian Administration adopted the view that it was vital to refashion and strengthen the provincial councils and make them into a proper system of local government. This entailed the direct election of the majority of members of provincial councils by residents in the *tikina* they represent; an



increase in the duties and powers of councils, including the making of by-laws; the reduction in the role of officials from voting members to advisers; that councils should elect their own chairmen, and at a future date be responsible for appointing their own staff.<sup>14</sup> Too often provincial councils had been criticised for not having any real powers because they were subject to the control of higher authority; they were also said to be a 'government within a government'. These changes gave provincial councils real, and undisputed authority over local matters in the areas of their jurisdiction. They have also placed provincial councils more squarely on democratic principles of local government. Of the 198 members of the fourteen provincial councils, 64 per cent are directly elected by the Fijians resident in the provinces, 14 per cent by Fijians resident in the major urban areas while only 22 per cent are local chiefs nominated by the Minister for Fijian Affairs. Thus the elected representatives of the people form 78 per cent of the total members of the councils. This is not to say that the nominated chiefs do not represent their people in council, for although they too are representatives, they represent their people in a different way. One could say that they provide continuity with tradition but to the extent that they do not outnumber the directly elected members. One should also not ignore the fact that the elected representatives are chosen by both the people and their chiefs. Important also is the fact that the reorganisation recognised the need to give a voice in the affairs of the council and the province to its migrant members, many of whom contribute significantly to the affairs of their own villages, despite their separate residence.

An important feature of the re-organisation was the abolition of the *tikina* council and the post of *Buli*. *Tikina* councils provided an intermediate point of contact between the village and the province. The unit seems to have been the effective unit of organisation and local planning among Fijians, and when it was abolished, the decision seems to have been received with mixed feelings. In the event it did not take long for Fijians to revive the *tikina* groupings for their own purposes of provincial and district activity. Indeed in most fund raising ventures involving the people of a province, the *tikina* is invariably prominent as a cohesive unit of organisation. This applies to both the old and the new *tikina*.

Provincial councils are charged with the responsibility of promoting the health, welfare and good government of Fijians in a province. And in order to carry out these duties, provincial councils are empowered to make by-laws on a wide range of matters including roads, recreation facilities, health, education, village

planning, water supply, cemeteries, the promotion of natural resources development, markets and provincial transport. Specific practical action in these areas must relate to the financial resources of provincial councils, which are limited in most cases. However, because of the wide range of activities under the provincial umbrella, and covering the areas noted above, it is clear that some of the functions of the provincial councils are in fact performed by other agencies of the central government. But these agencies, to be effective, need the co-operation and support of the council, its staff, and the people themselves. Because of this, the field of development action which can be regarded as specially belonging to the provincial council has been questioned.

This raises the role of the elected member of the provincial council. Is he a leader or a spokesman? He can be both depending on individual circumstances, which vary widely. If he is a leader, this depends much on his personality and standing in the community, both traditional and modern. The people who elected him must look up to him for inspiration, guidance and dedication to their cause if he is to provide the necessary leadership in the affairs of the *tikina*. However, it would appear that in most cases the people of a *tikina* regard their member (*mata*) as their spokesman, to articulate their wishes and aspirations in the provincial council and convey to them the decisions of council and other bodies to which their representations are made. They regard him as a worker, someone who will get for them, invariably from the government, what they want to improve their status as villagers. But in order to perform his role effectively the *mata* requires much time and travel and endless discussions with the people to sort out real needs and priorities. All provincial councils realise that this means travelling expenses for the *mata*, and some have tried to make provision for it in their limited budget, but, as always, available funds have limited what the *mata* can do in this direction. Indeed, greater political awareness and sophistication at village level have made the *mata* feel keenly the need to keep in touch with the villages they represent in the provincial councils. Most of them make an honest attempt to be effective representatives of their people within the limits of resources available to them and their provincial councils.

Staffing is still the responsibility of the FAB particularly at the level of *Roko*, Assistant *Roko*, and Provincial Treasurer. However, in practice the board does take serious account of the council's recommendation in staff matters, especially in the appointment of the *Roko*. And partly as a consequence of this

liberal approach, the post of *Roko* is no longer held only by persons of chiefly status, as it usually was in the years immediately after 1945. Of the thirteen *Roko* in August 1977, only six were of chiefly rank, of which three were *Roko* in the provinces in which they hold traditional chiefly status. These changes show that even at the local and regional level, with the support of the FAB, appointment to the staff of the provinces is based on merit and suitability for the post, and not on traditional status, although it is recognised that rank is an added advantage. Associated with this trend is the desire of provincial councils to employ in senior positions people from their own province as far as possible. This is an expression of provincialism that does not seem to have got out of hand, though it needs to be watched, especially if it will mean sacrificing normal standard of efficiency and effectiveness in administration. This appears to be a clear reason why the FAB should still retain some control in the appointment of senior staff to the provinces.

Any administrative organisation needs finance in order to operate. In all provinces the four to five years up to 1967 saw a decline in the repayment of provincial rates (a head tax levied on the male adults of the province aged 18 to 60 years). The situation was 'so serious as to endanger the very existence of the Fijian Administration' in its old form.<sup>15</sup> The falling off in the payment of provincial rates could have hinged on two factors. First, that the people saw little value in contributing to the maintenance of administrative services from which they gained little direct tangible benefit. Second, it may have indicated their dissatisfaction over the form of the administration, especially at the provincial council level, and particularly in the composition of the council, dominated as it was by officials and nominated individuals. The shortfall in most provinces was no less than 50 per cent: it was manifestly obvious that a new system of revenue raising had to be devised to finance the new councils. Spate foresaw this very problem ten years previously.<sup>16</sup>

In reviewing the finances of the Fijian Administration in 1957 Mr R. S. McDougall, whom the colonial government brought specially from the UK for this task, had recommended the introduction of produce taxes, to be levied on all Fijian produce from the provinces. This was acceptable to the FAB at the time and the necessary legislation was enacted. However, the Burns Commission opposed the idea because of the numerous complex problems such as evasion likely to arise in its administration, and the produce tax legislation was never brought into force.



In discussing the reorganisation with the FAB, Dr Nayacakalou suggested that a fresh look be given to the idea of rating Fijian land as a means of financing the provincial administration. The board agreed and asked for further details. An exercise was then undertaken to determine its viability in Tailevu Province. The results showed that at 2 per cent of the unimproved capital value of all native land in the province, at least 60 per cent of all landowning units would find it cheaper to change to the land rate while the province could expect to improve its revenue by 66 per cent. On this basis the board accepted the introduction of a land rating system as a means of financing the province, and the system was put into operation in Tailevu and Kadavu in 1968. Ba Province started using it in 1969 and Rewa in 1970. These are the only provinces operating the land rate: upon its success there will depend its use by other provinces.

When the land rating system was introduced, it was considered that the provincial rate took no account of ability to pay. It was also difficult to administer because of population mobility, and the pursuit of defaulters was wasteful of both time and money. It was further argued that *mataqali* land is fixed, and bears some relationship to ability to pay. The essential features of the system may be summarised as follows:

- (a) the land rate is levied on all Fijian owned land in the province;
- (b) the rate is levied on the landowning unit as a whole. There is provision for its apportionment among the members, but this is left to their discretion;
- (c) each landowning unit nominates a representative to handle all dealings regarding their land rate. Where the land rate has not been apportioned among members, the representative is responsible for collecting the rate and paying it to the provincial treasury;
- (d) the landowning unit may authorise the NLTB to deduct from their rent money (if any) an amount to meet their land rate;
- (e) there is provision for the issue of a warrant for the sale of goods and chattels found on the premises of the ratepayer, to recover long outstanding rates;
- (f) the provincial council has power to waive any part or the whole of the land rate due.

In view of the foregoing it is obvious that the smooth operation of the land rating system depends on a number of factors, of which the following appear critical:

- (a) the quick execution of all the necessary administrative and clerical procedures involved in the preparation of rate assessment notices and their distribution;
- (b) discussion and decision by the landowning unit on the method of payment, i.e. communal collection, apportionment or deduction from rent money, if any;
- (c) the ability of the members to pay their rates. This related, obviously to their resources, levels of income, their number, and the amount of rate struck for their land;
- (d) constant follow up by field staff of the province to ensure that landowning units know the procedures to adopt and decide on the method of payment they wish to follow.

These conditions are not always easy to fulfil for they are dependent on a number of variables. Even if the assessment notices are distributed early and in the right places, members of landowning units are often not all resident in the one village. Some *turaga ni mataqali* may be resident permanently in an urban area, and this, plus the dispersal of members, militates against close and careful consultation by members of the *mataqali*, an essential requirement in a matter of collective responsibility such as the land rate. Because of the difficulty of contact and consultation between members, decisions on the mode of payment are very often not taken by the group. This leads to a situation where individual members pay to the provincial treasury whatever they can afford; and over the years it is often the case that little or nothing at all is paid. This was borne out by the performance of the system since 1968.

In nearly all four provinces using the land rate the level of collection was satisfactory in the first year of operation of the system: 58 per cent in Tailevu, 60 per cent in Kadavu, 25 per cent in Ba, and 39 per cent in Rewa. This can be attributed to the novelty of the system in the first year. The next few years proved disastrous in Tailevu, Rewa and Kadavu. In Ba, however, the provincial staff managed to persuade the landowners whose land rates were in arrears to agree to the deduction of 50 per cent of their land rent to meet arrears. The landowners in Ba who have rent money have given standing authorities for these deductions resulting in the payment of more than \$45,000 per annum by the NLTB to the provincial treasury since 1971. An important point to note in this context is that in Ba, of the 635 landowning units in the province, the 315 *mataqali* who have been authorising automatic deduction of rent money to pay for rates are bearing the whole burden of

financing the province. A number of *mataqali*, as is the case in the other three provinces, have paid only a very small proportion of the rate struck for their land, if anything at all.

It is clear that there is still a large amount of rate arrears to be paid. Tailevu Province decided in mid-1977 to write off no less than a quarter of a million dollars of outstanding rates going back to 1968. The seriousness of the arrears situation is similar in all four provinces and appears to call for the same decision that Tailevu has taken and a more detailed assessment of the basis of financing provincial councils.

It was hoped that the introduction of the land rate would serve as an incentive to the greater use of Fijian land for economic production, particularly idle *mataqali* land. This has not worked out. Many *mataqali* with large areas of unused land regard the land rate as punitive tax which does little to promote land development. The development of land for agriculture is dependent on factors such as suitability of crops, access, marketing arrangements, prices, security of tenure and so on. In itself the land rate does little to promote land development. And for the ordinary villager the land rate is not necessarily a fair rate because income from the land varies widely between villages and between individuals dependent on the land for their livelihood. Also the potential cash income from a piece of land and the actual cash earned from it can be very different indeed.

The population of the *mataqali* is a significant variable in Fijian land tenure. Some *mataqali* have large areas of high quality land for which the rate struck has been prohibitive in view of their small population. Furthermore, the bulk of *mataqali* members may continue to practise semi-subsistence farming and only intermittently or only in small numbers enter fully into the cash sector of the economy; and when they do, it may be only for a specific purpose. The land of such *mataqali* may not be leased but if it is leased, rentals are often low in relation to the high rate. This sort of situation prevails in the agriculture leases on native land in Tailevu and Rewa. It would seem that an upward assessment of agricultural rent is necessary if rent money is to contribute to the payment of the land rate. The new provisions of the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act will allow this to be done.

Although the land rate has not worked successfully in any of the four provinces that have used it as their revenue base, it is not certain if all the necessary provisions of the system have been fully tested. Many landowners do not appear to appreciate fully their responsibilities under the system, and at the same time there has

been some reluctance to use some of the provisions of the Land Rate Regulations relating to the non-payment and recovery of the land rate. In view of all this therefore serious consideration should be given to the abolition of the land rate as a system of financing provincial councils, and alternative methods of funding be considered, as a matter of urgency. Perhaps the idea of levying produce taxes ought to be revived and given serious thought. At least this is related to the productive capacity of the land in the province.

While the land rate has proved unsuccessful, the remaining ten provincial councils continue to levy a head tax on all male members of the province aged 18 to 60 years. This tax has not been entirely successful and the shortfall continues to run at about 50 per cent every year. In Lomaiviti Province, for example, a collection of \$15,122 was estimated in provincial rate in 1977. By July 1977 only \$2,450 or 16 per cent had been collected. This makes the need to examine closely the basis of financing the provincial councils a serious matter that demands early and urgent attention. The alternative is to let things drift. This will weaken and undermine the position of the provincial council, to such an extent the Fijians will find it increasingly irrelevant and unnecessary.

However, provincial councils are doing all they can within the limits of their resources to improve their financial position. Some have purchased sizable assets which are expected to earn the province some revenue that will in time be large enough for the land rate or the provincial rate to be reduced considerably if not removed completely. Others are adopting various systems of raising funds in lieu of the land rate or the head tax. Tailevu Province plans to produce badges which will be sold to all members of the province annually, for \$1 per badge. It is hoped that the total raised in this way in 1977 could be around \$20,000 to \$30,000. In Cakaudrove there is a backlog of \$20,000 unpaid provincial rates for 1976 alone. It is planned to call on each member of the province throughout Fiji to contribute \$2 to the provincial fund. In this way it is hoped that about \$70,000 can be collected; the Cakaudrove Provincial Council needs \$60,000 annually to do its work properly. This approach is based on what is regarded as the communal spirit of collective obligation; and the collection of funds will be based on traditional *vanua* groupings. This seems a sensible approach, but the basic question is this: will the collective spirit last? Can it be depended on as the basis for financing an administration? Past experience points to the strong possibility that interest in and support for this system of fund raising could wane after the first

few years if no real benefit accrues to the ratepayers. Perhaps one cannot budget on collective generosity for more than a few years.<sup>17</sup>

But there is another important angle to the whole question of rate collection which is of vital concern to the ratepayer. This relates to what the rates are spent on; it raises the whole question of provincial expenditure. In the past the pattern of provincial expenditure was such that little direct benefit accrued to the ratepayers and the money they paid into the provincial treasury as rates was spent mainly on maintaining the staff not paid from the government subvention, and for office and official expenses. Thus the people saw no strong compulsion to pay their provincial rate if they did not derive any benefit from the administration. Whatever system of revenue raising is adopted by the provincial council, the pattern of expenditure must be of direct benefit to the people of the province. If nothing is done about this, the financial position of provincial councils will continue to deteriorate, despite the greater powers that have been devolved on the provincial councils since 1967. Perhaps each village or each *tikina* ought to keep a proportion of the rate they collect for their own development.

Despite these difficulties, and some of them make the situation rather gloomy, it is clear that with all these changes, the provincial councils have reached the stage of development envisaged for them almost thirty years ago by Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna:

They will have a new look, for they will wear the full costume of local government councils as these are known elsewhere in the world—in structure and organisation, in powers and functions . . . It is agreed that they cater for only one race within their various boundaries. But the Fijians need time to establish themselves in their own new provincial councils and to learn their ways, and this feeling was reflected in the Council of Chiefs resolution of 1965.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Fijian Development Fund Board (FDFB)**

This is one of the Fijian institutions that has remained little changed in purpose and function since its creation in 1952. One of the major aims of the administrative re-organisation in 1945 was the economic development of the Fijians. To this end Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna devised the basic principles of the FDFB to be based on a compulsory cess of \$20 per ton on all copra produced by Fijians. It was hoped that accumulation of cash through cess deduction would lead to a pool of funds that Fijians could use in their own development. From the very beginning, the need to improve

housing conditions in the villages was the main objective of the fund. In this way, time usually spent on building and repairing *bure* made of thatch material could be spent on more economic activities and increased agricultural production for cash purposes. It was hoped that in this way the administration could combat the tendency for Fijians to be 'too apt to fritter away their substance on evanescent trifles'.<sup>19</sup>

In the period 1952 to 1972 \$6.7 million was deposited with the fund, while over \$6.5 million was withdrawn for approved purposes.<sup>20</sup> About two-thirds of all withdrawals have been for housing purposes; other projects funded by the board included the purchase and building of vessels, the purchase and development of land, school buildings, copra sheds and dryers, water supplies, agricultural and industrial equipment and livestock. Some critics might have preferred to see the bulk of the depositor's funds invested in truly development projects. However, the board of the fund has interpreted development widely and this is why there has been such concentration on housing. At the same time the emphasis on housing indicates the kind of need the people have felt and expressed through the use of their money. The need for better housing is important throughout the Fijian community. One might well ask, what have the Fijian copra producers to show for the money that did not go into cess? At least they can point to the FDFB houses to show the result of cess deductions.

This pattern of expenditure, with its emphasis on housing, has persisted during the first and second decades of the fund's existence. It is likely to persist into the 1980s. This trend is clearly defensible on the grounds that living conditions in the villages need to be improved, and housing is one area in which Fijians acutely feel the need for improvement. But this is not to say that other areas of investment have been ignored, and though they may have been small, the investments concerned have been needed at the time they were made. The fund has helped considerably in the educational field, through school building construction, the payment of school fees, and for the education of promising Fijians overseas. The fund's ability to help its members is dependent on the price of copra. This was depressed in 1974, and is only just beginning to recover somewhat. This period of low prices led to a considerable reduction in the level of cess deduction from \$20 to \$5 per ton, a move that was obviously welcomed by Fijian copra producers.

Over the years the FDFB has invested some of its surplus funds in overseas and government securities. This totalled about half a

million dollars in 1977. It seems that there is a case for assessing closely the pattern of FDFB investments, so that the members' funds are invested in a way that will bring them the maximum advantage. The Unit Trust Scheme planned by the government offers possibilities, though this is not the only avenue that should be examined. Perhaps this money should be invested locally and not overseas; Fijian money should be used to promote Fijian development and not the economy of Australia or New Zealand. The FAB is already involved in a number of commercial ventures which the FDFB might consider seriously for investment.

### **Native Land Trust Board**

The origin of the NLTB goes back to the mid-1930s when governors of the colony continually urged the Fijian people, through the Council of Chiefs, to utilise their land as much as possible. This led to the formulation of proposals for the leasing to others of tracts of land not needed by the Fijian owners. And by 1940 legislation was enacted, creating a board of trustees which, understandably, was dominated by government officials at that time, to be responsible for the administration of all native land.

Speaking in the Legislative Council on 22 February 1940 in support of the Native Land Trust Bill, Ratu Sukuna said that:

landowners have duties as well as rights. Travel the country and you see small patches of native cultivation here, long stretches of unused land there, further on more scratchings. Is the native, is anyone, justified in holding up large tracts of land in an agricultural country with a quickly growing population? . . . I recall the story of the ten talents and not far away I seem to see a writing which looks like tax on undeveloped land and consequential effects. It was these considerations that led the Chiefs to come together and in a number of meetings to decide to advise their people along the lines of Sir Murchison Fletcher's speech to the Council of Chiefs in 1930, on the subject of unused lands. They felt it was far better for them to put their own house in order rather than wait and have it put in order for them from outside, which might mean modifications that they did not want. The measure proposes to hand over to the Crown, as represented by a Board of Control, all native lands to be administered for the benefit of the owners . . . This Bill, I believe is unique in the history of British Crown Colony government and the Government may well be proud of a Native policy which . . .

has produced the sort of faith that removes mountains. When passed the legislation will be a monument of trust in British rule, of confidence in its honesty, and of hopes for the future—hopes that the seeds of disruption will disappear and that Europeans, Indians and Fijians will settle down to labour, sacrificing if need be community interests for the benefit of the whole.<sup>21</sup>

For more than twenty years the board operated essentially as a leasing agency, granting tenure on native land to Fijians and others interested in leasing native land for a variety of uses. This is still the main function of the NLTB as laid down by statute, that it shall administer its trust in the best interest of the owners. In this way the board must satisfy itself that the land it leases is not required for the use of the owners at some future date. The policy of setting aside certain sections of native land exempted from leasing to non-Fijians, and for the sole use of Fijian owners, has been criticised as indefensible. The very purpose of reservations was to set aside land not needed by the owners for their use, and in this way facilitate the use by others of non-reserved native land for productive purposes. The policy has been criticised largely because of its effects on leases by non-Fijians, which fall into reserve when they expire. It must be realised that the interest of the owners of the land must come first,



Plate 11 Native Land Trust Board building



and without a reservation policy it might not have been possible to lease native land so freely and easily as in the past. And so in executing the reservation policy, 'it has been necessary to proceed with caution, not, as has been suggested, in order to frustrate the land hunger of non-Fijians, but to win the confidence of the native owners in a policy designed to benefit all'.<sup>22</sup>

The cost of administering native land has been met entirely by the owners, who are levied 25 per cent of all rent moneys paid to the board for leases on native land. This is the major source of the board's revenue which, in terms of increasing costs and services provided by the NLTB, is proving inadequate. Indeed some landowners, becoming increasingly aware of the commercial value of their land, have asked for a reduction in the percentage deducted by the board for its administration cost. Such requests, made with the demand for increased services, show a regrettable lack of appreciation of the nature of the services provided to date, their cost to the board, and the inflationary trends of recent years.

In view of the increasing cost of financing the activities of the NLTB, attempts have been made to raise other independent sources of revenue, and to increase the revenue base of the board by increasing the number of commercial and residential leases. This has meant the direct involvement of the board in land development projects on a subdivision basis and resulted in the development of residential land like the Lami subdivision in the late 1950s, Tamavua in the 1960s and Waiyavi at Lautoka in the early 1970s. There have also been industrial and commercial subdivisions developed by the NLTB such as Nailagobokola in Nausori and Seaqaqa township in Vanua Levu. All these land development projects have been undertaken in the hope that the revenue base of the NLTB can be extended.

But in view of the role of the NLTB in making land available to the people of Fiji for a variety of uses, it is clear that the efficient performance of the board is in the interests of the nation, especially in increasing economic development. At present the board, on behalf of the Fijian landowners, subsidises the general economic progress of the country by making land available at costs which are met largely by the Board from its 25 per cent poundage. It is this kind of subsidy which is not only burdensome but also inequitable when shouldered only by the Fijian community for the good of all. It would appear therefore that there is a strong case for a government contribution towards the administrative costs of the NLTB largely because the functions of the board are in the interests of the country as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

Suitable local personnel may not be available to fill the professional posts so necessary for the efficient functioning of the NLTB, and thus recruitment from overseas may become inevitable, perhaps on an aid basis.<sup>24</sup> But this will not obviate the need for a government grant to the NLTB, for which there are precedents in the payment of a subvention to the FAB and the administrative subsidy to the Housing Authority, both of which are paid annually. In the case of the Housing Authority the government pays also an annual grant of about \$1.5 million for the development of land for housing. There is a case in the national interest for the government to pay for at least some of the cost of subdividing agricultural land by the NLTB.

The need for increased revenue apart, there was a keen awareness by the board, especially in the late 1960s, of the need to be involved more and more, through land development projects, in the mainstream of Fiji's economic life. This the board could do on behalf of the native owners. And it must and should be done if only to justify the fact that the board, on behalf of the Fijian people, administers and controls 83 per cent of the land in Fiji. If the board cannot involve itself in worthwhile land development ventures, on behalf of the owners, then very few if any other Fijians can. In this respect a major breakthrough has been made in the leasing of native land for tourist purposes. If an application is acceptable to the board, the applicant will be given an option for twelve months upon payment of a fee ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 depending on the acreage involved. During this option period the applicant will be required to submit detailed plans, a feasibility study, capital structure and other relevant information to enable the board to judge the case further. If approved a lease is given for sixty years, with a rent reassessment every ten years. During the development period hotel leases are assessed at \$750 per hectare per year for the first four years and thereafter at 3 per cent of gross receipts from all activities on the site, subject only to a minimum of 10 per cent of the unimproved capital value of the land. The landowners will be issued free 10 per cent of the paid up shares in the company, together with a seat on the board of directors. The consent of the NLTB is essential in any share transactions. Provided they meet the requirements, preference in employment will be given to the landowners. Cash compensation will be made to the landowners for improvements destroyed in the development, such as coconuts, fruit trees and gardens. It is clear 'that NLTB's position is one of encouraging well planned investment, while taking adequate precautions to safeguard the interests of the native owners'.<sup>25</sup>

### **Native Land Development Corporation (NLDC)**

The continued involvement of the NLTB in development projects with a high risk element, and where returns on investment are slow, such as in land subdivision, has raised the question whether such investments by the NLTB are in keeping with its trust responsibilities. At the same time, the board was keen to involve itself in land development projects so that the advantages to the landowners could be enhanced. To resolve the dilemma the NLTB decided in 1974 to set up a development arm known as the Native Land Development Corporation. The NLDC is a fully owned holding company of the NLTB established under the Companies Ordinance. In the last three years the corporation has become involved in agricultural land development on an estate basis in Seaqqa, and residential, commercial and industrial land subdivision in Vaileka, Tavua, and Natua in Seaqqa. The government has also agreed to support a long-term loan on very favourable terms to the NLDC of \$900,000 from the European Economic Community, to be used mainly on land development. At the same time it has bought shares on a deferred payment basis, in a number of viable commercial enterprises. It has also bought the largest book selling enterprise in Fiji. Except for the last named, which is a profitable venture, all the other enterprises are rather uncertain in the profits they will give to the NLDC in the first few years of its equity participation in them.

However, without such ventures, without taking any risks, the NLDC is not likely to gain much in money terms or in professional and commercial expertise in the future. But it is vital that business ventures of the sort the NLDC is involved in at present show some Fijian equity participation, and at least a good start is being made by the NLDC. Time will tell whether the investments made are wise ones. But the terms of these investments appear to show the fund of goodwill towards the corporation. There is also a willingness to help properly organised Fijian ventures attain a firm foundation. The first few years of the NLDC have not been easy largely because of shortage of capital. The success of the NLDC will depend largely, apart from the good management of its own affairs, on its ability to take quick advantage of this goodwill and convert it to profit yielding investments requiring the minimum of capital outlay on its part. The future appears bright, but the road ahead in the short term could be difficult to negotiate. However, given management skills and support from Fijian and other agencies, and political stability, there is much hope for the NLDC to succeed in the future.

## *Fijian Political Development*

### **A colonial stance**

In ceding Fiji to the British Crown in 1874, the Fijian chiefs were executing Fiji's most significant political document. The High Chiefs fully trusted Her Majesty's government to rule Fiji justly so that the people might live in peace and prosperity. Cession brought order to a chaotic political situation characterised by inter-tribal rivalries and wars. A system of government was introduced and with it came peace and order. And in general the Fijians were satisfied with the way they were ruled by the Crown Colony government. Even after sixty years of such rule Fijian leaders could say that:

there is nothing natives desire better than to be governed by the King's Representative with the help and advice of his senior officers and such European members of the Legislative Council as are, as far as possible, above the influences of local interest and prejudice.<sup>1</sup>

Such a statement demonstrates the trust and faith the Fijians had in the government, to the extent that they willingly allowed themselves to be ruled, and never agitated for a greater say in the affairs of the colonial government.<sup>2</sup>

Fijian representation in the Legislative Council began in 1905. For no less than fifty-eight years until 1963 such representatives were always nominated by the Council of Chiefs. In 1963 direct election of four of the six Fijian members of the Legislative Council started. Because of the composition of the Council of Chiefs, with little or no direct commoner representation since 1874 until about 1950, it was inevitable that such representatives were entirely Fijian chiefs. It was not until the early 1950s that commoners of education and proven ability were given the opportunity to represent their people in the Legislative Council.

After the end of World War II the Fijians' horizon widened considerably. More and more Fijians came into contact with new ideas. Urban migration gradually increased. New job opportunities emerged, and the Fijians came to accept and adjusted to new

employer-employee relationships. Increasing education among Fijians facilitated these changes. New and wider forms of association were being formed by Fijians in the urban areas; they were beginning to form their own perception of the Fijian status then, and their situation in the future. By the late 1950s pressure for widening the basis of Fijian political representation was building up, and urban Fijians made representation to the FAB to be represented in the provincial councils and in the Council of Chiefs. There was also pressure for the direct election of Fijian representatives to the Legislative Council. Such views encouraged the Governor, Sir Ronald Garvey, to suggest to the Council of Chiefs in 1954 that a measure of popular election be adopted in the selection of the five Fijian members of the Legislative council. The suggestion was declined by the Council of Chiefs until 1960.

During the latter part of the 1950s the problems of the Fijian people and their administration received considerable interest locally and from overseas investigators. There was the investigation of R. S. McDougall into Fijian administration finances in 1956, Professor Spate's investigation into Fijian economic problems in 1958, Professor Ward's study of land use and population in Fiji in 1958 and 1960-1, and that of Dr Nayacakalou into the relationship between Fijian traditional leadership and the Fijian administration, and the Burns Commission in 1960. These investigations, amongst other things, brought into sharp relief the divergence of existing Fijian institutions, based as they were on tradition-sanctioned philosophies, and the realities of Fijian life and thought which were already beginning to be based on new ideas and forms or organisation. All this called for a new and enlightened approach to and wise leadership in Fijian political development.

### **The ferment**

Between 1960 and 1962 there was serious discussion in the Council of Chiefs on the need to widen the base of Fijian representation in the provincial councils, the Council of Chiefs itself, and in the Legislative Council. In 1960 urban Fijian representatives took their seats for the first time in the Council of Chiefs. And as for the popular election of Fijian members of the Legislative Council, its acceptance by the Council of Chiefs was not an easy or straightforward matter. Fortunately, the Fijian members of the Legislative Council, most of whom were paramount chiefs, were convinced that the time had come to shift the basis of Fijian representation in the Legislative Council, and it was only because of their powerful arguments that the Council of Chiefs agreed to

the direct election of Fijian members to the Legislative Council for the first time in 1963.

It would not be far wrong to say that by 1960 there was already a feeling of insecurity among the general Fijian public; and among Fijian leaders there was concern for the welfare and security of Fijians in their own country. Between 1960 and 1963 a number of factors strengthened this feeling of insecurity. There was the recommendation of the Burns Commission regarding the abolition of the Fijian administration, and Fijian reaction to it was almost predictable. There was the increasing Indian population which by 1960 was already more than 50 per cent of the Fiji total. The rising population was seen in terms of a greater demand for land and the only large areas of unused land belonged to the Fijians. Such a situation led, indeed encouraged, the leaders of the Indian community to say to the Burns Commission that:

the chief complaint of the Indian community is that the Colonial Office has not in spirit or letter, wittingly or otherwise, fulfilled its pledged word to accord parity of treatment to Indians with the other races in the Colony in the matter of land utilisation and holding.<sup>3</sup>

Speaking in the Legislative Council on 13 December 1961, Ravuama Vunivalu commented:

I was going to say Sir, that when the Burns Commission arrived in Fiji, I was sitting in the body of this Chamber when the Hon. Indian Member for the Southern Constituency was making representations on behalf of the Indian Association. On the question of land he was asked point-blank by no less a person than Sir Alan Burns as to what he wanted to do with land; whether he meant usage or ownership. The Hon. Member said 'Both'.<sup>4</sup>

Comments such as these encouraged the Fijians to think and believe that the Indian community was not satisfied with usage rights over Fijian land; they appeared to display a desire to exert greater rights over Fijian land. At the same time the Indians believed that they should be accorded economic and political rights equal to other communities in the colony. In addition to these demands, the Indians had also been agitating for political reform.

In view of these pressures, Fijian leaders formed the Fijian Association in 1963 basically to counter Indian demand for political change. The Fijian Association aimed to protect Fijian interests, which were not to be compromised for short-term

political gain. It also believed in maintaining the link between Britain and the Fijian people; Fijian land must not be alienated; and any political reform must be achieved through constitutional means. From its inception the Fijian Association appears to have been closely associated with Fijian high chiefs and the Fijian administration, although strictly speaking the claim by Nayacakalou that the Fijian Association was the unofficial arm of the FAB cannot be substantiated, because one was political in function, the other administrative.<sup>5</sup> In order to gain the widest support possible for the Fijian Association, there was a membership drive aimed at recruiting as widely as possible, from both the rural and urban Fijians, in order to demonstrate the wide-based support Fijians had for the principles the association stood for. And not surprisingly, there was ready and spontaneous support for the cause. This meant an appreciation by Fijians of the aims of the association, a feeling of insecurity because of the increasing Indian numbers, and the effectiveness of the propagators of the association in spreading its 'gospel'.

By 1963 the pressure from the United Nations, especially from its Committee on Colonialism, to grant independence to colonial territories had been mounting for some years. This pressure led colonial powers to take the view that it was better to grant independence too early rather than too late. All this meant that progress towards self-government for Fiji was inevitable. Thus, despite the official majority in the Legislative Council, the government introduced a membership system in July 1964 conferring ministerial responsibilities on three unofficial members. By then Ratu (now Sir) K. K. T. Mara had clearly emerged as leader of the Fijian members of the Legislative Council and President of the Fijian Association; he became Member for Natural Resources. Mr (now Sir) John Falvey was made Member for Communications, Works and Tourism, and the late Mr A. D. Patel became Member for Social Services.

Early in the new year, the British government indicated its plan to hold a constitutional conference in London in mid-1965. The Fijian delegates at the conference succeeded in gaining the support of the European representatives for the principle of communal representation; this position was also favoured by the UK government, which did not wish to depart too drastically from the existing and accepted practice of electing members to the Legislative Council. Also the different races had not been fully integrated. The Indian representatives on the other hand wanted 'one man one vote', which the Fijian people saw as an attempt by

the Indian community to dominate the Legislature through their superior numerical strength. This view is not entirely accurate, because much would depend on how the constituencies were devised, and the distribution of population by ethnic groups. When the conference ended, it was agreed that the Fijians, Rotumans and other Pacific Islanders would elect nine representatives, the Indians nine, Europeans, part-Europeans and Chinese seven, and two additional Fijian members would be nominated by the Council of Chiefs. In addition, each of the three voting communities would be allocated three representatives to be elected on a cross-voting basis. It has been said that the conference was a triumph for Fijian interests because common roll was rejected, the Fijian chiefs retained the right to elect two more representatives, and other Pacific Island minorities increased Fijian numbers.<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that one cannot, in a country the size of Fiji, and with already diverging communal interests, take communal representation too far. This is why broadly similar ethnic groups or those with fundamentally similar interests were grouped together for the purpose of electing representatives to the Legislative Council. There is also the very close affinity between other Pacific Islanders and Fijians, largely because of the unifying influences of both Polynesian and Melanesian cultures which find their expression in various parts of Fiji. The allocation of two extra seats to the Fijians was a sacrifice on the part of the European, part-European and Chinese group. Two additional seats would not provide any safeguards for the Fijians, and at the same time would not threaten the freedom of expression of any other community; but they did give the Fijians the assurance of added weight for their interests in the affairs of Fiji.

Fresh elections were held in 1966, based on the new allocation of seats agreed at the 1965 Constitutional Conference. That election saw the emergence of party politics for the first time, when, largely through the initiative of Ratu K. K. T. Mara, the Alliance Party fought and won the election on a broad development front and on the basis of a multi-racial policy encouraging fair opportunity for all, leading to 'peace, progress and prosperity'. The Alliance Party won twenty-four seats, and gained also the support of three independents, while the Federation Party, led by Mr A.D. Patel, won all the nine Indian communal seats.

Since the 1965 Constitutional Conference, the Federation Party has not been satisfied with the system of election and representation into the Legislative Council. They regarded the system of election on a communal basis as undemocratic, and not



conducive to nation building and the closer integration of the different communities in Fiji. It was clear that the Federation Party wanted another constitutional conference to work out a fresh basis of representation which would have nothing to do with ethnic origin; obviously the party was falling back on its original stand of 'one man one vote'. And to emphasise the point, Mr. Patel led his party in a walk out from the Legislative Council in September 1967. They were absent for several months, which led to their disqualification as members of the council. By-elections to fill the nine vacancies were held in September 1968 and all Federation Party members were returned with increased majorities.

This landslide victory had some fairly grave consequences. Immediately after the by-elections the Fijian Association conducted meetings throughout the countryside to assess the Fijian reaction to the results. It became clear from these meetings that to the Fijian people, the loss of the Alliance candidates meant a rejection by the Federation Party and the majority of the Indian people of the Alliance policy of multi-racialism and a partnership among the communities and peaceful co-existence in Fiji. They also saw their weak economic position and a threat to their political status expressed in terms of the increased majorities gained by the Federation Party candidates, and were consequently not prepared to accept a reduction in their control of the political affairs of Fiji. Thus the points raised at these meetings were predictable. Common roll was rejected; independence was not wanted immediately; if independence came, the control of Fiji must be returned to the Fijians; Fijian leaders must be united and should cease to offer the hand of friendship to the Indians; the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance should be repealed and Indian leases on native land should not be renewed when they expired. Understandably, these issues were born of anger and disappointment; anger that the Indians appeared to the Fijians to be strongly in favour of common roll as a means of gaining political power which would allow them to dispossess the Fijians of their land, and disappointment that the Indians were not satisfied with their superior economic lot and relatively strong political position in their country of adoption. Feelings ran high and tension mounted dangerously to a level where the possibility of racial confrontation and conflict was very real. However, and fortunately for all, reason prevailed, and largely through the intervention of the Fijian paramount chiefs, the rank and file of the Fijian Association accepted moderation, and the need to achieve their goals through discussion and constitutional means.

**The move to independence and after**

By the beginning of 1969 the Fijians were starting to realise that Fiji would have to become independent some day, and the idea of independence was no longer repugnant as it had been only a few years before. But before independence was achieved a lot of issues had to be resolved, on which the Fijian position had to be clarified and thought through. These issues were put to the Fijian Association by its President, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, in June 1969:

What we must ask ourselves is whether the present constitution gives Fijians an adequate political share. Is it adequate for the future where we shall have to assume the responsibility of leadership that we have long grown accustomed to leave with the United Kingdom? What is our view about communal seats? What is our view about cross voting? Do we want to extend it? Is there a virtue in two chambers? Perhaps a second house will give better examination of legislation, representation of minorities and the opportunity for people who might not otherwise get in. How big should Parliament be remembering there must be ministers and backbenchers to be provided? What are our views on the common roll? What about a republic? What do we think about a Head of State? If we have one, should he be a constitutional monarch or president with powers? These are just some questions; there will be others. Our guiding principle should be to produce a constitution we sincerely and honestly believe will provide for future peace and prosperity for all in future generations. This needs vision, leadership and a means of assertion and generosity.<sup>7</sup>

These were the questions to which the Fijians and the Fijian Association addressed themselves during the whole of 1969, and by the time the two parties got down to serious discussion on constitutional changes in August 1969, the Fijian Association's position was becoming clear. The Fijian Association and the Alliance favoured dominion status with the Queen as constitutional monarch represented in Fiji by a governor-general. The Federation Party on the other hand wanted an elected President as Head of State, but Fiji should be a member of the Commonwealth. After discussion the Federation Party agreed with the position adopted by the Fijian Association and the Alliance. This broad measure of agreement led to the visit to Fiji by Lord Shepherd, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, in January 1970 so that he could acquaint himself at first hand with the progress of these

discussions and the measure of agreement reached. This was followed by the Constitutional Conference held in London between 20 April and 5 May 1970 and independence on 10 October 1970.

From the Fijian standpoint the present constitution embodies many of the fundamental points desired by the Fijian Association. Fijian interests are safeguarded. Legislation dealing with Fijian land and Fijian culture may not be amended without the support of six of the eight Council of Chiefs representatives in the Senate.<sup>8</sup> Any other legislation that infringes Fijian land rights would be treated in the same way. And so it would not be too much to say that the Fijians might look back over the political developments during the last two decades with satisfaction and gratitude. They have been fortunate that they have had wise and sound leaders, both chiefs and commoners, with the initiative and the vision to take not only the responsibility of national leadership while determining the direction of political progress in the best interest of the Fijians, but simultaneously accommodating the needs of others in order to achieve a broad and united national objective that has led ultimately to political autonomy.

The first general election after independence was held in 1972, two years later. The Fijian Association won for the Alliance all the twelve Fijian communal seats, and, largely as a result of Fijian support, the Alliance also won fourteen of the twenty Fijian and Indian national seats, and four of the five general national seats. It also won the three general communal seats. The Alliance won the election easily with thirty-three seats and the National Federation party nineteen.

Since 1970 the Fijians have followed diligently and faithfully the tenets of the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party. They have accepted the need to promote the political and economic development of all people in Fiji and the need for tolerance and understanding in closely integrating a multi-racial society, although the need to concentrate on the improvement of living conditions amongst the economically handicapped is given special recognition. These principles have guided the Alliance Party, of which the Fijian Association is a major partner, since independence in 1970. But as in any organisation there are bound to be one or two disgruntled and dissatisfied individuals; the Fijians Association and the Alliance are no exceptions. In 1974 the Alliance philosophy of multi-racialism, and the policy of developing Fiji's resources for the benefit of all, was seriously challenged for the first time. Sakiasi Butadroka, previously of the Fijian Association, questioned the value of these policies to the Fijians. He claimed that the

government had done little to raise the economic and social status of the Fijian people. He went so far as to advocate the repatriation of people of Indian ancestry, and that Fiji's Parliament should consist of only indigenous Fijians, although all citizens would retain the right to vote. These were indeed extreme views typical of a dictatorial and racist regime, though hopelessly unrealistic in perception of contemporary realities in Fiji. They ignored the contribution other communities have made to the welfare of the country, and of the Fijians. This breakaway movement led to the formation of the Fijian Nationalist Party with the familiar slogan 'Fiji for the Fijians' as its major political philosophy. The extent of Fijian support for the Nationalist Party was not clear until the general elections were held in April 1977. For the first time the Fijian Association lost one of the twelve Fijian communal seats to the leader of the Fijian Nationalist Party and another to an independent candidate. Of the 80,000 odd Fijian votes cast in the ten Fijian communal constituencies that were contested, the Fijian Nationalist Party gained 20,189. These figures alone show that the support the party had was quite substantial and should not be taken lightly, because the splitting of the Fijian votes between the Fijian Association and the Fijian Nationalist Party as in the April 1977 elections gave the National Federation Party an edge over the Alliance in the critical national constituencies, thus ending the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party political control that had lasted since 1966. And ironically the very party that wanted to make 'Fiji for the Fijians' and expel the Indians very nearly gave Fiji its first Indian Prime Minister.

However, by the time the second general elections were held in September 1977, Fijian support for the Nationalist Party had dropped by about 50 per cent. In the nine Fijian communal constituencies contested by the Nationalist Party their candidates polled 10,944 of the total votes cast, and not one of them was elected to Parliament. In the Fijian communal constituency won by an independent candidate who was the sole opponent of the Alliance candidate, it is not impossible that some of those persons who voted for the independent candidate had sympathy with the Fijian Nationalist Party. At the same time the reduction in the votes won by the Nationalist Party candidates in some of the crucial National Constituencies, together with the split in the Indian votes between the two factions of the National Federation Party, enabled the Alliance Party to score a most convincing victory at the polls. But one cannot regard the Fijian Nationalist Party as dead and finished. They are still there, 10,900 of them, in the countryside.

Perhaps a proper and detailed explanation of development projects and programs at grassroots level in the context of a multi-racial Fiji is the surest way of reducing to an insignificant level the support Fijians have for that party.

Politically, the Fijian people have now reached the crossroads. More so than at any time in the past they need to assess what the different political parties each have to offer to themselves and to the country as a whole, bearing in mind that real progress can be achieved only within a framework of economic, social and political stability and multi-racial harmony. The policies of the National Federation Party as they affect the Fijian people cannot be identified easily, if they exist at all. Indeed the National Federation party ignores the existence of race as a fact of life in Fiji and its impact on political action, and does not appear to think that the Fijian people need special help in order to bring them up to a level comparable with the other races in the field of trade and commerce. The Fijians see this attitude as meaning that if the National Federation Party comes to power, it may attempt to weaken existing institutions that cater only for Fijian needs. Indeed K. C. Ramrakha had advocated in June 1974 in the House of Representatives the abolition of the NLTB. By taking such a stand, he was hitting at the heart of Fijian existence; he was pressing a very sensitive area close to the Fijian's soul and to his being. The Fijians believe that when the Indians in the National Federation party say that too much land lies idle, they are referring mainly to Fijian land, much of which is unsuitable for the crops with which the Indian farmers are familiar, while other parts cannot be used without the necessary infrastructure. The National Federation Party have proposed giving more land to cane farmers as a matter of priority. The Fijians ask: whose land will this be? The only sizable areas that can be given for cane farming are owned by Fijians, especially the reserves which were previously under sugar cane and leased to Indian tenants but have reverted to the Fijian owners on the expiry of the leases in order to meet their own needs for agricultural land. The bulk of the Fijian population clearly appreciates the dangers of these policies, for they see that their total effect is to reduce the Fijian to a nonentity in his own country. Even as recently as 1976, leaders of the National Federation Party asserted that the land of Fiji belongs to no one but God! This is true if one takes a broad and intensely religious view of things. The practical implication of this idea would work only if everybody believed and practised, without any deviation, the true meaning of God's love. However, the Fijians would retort that God put them first in Fiji to be owners and caretakers of His domain.

The policies of the Fijian Nationalist Party appear attractive to many unthinking and simple-minded Fijians. Such people fail to realise that a policy of racial expulsion will be difficult to stop once applied; it could affect most if not all minority communities in Fiji. Apart from its effects on living conditions, it could lead to a situation where Fijian tribalism would be encouraged to a dangerous level, leading to friction; ultimately the Fijians would be fighting amongst themselves.

A disturbing feature of the private preaching of the Fijian Nationalist Party to the Fijian people is the belief that God is on their side; that what the Fijian Nationalist Party is doing is under divine instructions; that God wants the Fijians to rule his country and that He wants the Fijians to resist any attempt by foreigners, the Indians in particular, to covet and take away from the Fijians what is rightly and traditionally theirs. In this context, 1 Kings chapter 12 verses 1-16 in which King Ahab of Samaria asked Naboth for his vineyard in exchange for its value in cash or some other piece of land, has been quoted. To this request, Naboth replied: 'The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my father.' Ahab's wife then plotted the death of Naboth and when he died, Ahab lost no time in taking over the vineyard. The Fijian Nationalist Party see in this text what they regard as the plight of the Fijians represented by Naboth, and the greed of the Indians represented by King Ahab. The Bible therefore is quoted to support their case and give credence to their argument. But the situation in Samaria at that time was quite different from that in contemporary Fiji. Moreover, the Fijian Nationalist Party appears to believe that God will put things right for them; that He will ensure that the Indians leave Fiji and their property will belong to Fijians without any effort at all. All this is a measure of the depth of unreality the party appears to be indulging in at present. At the same time greed seems to engross the Fijian Nationalist Party and is likely to be in control over every move its leaders contemplate. Clearly then the Fijian Nationalist Party is a racist party of the first degree and in its most blatant form. It simply does not have the support of the majority of Fijians and cannot be considered seriously as offering an alternative policy beneficial to Fiji. However, it has succeeded in driving a deep wedge into a strong and united Fijian political public.

It seems therefore that the only alternative for Fiji and the Fijians lies in policies that recognise the strength of each racial group in terms of their rich cultural contribution to the nation, and their economic role in the well being of all. These cannot be ignored

and a place must be found for each community. At the same time the handicapped community must be given special assistance to find a respectable and meaningful place in the total economy, and especially in the cash sector. The Alliance stands for all these and recognises the relatively weak economic position of the Fijians, and is taking steps to ensure that the position is remedied. All this will depend on the government's policy of multi-racialism and how the Fijians will respond to it now and in the future.

### **Multi-racialism**

In Fiji race is a fact of life and it cannot be ignored in any analysis of the local political scene. Indeed race exerts a significant influence on political activities throughout the country. Racial differences are accentuated by social, cultural and economic factors, and when these are taken together they help to determine people's behaviour. These in turn affect their political leanings, in the sense that a person will naturally choose to associate with his own racial group. This attitude is emphasised by the cultural diversity of the population and accounts for the basic divisions which have characterised the total society for some time. Although there may be broad cultural similarities between the major races in terms of some of the values they share, these similarities tend to be few and ineffectual as unifying factors.

Fiji has three broad cultural groups, each of which conceives its position in Fiji, including the assessment of its resources and how these should be utilised, in often divergent ways. There are a number of obvious differences in cultural traits. Language is an important vehicle of cultural transmission, and the cultural and racial divisions in Fiji show themselves most clearly in languages. Through language the ideas and beliefs of a race are expressed and given meaning. It is a fact of life in Fiji that most people are fluent only in their mother tongue; a very small proportion of the total population is effectively trilingual, especially in Fijian, English and Hindi, to the extent that they have some understanding of the beliefs and aspirations of other language groups. It is a normal human tendency for people to feel most confident in expressing their own ideas in their own mother tongue. When two people of different racial groups interact, they often communicate in a third language or in one or the other of their languages. In this sort of situation there is always the danger of mutual and accidental misunderstanding of ideas, motives and aspirations. If this happens

it can lead to mutual suspicion, and a barrier immediately arises to separate the individuals concerned. There is then a mutual feeling of mistrust which is probably misplaced, but nevertheless very real because it has been generated by significant and deep seated language and cultural differences. To make things even more complicated, the Fijians see that they are in the minority numerically. They own 83 per cent of all the land, but the Indians and Europeans, part-Europeans and Chinese are in control of the economic power.

All these factors are an inseparable part of Fiji's multi-racial society of which the Fijian people are a major component. At the national level the Fijians realise and accept that each of the major races must be given an adequate voice in the affairs of the country; this is the basis on which they have accepted their role as a constituent body of the Alliance Party; although because of numbers they are regarded as the most powerful of the troika of which the General Electors Association and the Indian Alliance form the other two constituent bodies. The Fijians, through the Alliance Party, have accepted a partnership in which all three constituent bodies have an equal say in the affairs of the party. The acceptance of this position by the Fijians is a far cry from the time when their leaders adopted the position that 'when independence comes . . . let the British Government return Fiji to the Fijians . . . in the same spirit with which the Fijians gave Fiji to Great Britain.'

The basic question that needs to be asked here is why have the Fijians fundamentally changed their position from one of paramountcy of their interest to one of partnership with other communities? This is not easy to determine precisely, but it is possible to suggest some contributing factors. Fijian leaders realised fairly early that both self-government and independence were likely to be granted to Fiji by Great Britain on terms which would be agreed upon by the major communities; and it was not difficult to realise that the position taken in 1961 would not be acceptable to the Indian people and to the UK government. This would prevent Great Britain from granting to Fiji any measure of self-government, until it was sure that the interests of all parties would be catered for adequately. The Fijian leaders realised that the contribution of non-Fijians to the welfare of Fiji could not be ignored and this gave them the right to be parties to any negotiated terms of self-government and independence. There was also the fact that most non-Fijians know no place other than Fiji as their home; their ancestors may have come from India, but those of the present generation were born in Fiji. It is a mark of considerable



persuasive strength that these viewpoints were accepted without much question by the Fijian people in general both before and after independence. And in order to ensure the acceptance of this position, it was necessary to provide constitutional safeguards regarding Fijian custom and land ownership, matters which are so close to the Fijian identity and his being.

With these concessions and safeguards the Fijians also expect that other communities will view with tolerance official attempts to bring them more quickly into the mainstream of the country's economic life. Their willingness to extend leases by non-Fijians on their land would appear to them to justify their demand for special treatment to ensure for them greater participation in the commercial sector of the economy. For undoubtedly, peaceful co-existence in Fiji has an economic requirement which demands a redistribution of the benefits of development in favour of the Fijians until some degree of economic parity with other races is in sight or assured. The alternative is to accentuate the current trends in development so that those communities in control of the commercial life of the country strengthen their position further. This can only lead to dissatisfaction, unrest and instability.

Although economic measures are necessary to peace and harmony among the races, a permanent solution must look to the future and in the long term. By this is meant measures that will lead to real understanding between the major races. This needs time and must begin early and in the schools. Multi-racial schooling will help in this direction; by learning and playing together, students of different ethnic groups will begin to understand one another; and only in this way can they begin to see the others' differences and begin to appreciate them. But all this requires a conscious effort on the part of the school and educational authorities to promote a situation of maximum contact between students of different races which is not artificial, but spontaneous in its emergence and with meaning in the experience of the students. Multi-racial schooling has already gone some way in the urban areas, though not far enough (Table 7). The rate cannot be forced on parents; but its advantages for Fiji, not only in terms of Fijian educational progress by allowing the kind of competition the Fijian student needs, but also in terms of fostering greater understanding, should be publicised as widely as possible. To do this successfully will need skill, especially by Fijians who are convinced of its value and who are willing and able to persuade others to accept it fully.

In the rural areas of mixed population such as Ba, Tailevu, and parts of Naitasiri, there is already a high degree of understanding

**Table 7**  
**Racial Composition of Suva City Schools, 1974**

	Fijians	Indians	Euro- peans	Chinese	Others	Total
Veiuto Primary	269	158	440	27	89	983
Deenbandhu						
Primary	35	458	—	—	10	503
Marist Primary	177	444	91	84	59	855
St Annes	95	96	113	90	42	436
Marist Brothers						
Primary	181	182	26	9	17	415
Suva Methodist	458	403	15	9	80	965
Annesley Meth.	263	176	21	5	34	499
Draiba Fijian	555	—	—	—	6	561
Nabua Fijian	607	—	—	—	9	616
Stella Maris						
Primary	124	72	94	35	44	369
Holy Trinity	119	127	24	2	19	291
St Agnes	219	63	2	6	112	402
Arya Samaj	19	323	1	—	3	346
Dudley						
Intermediate	209	237	12	4	39	501
Samabula Primary	41	524	1	1	4	571
Vatuwaqa Primary	19	221	8	—	17	265
Suva Muslim	48	400	1	—	1	450
SSM School	20	769	—	1	2	792
MGM Primary	7	425	—	—	—	432
Gospel Primary	151	321	9	4	16	501
Nehru Memorial	7	742	—	—	1	750
Fiji Chinese						
Primary	7	1	5	229	6	248
Raiwaqa Primary	264	37	7	1	44	353
Suva Primary	50	67	75	4	5	201
LDS Suva Primary	42	45	5	3	22	117
Pt Vishnu Deo						
Memorial	311	262	9	2	52	636
Total	4,297	6,553	959	516	733	13,058
Average	165	273	48	29	29	502

*Source:* Figures supplied by the Ministry of Education, Suva.

between the villager and his Indian rural counterpart. The rural development program has brought them together more closely; it has encouraged them to see common development problems and needs, and to search for common solutions through a pooling of resources. This kind of common problem solving approach has not reached the field of education, although it too could benefit from such an approach; it will probably take some time before greater co-operation can be seen in this field of activity in the rural areas. This is partly the result of the greater degree of conservatism one finds in rural areas generally.

In the towns the situation is different. The Fijian town dweller has a wider circle of friends and a wider horizon; his work brings him into contact with non-Fijians, most of whom might well be his supervisors. He has to adjust to this relationship and to the work situation and the competition which this brings. At the same time he cannot avoid noticing the relative affluence of non-Fijians in the urban scene to which he himself aspires. Ideally, the urban situation should be conducive to the promotion of greater understanding between the different races, because it is the point of contact where, for the Fijian at least away from the closed community of the village, he is exposed to other people and their ideas. He has much opportunity to adjust to their ways, and they to his. But in practice it cannot be said that it has worked out this way because of the natural tendency to associate more with one's own group than with others. At the same time the economic differences have tended to accentuate the ethnic divisions.

And so a peaceful multi-racial policy for Fiji demands efforts on many fronts. In the long-term education obviously provides an important avenue for fostering greater understanding between the different communities. The process of urbanisation is throwing people into a situation where they are forced to adjust to one another in the short-term and in the different circumstances and roles in which they find themselves. But underlying all this is the need to redistribute the fruits of development, in both the rural and urban areas, so that the poor, of whom the Fijians see themselves as the majority, are rescued from their present predicament and given a better place in life.

## *Conclusion*

In this analysis of the contemporary Fijian situation I have tried to review in a general way some of the major changes which have occurred in Fijian life during the last twenty years or so. Much progress has been made not only in modernising Fijian institutions, but also in the Fijians' attempt to play a greater part in the life of Fiji; no doubt more needs to be done if the Fijians are to hold their own in their own country. The last twenty years have been very difficult indeed. The Fijians have had to review their position in the context of increasing development around them, but more significantly in the light of the rapid political development leading to independence in 1970. All these developments continue to affect the Fijian position and have a number of important implications for Fijian life, both at the local level and in the national scene.

### **Social change and modernisation**

Twenty years ago Fijian society was fairly tightly organised and in many instances contained obstacles to change and development. This is not entirely the case now, for Fijians realise that certain aspects of their social institutions need modification if they are to make rapid progress in the modern world. Although the rate of this change may not be fast enough from the viewpoint of outside observers, the important point is that change is accepted and is proceeding. Because social change affects the Fijian's conception of his status and being, one cannot expect too rapid and drastic a change. The Fijian needs to be sure that what he changes to is both workable and acceptable to his self-esteem.

There is no doubt that the traditional social order has been modified considerably over the last two decades. This process will continue in the future and may well intensify. Village society is no longer strictly regulated from above and the people themselves are left to determine their own activities with guidance from outside. As a result there has been a tendency to fall back on and utilise traditional means of grouping and local leadership for modern ends. Local chiefs are unmistakably playing a critical role in the affairs of their village. They will need all the guidance and expert

advice they can get if they are to lead their people in new and rewarding directions. There is also the need for co-operation among villagers themselves, to work together for the common objective of raising living standards in the village. Such co-operation should be easily obtained in villages where traditional leaders have been installed formally, and where there are one or two *yavusa*. A three or four *yavusa* village, with no clear line of accepted authority, is likely to operate only under considerable strain and more often than not villagers pull their own and separate ways, and village chores are not always effectively done.

Social change among Fijians has important implications for development in the villages and settlements and in the urban areas. If present trends persist there will be increasing population mobility, and rural-urban drift will intensify as a result. Individualism is already an important feature of Fijian life in the urban centres. It is already appearing as a feature of development in the rural areas and there is no doubt that it will gain momentum in the years ahead. In the village this factor will need to be handled carefully if it is to be harnessed for village development and for the promotion and enhancing of community spirit in settlements throughout the country. If it is not properly handled it could lead to conflict not only in the villages but throughout Fijian society in general, and this may lead to social disorganisation and ultimately to the break up of the village community. Obviously, this is not desirable or desired by the generality of the Fijian public.

The loosening of the social order is most glaringly evident amongst young people. There is a tendency for young people to disregard the authority of their elders; or at least to question it. Often elders no longer exercise the control necessary over their young people. This is not a simple matter of disobedience because both elders and youth now operate in a much changed environment. Education is perhaps the most important influence. Over the last two decades Fijians throughout the country have been exposed to new ideas originating from outside Fiji. These ideas have come through the educational system and through the mass media. In some cases Fijians regard the adoption of new ideas as a sign of progress. New styles of personal attire have been adopted, some for the good, but in others they have led to the apparent absence of any discipline in the lives of young people. Population mobility from the village to the town has tended to support this trend and in some cases the rowdy behaviour one finds in many urban centres of mixed population is creeping into the village in the form of a disrespect for elders and villagers in general. To say this

is not to question the fundamental rights of individuals: these are enshrined in the constitution. But individuals are part of a community; they have responsibilities as well as rights. But unfortunately many young people, both in the towns and in the villages, do not seem to realise that while their rights as members of a village are accepted, they have certain responsibilities they must fulfil for the village community to function smoothly and properly. This demands mutual recognition and respect of the functions of each member of the village as essential for the whole to exist as a viable entity.

The position of the various social units is relevant to this recognition. Village chiefs have an important part to play in leading their community in directions that will result in an overall improvement of living conditions. The leaders need to recognise the individual needs of the people and that full consultation with the led is an essential requirement of successful leadership; this is why participative leadership at the village level, as elsewhere, is all about.

There is an important element in this process of consultation at village level, by villagers themselves, that needs special attention. This concerns the assessment of village level institutions and organisations, many of them created through the time-honoured process of trial and error, and largely to meet local demands some of which are no longer relevant or pressing. They still exist and should be reviewed and assessed in the light of modern needs. This review can be done effectively only by the people themselves, assisted perhaps by outside advice and guidance that needs to be sympathetic to the aspirations of the people at the village level. It will have to take into account also the role of the individual in a community which places a premium on collective effort, cohesion and solidarity, but where the social ingredients and links which held together the individuals of a community are weakening.

In traditional craft, there is an urgent need to preserve the skills of traditional village craftsmen through village housing that combines both modern and indigenous materials and architecture with traditional design and decorative art. The *i tokatoka*, *mataqali* and *yavusa* had a clear role in the ownership of land. Their roles in other activities need to be clearly thought out. In some situations, the resources available to these social units can be better mobilised on a *yavusa* basis to meet certain ends, depending on the size of the village and the particular task. Housing is perhaps better served when the *i tokatoka* is used as the unit for fund raising

by villagers, because the house cannot be built to accommodate the entire *mataqali*, but *mataqali* labour is always available for the actual construction. Indeed, more often than not all village labour is mobilised in housing construction, but the primary co-operating unit, the unit that is responsible for obtaining and purchasing building materials, could well be the *i tokatoka*.

Particularly in the towns there is tendency to hold up the advantages of the nuclear family as the ideal to follow in the formation of households. This tendency is supported by the provision of housing designed to suit the family that contains only the couple and their children. This idea is an outside introduction that is tied to the level of rent or loan repayment the working member of the nuclear family can afford. In this way overcrowding, especially in the official housing estates, is usually frowned upon and the extended family, as the unit of household organisation, is only tolerated if not discouraged. If this tendency develops further, it will inevitably lead to the complete disregard of the *i tokatoka*, *mataqali* and *yavusa* as the basis of Fijian social grouping. This should be guarded against.

There are other possible side effects of this process especially in the towns. Elders will cease to live with or visit their married sons and daughters; they may eventually be alienated from one another. The young parents will be so preoccupied with the pressures of obtaining a living that they do not look after their children properly, and the elders are not encouraged to share in the upbringing of their grandchildren. It is often said that grandparents frequently display undesirable habits such as indulging young children who will get special treatment they do not get from their parents. This may be so, but the proper upbringing that only a home environment can give, and the family continuity and cohesion, are clear advantages and far outweigh the supposed disadvantages of the involvement of grandparents in the upbringing of children. If parental guidance is not given the value of the family as the basis of social institutions can be undermined, and it will be much easier for the young adolescent to drift away from his home: he will try to obtain from elsewhere what he does not receive at home. If, because of their tight work schedule, the parents cannot give to their children the love and care they deserve at least the grandparents provide a valuable substitute that is still part of the family. Particularly in the towns, the Fijians would be well advised to take these needs into consideration when establishing their own homes.

**The land and Fijian development**

One often hears the assertion that the *mataqali* is a problem in Fijian land use. Such a statement implies that the members of the *mataqali* might not agree amongst themselves on the question of leasing their land. Admittedly there are cases where this situation has occurred, but in recent years there has been a keen awareness by the *mataqali* of the fact that idle land does no one any good. This has led to a willingness to lease surplus land, not only to Fijians without land, but to others as well. Existing land subdivisions on Fijian land for agricultural, residential and industrial uses are indications of this changed outlook.

Fijian land is unequally distributed among its owners. This is partly the result of the use of the *mataqali* as the main unit of ownership. In some areas, the situation would be improved if the *yavusa* was used as the basis of ownership of Fijian land. However, this is not likely to help in all cases. But the major factor in this maldistribution of land is the nature of the evidence taken by the NLC during its sittings to determine the ownership of land by Fijians. This cannot now be undone. However, there are various ways and means by which the land-poor Fijians can get access to more land for both subsistence and commercial uses. The securing of usufructuary rights over land by traditional means is a common way of obtaining land, and this has been used by the people who have migrated from the resource poor islands of eastern Fiji to secure land in Viti Levu during the last twenty years. This avenue is a useful way of reducing the unevenness of land distribution, and gives the chance of a better life to many Fijians who are short of land. Yet it cannot be considered the final solution to the Fijian land problem, though the generosity of the land rich *mataqali* is gratefully acknowledged. Because leaders of the *mataqali*, their needs and opinions will change over a long period, a much more secure title to the land is desirable all round. Through it the landowners get a regular income, and the title holder receives greater security which enhances the potential for his progress and the betterment of his living standards. The users of *mataqali* land (including the owners) are increasingly demanding the issue of secure titles to the piece of land they cultivate.

The subdivision of large areas of unused Fijian land has offered an opportunity to many Fijians to improve their lot during the last two decades. The allocation of subdivided, undeveloped land in places like Waibau and Lomaivuna has offered a challenge to their pioneering effort. Although there have been failures, many settlers on land at Waibau and Lomaivuna are doing well. Certainly they



can and in many cases are enjoying a better standard of living than they would otherwise have attained had they remained in the village, cultivating their limited *mataqali* land, especially those who have come from the small islands of the maritime provinces. Land subdivision has resulted in the closer settlement of Fijian land which might otherwise have remained unused to this day.

The formation of corporations to manage and develop native land for the benefit of the owners, and to increase the development of unused or little used Fijian land, is a recent development. This approach, like land subdivision and settlement, is government sponsored, but it is too early to judge results at present. Given outside expertise and management, external inputs, secure markets for produce and attractive prices and the necessary infrastructure there is no good reason why it cannot be successful. It is important that in the early stages of land development by the corporation, the landowners are fully informed of progress; that they are party, perhaps through employment, to the development of their land, and that they do not demand an unreasonably high return in the early period of establishment. Where large areas of land are being developed on a corporation basis, say 8,000-12,000 hectares as in Uluisaivou in Ra, which has its advantages, the concept of a nucleus estate is worthy of consideration. This means that the corporation will retain for its own development about one-third of the total area, say 2,000 to 4,000 hectares, and the balance will be subdivided into 40-hectare holdings after the entire area has been developed and costs recouped, for use by individuals or groups from amongst the landowners or for other Fijians capable of maintaining such holdings as viable and productive units. The size of these individual holdings will be determined largely by the nature of the land and the particular type of use. Fertile areas suitable for market gardening and cane cultivation would probably need 8 to 16 hectare lots, while 40 to 80 hectare holdings would be needed for cattle grazing.

The *galala* has been held up as the solution to Fijian development in the rural areas, but most Fijians do not agree if it implies a movement away from the village to their own individual holdings. However, many Fijians have moved to land they cultivate. This is likely to have been the result of inadequate land, if it has resulted in leasing other *mataqali* land. Even in the cane lands at Seaqaqa, many Fijian landowners continue to cultivate their cane blocks from the village. All rural Fijians are now *galala*; but the majority continue to live in their villages.

It is not suggested that the subdivision of land for settlement and greater use is the only model for all Fijians to follow, though at present it appears to be an attractive viable alternative to village life, and to the hard worker it is a rewarding option, given other relevant factors of production. The village will remain the basis of Fijian settlement in the rural areas. Although there may be a number of distractions which inhibit greater use of land by Fijians living in the village, the problem could be reduced to a question of the organisation of labour and the allocation of time by the villager. Increasingly, villagers now realise that greater use of land holds the key to the improvement of life in the village. But this is also a matter that is dependent on the particular crop villagers cultivate and its return per unit of land and labour. It is probably true to say that if the price is right and the land suitable and available, the Fijian villager will produce crops that will bring him maximum return per unit of labour. This is why many villagers on the Sawani-Serea road and beyond are turning from *dalo* and cassava as cash crops for sale in the Suva market to ginger as the main cash crop for export.

The rural development program no doubt has done much to improve conditions in the rural areas. Its emphasis on community projects has borne fruit; it has also encouraged a sense of community participation in local development, and has brought closer together communities often divided by race and culture. Roads and bridges have improved access to market. They have certainly instilled a greater sense of awareness of the urgent needs of economic development to the rural Fijian, and with it the realisation of the need to exert the necessary effort. No doubt much more needs to be done, to raise income for the individual and his household. This means that the assistance available from outside agencies, both official and private, needs to be used in such a way that the individual can see the benefits of the program in terms of increased income and better living conditions. Inevitably, rural development, to be effective in the long run, must be based on land development. This does not mean that nothing is being done now. However, at times rural people, including the Fijians on settlement schemes, feel, and with good reason, that the agencies that are supposed to assist in the development impose what appear to be impossible conditions. This feeling is not helped by the approach and attitude certain officials have for their work. Some, according to rural settlers and villagers, do not follow up their promises and the assistance expected is not forthcoming. Lack of co-ordination among rural workers is a further problem and often leads to

confusion. This naturally encourages villagers to be unreceptive to outside advice, and they should not be blamed for this.

In future, the demands for Fijian land for a wide range of uses will no doubt increase. Fijian land will be required for agricultural development. The support now given to the NLTB by the government should lead to greater efficiency and the rapid availability of native land for development not only for the Fijians but for others as well. At the same time, the conditions under which Fijian land becomes available will need to be realistic and take into account the aspirations of the owners. The new approaches to land development being tried appear to show some encouraging signs of success. Perhaps these approaches should be developed and extended to a wider range of projects and beyond the development of land and into the fields of industry and commerce, including the reservation of selected industries for Fijian participation.

Intensive use of land by Fijians in subdivision settlements like Waibau and on the sugar cane scheme at Seaqaqa appears to be providing the base and the opportunity for enterprising Fijians to develop beyond the cash cropping stage. Some use a proportion of their income from the sale of ginger and cane to buy trucks for the carting of produce to market, and tractors to be hired by farmers for land preparation and cane harvesting. In this way income from cash cropping enables such Fijians to enter the field of entrepreneurship. Such developments are only beginning and it is as yet too early to judge their success. However, much will depend on the individual's ability to manage his operations on a commercial basis. But Fijians need to be encouraged and given the necessary advice and incentives if they are going to succeed, not only as farmers but also as entrepreneurs in their own right.

The question of incentive is an important and critical one in the field of Fijian development. The Fiji Development Bank is already doing much to help Fijians enter the commercial sector of the economy with its low rate of interest on loan funds. There is a need to consider the possibility of the bank itself taking over or establishing some enterprises, operating them to a viable and profitable level, then handing them over to some Fijian group or individuals who would have been trained to manage such ventures. This approach is being taken in Papua New Guinea with some success, and there is no convincing reason why it cannot be tried in Fiji. Perhaps a partnership with some of the main trading firms like the Carpenter Group of Companies and Burns Philp (SS) Co. Ltd is worthy of serious study, because such a joint venture approach would appear to be sound investment for such companies, both economically and in terms of future stability.

**The Fijian and economic progress**

The weak position of the Fijian in the economy of Fiji is obvious enough. Much is being done in fields such as co-operative development, land subdivision and agricultural development, in the lending policies of the Fiji Development Bank, rural development, urban housing, sugar cane farming, and pine planting. Some aspects of these developments are long-term in nature. The objective in Fijian development must be to raise living standards generally, and to produce Fijian entrepreneurs who will hold their own with other commercial operators in Fiji, so that overall the Fijians will be on a par with other communities in their control and ownership of resident commercial ventures. This must be a long-term aim which the Fijians are not yet demanding. But one should not be complacent about it because the time will come when more and more Fijians will articulate these desires. If vigorous steps are taken early to ensure the attainment of this aim, it will be easy to blunt any undesirable tendencies like those which were displayed by the Fijian Nationalist party during 1975-7.

The road to economic progress for the Fijians is a difficult one. It requires capital, infrastructure, the necessary experience and skills, management expertise, hard work and dedication. These assets are sadly lacking amongst Fijians, though many Fijians are already following the road which will equip them with these pre-conditions: they are learning the hard way through experience in running their own ventures, small though they might be at this stage.

Fijians everywhere are responding to the necessary market forces that are part of the commercial system and at the same time their choice of crops shows an increased appreciation of economic forces and the price mechanism. They are producing crops and selling them where high prices are obtained and at the same time they are entering commercial ventures which will bring the maximum return per unit of labour, land and capital. There have been failures in Fijian commercial ventures but which society has not seen failures? Without some failures there can be little or no progress. The important point is that lessons are learnt from such failures. Failures of commercial ventures in the past have been due particularly to a lack of money management and the ability to operate commercial ventures on proper business lines. Fijians are learning the hard way through experience and the few areas of success achieved so far point out the way that may be followed in the future. However, there will still be a need to exert maximum effort, and provide the necessary incentives in order to ensure that

the Fijians succeed in commerce and industry. Much needs to be done to ensure that the Fijians hold their own in the commercial field. This needs tolerance and sympathy from all sides.

Fijian economic progress requires a simultaneous attack on many fronts. The co-operative movement offers a valuable introduction to the field of commerce, but perhaps it should be regarded as a stepping stone to other ventures. Entry into the field of copra purchase by central co-operative associations is a welcome move in the right direction. This expands the services such associations provide to their members and introduces them to the problems of marketing and handling of primary produce on a much larger scale than previously. Other group schemes based on the *mataqali* and *yavusa* also have a place, but proper management and the necessary incentives will still be needed to ensure their success.

The reservation of certain commercial sectors for Fijian enterprise is an idea that should not be dismissed too lightly. This could well be considered in the context of regional development which is likely to receive government support, because this is an approach that can be utilised to even out to some degree the imbalance in economic opportunities between the rural areas and the urban sector. Perhaps the processing of certain agro-based industries should be developed particularly for Fijian ownership, with the skills and necessary expertise obtained from overseas. This approach might be more palatable to other communities, because such industries will be based on the land, a commodity the Fijians control at present. A reservation policy applied to the existing urban-based industries could create resentment because it might deprive those already involved in these sectors.

The kind of analysis that is needed to determine viable industries for Fijian involvement might be undertaken by a properly staffed Business Opportunity and Management Advisory Service in the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and Rural Development. At present this organisation merely receives applications from Fijians needing financial support from the Fiji Development Bank and assists the applicants to formulate viable proposals. It takes little initiative of its own to establish Fijian commercial enterprises. This must change if it is to make a significant contribution in the field of Fijian commercial development.

But adequate Fijian participation in the commercial life of Fiji in the terms outlined above requires proper planning, and the training of Fijian manpower ultimately to run and control commercial ventures. Particular projects must be thought through carefully,

and especially their requirements in terms of funds, manpower, skills, land and so on. Thus education and training are fields in which a concerted effort is needed if Fijians are to provide the high-level manpower needed to run viable ventures.

Fijian education is already in a relatively weak and desperate position. The number of Fijian students dropping out of the education system from Class 1 to Form VI is quite high: only 5 per cent of the 6,449 students who entered Class 1 in 1965 reached Form VI in 1976. The position must improve if the Fijians are ever to supply a reasonable proportion of the highly trained manpower which the country needs, and if they are to hold their own in Fiji in future. A wide range of measures, already outlined, are necessary. Given the effectiveness of these measures, what is probably needed is a Fijian educational plan that will outline the fields of training, both intermediate and high-level, both academic and technical, that Fijians can be slotted into so that they can enter a wide range of professions such as law, accountancy, medicine, pharmacy, engineering and architecture. Fijian absence in these fields is quite conspicuous. Such a plan will provide the necessary direction and guidance, so that at least there is a broad objective to aim at. A specifically Fijian authority could probably do this most effectively, with the support of other official agencies. This could be the task of the FAB, which recently appointed a subcommittee to be responsible for Fijian social and educational development. Liaison with the Ministry of Education, whose support has been promised, will be essential. Like all other development plans, a Fijian educational plan will depend on good staff at all levels and the development of the economy for its success, especially in the creation of opportunities for the employment of trained personnel. It will be necessary also for the FAB to keep in touch with all levels of training and education affecting the Fijians. All these factors, though essential, are what might be regarded as 'environmental' in nature. The Fijian student himself must be prepared to exert the necessary effort in his studies, without which all else will have little or no effect. This requires of him the kind of single mindedness that ignores distractions of a social nature, and the will to work hard and make the essential sacrifices that are in keeping with the effort most parents are making to obtain a good education for their children.

### **Institutional modifications**

In the past the Fijian administration may have given the impression of being quite separate from the central government. This is no

longer the case since the administration is not only dependent on the central government for its funds, but also because its staff and various arms operate in a way that facilitates the implementation of government policy. And in this way the old question of abolishing the Fijian administration is no longer an issue. The question now is to ensure that the structure serves the needs of modern times.

The last two decades saw fundamental changes in Fijian institutions. These institutions were based on time-honoured, tried and tradition-sanctioned philosophies. Their composition was based largely on social status which was basically ascribed and not achieved. Recognising the changes within Fijian society, much of which was motivated by new economic relations and outside ideas and values fostered largely by the education system and the mass media, Fijian chiefs agreed to a considerable liberalisation of Fijian local and national institutions. The basis of the provincial council was made more democratic so that it is now a properly constituted rural local government body for the Fijian people. The Council of Chiefs too and the FAB ceased to be dominated by the chiefs in their composition. These institutions will probably need to take a more liberal stance in the future if they are to cope with Fijian needs and aspirations.

During the last twenty years the Fijians have tried to bridge the wide gap between the village and the province: a gap that was created by the abolition of the *tikina* council. In nearly all instances, the people have revived *tikina* groupings. There is probably a need to give greater authority to the provincial council on local matters such as road construction and maintenance, the licensing of business in their areas of jurisdiction, and the maintenance of facilities such as local markets, jetties, health centres and the like. Provincial councils cannot do this on their own with their limited resources; they will require some financial assistance from the government because these are functions which the councils could perform on behalf of the government.

The government already pays through an annual subvention the salaries of the senior staff of the provincial councils. Provincial councils and their staff perform a role that is consonant with government objectives, particularly in terms of rural development. They work to facilitate the task of the various departments of the central government. This is of particular concern in the context of the need to promote the rapid movement of Fijians into the commercial sector of the Fiji economy. In these terms a greater measure of financial assistance by the government to meet the administrative expenses of the provincial councils is desirable. At

the same time, and if this course is accepted, there is a need to rationalise the administration of provincial affairs. This will demand a closer look at its staff complement and its office organisation and methods. Some degree of decentralisation will probably be necessary, based on the *tikina*, especially in the island provinces of the Eastern Division.

Liberalisation of composition has also affected the NLTB. In its early days the board was dominated by government officials nearly all of whom were expatriates. Today nearly all members of the board are locals who are chosen by Fijian representative councils (with the exception of the two nominees of the Governor-General). Since 1946 the board has been financed from 25 per cent of all rent on leased native land. There has been no grant from the government to help the board establish its operations, and the poundage on rent has proved inadequate to meet rising costs and the increasing demand for services from the landowners. The services of the NLTB are in the national interest and this gives adequate grounds for the payment of a subvention to meet normal administrative costs. This subject was put to the Council of Chiefs at its meeting in January 1978. The council decided unanimously to request the government for funds to meet staff salaries and other statutory contributions. Parliament agreed to this request in March 1978.

During the debate on the subject by the Council of Chiefs concern was expressed that the proposal might lead to control and interference by the government in matters affecting native land. There is no valid reason for such a concern. The Native Land Trust Ordinance is a 'reserved' legislation which vests the control and administration of native land solely in the hands of the board. If a government grant were paid to the board to meet staff salaries the government would wish to ensure that the money was not spent on other items. Thus there is no need to worry about the government's intentions regarding native land. In fact the government has already arranged for the payment of funds obtained from the EEC to the NLDC to assist in the land development activities of that body. These are sure signs of the government's support of the work of the board which it sees as being in the interest of all.

### **The future of multi-racialism**

Watters has said that 'little hope remains for Fiji unless all racial groups and especially the Fijians act now, with vision, resolution and self-sacrifice to subordinate their narrow sectarian interests to the interests of the country as a whole'.<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that



the Fijians have subordinated their interests to the interests of the whole; otherwise independence might not have been achieved in 1970. But on their own the Fijians cannot make Fiji a happy and prosperous land. The other communities must also be ready to sacrifice some of their narrow interests, and at the same time ensure that conditions exist for the rapid advancement of the Fijians to a level comparable to others. After all, if there is dissatisfaction amongst a large section of the Fiji community, future stability might be in jeopardy.

There is no doubt that multi-racial harmony is the only viable alternative for Fiji. This demands a meaningful partnership by all—Fijians, Indians and others—in the economic, social and political affairs of Fiji. The present constitution provides for a political partnership that is fair to all because it takes account of relative strengths in the population and cultural diversity. The education policy aims to give more opportunity to the handicapped. It is in the economic and commercial fields that imbalance is both obvious and potentially dangerous. And as Spate has so vividly expressed:

Fijians and Indians seemed to me like a young couple, each with admirable qualities but with very differing and to quite an extent incompatible temperaments, forced into a marriage of inconvenience by selfish relatives (the colonial government and early settlers) and locked up in a small house with no chance of divorce. At least barring extremists on both sides, there seems to have been an honest effort to make the best of things.<sup>2</sup>

But a marriage is essentially a partnership of equals. The partners have equal responsibilities to make a success of their union, and it is their responsibility to ensure that the conditions exist to promote equality and that their home environment is conducive to this end. Without this the marriage is not likely to bring satisfaction to the whole family. And understanding between the partners must hold the key to a happy marriage. Their different ways, needs and handicaps must be mutually understood. There must also be an opportunity to develop bonds which will bridge the gap which separates the two, in terms of temperaments, social and cultural differences. Education no doubt is doing much to encourage greater understanding between the two major races; no doubt also much more needs to be done and at all levels of society. Greater economic opportunity must be given to the economically handicapped, and particularly to the Fijian so that he can be a full

and effective partner in the Fiji family. Without this a peaceful Fiji with security and stability cannot be fully assured.

### **A final word**

The Fijian people have come a long way during the last twenty years. During the next twenty years the pace of change will undoubtedly quicken. This will result from increasing development throughout the country. The allocation and use of resources should have as their fundamental objective the improvement of the lot of the economically handicapped, particularly the Fijians. And the changes arising from development must be guided and directed in ways that will ensure both social and political stability and a desirable level of productivity. This also means that the conditions of development must be made so that in economic terms the Fijians may not only *have* more but also that they may *be* more.

Because this book is essentially a general survey, it has not been possible to make a variety of detailed studies. This will be necessary in the future when studies of Fijian life in the changing villages and settlements, in the urban areas, in the factories and on the farms will be vital to a better understanding of the Fijian situation. I have not tried to make a comparative study for this has not been my aim. But the forces affecting Fijian society and the Fijian response to these factors can be seen in other indigenous societies throughout the Pacific Islands and elsewhere as they move into the modern world and grapple with its problems. I hope this book has highlighted Fijian views and aspirations, the changes occurring in Fijian society, and how the Fijians are coping with the problems and the processes of modernisation as they move through the last quarter of the twentieth century. I hope this work will contribute to a better understanding of the Fijian position now and in the future.

# Appendix

Sawakasa Tikina Council held at Qoma 29/11/62

Programme of Work for Six Months January–June 1963

## *Luvunavuaka:*

250 *dalo*, 25 banana, 25 coconuts, 50 *voivoi* (pandanus for mat making), 50 cassava, 50 *yaqona* are to be planted by each able-bodied individual (whether per month or for six-month period is not stated). One day per month is to be devoted to the village grazing land.

## *Vorovoro I:*

Each villager should plant 250 *dalo*, 50 banana, 25 coconuts and 250 cassava. 7.2 metres by 5.4 metres house is to be erected.

## *Vorovoro II:*

Each villager has to plant 250 *dalo*, 250 cassava, 25 banana, make a contribution to 500 village *dalo*. Those who plant rice attend to this crop during January and February. Erect one 7.2 metre house and all villagers are to devote one day per month in the village grazing land (which today serves as an enclosure for horses).

## *Driti:*

Plant 500 village *dalo*, and each individual should plant 500 *dalo*, 50 coconuts, 50 banana, and maintain grazing land one day per month.

## *Nabaulau:*

The erection of three 7.2 metres by 5.4 metres houses, three kitchens each 4.5 metres by 3.6 metres and the planting of 750 cassava by each individual are to be undertaken during the 6 months period. (This program of work is for Qoma village as well, to which the people of Nabaulau have kinship ties).

## *Delakado:*

Each individual is to plant 25 *dalo*, and 100 cassava and 25 banana and contribute to 1,000 village *dalo*. One 7.2 metre by 5.4 metre house and one 5.4 metres by 3.6 metres are to be erected.

## *Nataleira:*

Each individual should plant 100 yams, 25 banana and contribute to 1,000 village *dalo*, 160 village banana, and 0.4 hectare of village rice. It is up to the *turaga ni koro* to allocate the time most

appropriate for house building, village clearing, and the weeding of gardens.

*Silana:*

Each individual is to plant 250 *dalo*, and 50 banana. 1.2 hectares of village maize to be planted. The four rice planters to plant rice.

*Source:* Translations from cyclostyled sheets distributed at Sawakasa Tikina Council, 29 January 1963.

# Notes

## Chapter 1

- 1 For a list of inhabited islands see R. A. Derrick, *The Fiji Islands*, Government Printer, Suva, 1965, Appendix I, pp. i-iv.
- 2 Fiji Government, *Annual Report for 1972*, Government Printer, Suva, 1973, p. 158.
- 3 *Annual Report for 1971*, Government Printer, Suva, 1972, p. 164. Of the amount approved 97 per cent had been spent by the end of 1971.
- 4 Gold is obviously a declining asset; the ore reserves in Vatukoula are limited. Gold mining has been subsidised heavily over the last decade, and as a result of industrial problems, the government decided early in 1978 to buy out the interests of Emperor Gold Mining Company and all its subsidiaries. The mining company has indicated that its assets are valued at \$16 million, but since the company has claimed that it cannot operate profitably, this figure cannot be taken seriously. Also the government has lent heavily to the company. However, the price was subject to negotiation which eventually failed to reach agreement.
- 5 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, *Current Economic Statistics*, Government Printer, Suva, April, 1977, p. 60.
- 6 T. Le Fevre, Tourism: Who Gets What From Tourists? in B. R. Finney and K. A. Watson (eds.), *A New Kind of Sugar: Tourism in the South Pacific*, East-West Center, Honolulu, 1976, p. 103.
- 7 Commerce and Industries Office, *Trade Report for 1963*, Council paper No. 14, 1964, p. 69, and Bureau of Statistics, *Trade Report for 1975*, Parliamentary Paper No. 31 of 1976, pp. 154-5.
- 8 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, *Current Economic Statistics*, Suva, April 1977, pp. 88-91.
- 9 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, *Trade Report for 1975*, Parliamentary Paper No. 31 of 1976, pp. 2-3.
- 10 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census of Population, preliminary results.
- 11 Census Commissioner, *Report on the Census of the Population 1976*, Vol. 1, Parliamentary Paper No. 13 of 1977, pp. 170-3.
- 12 E. K. Fisk, *The Political Economy of Independent Fiji*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1970, p. 36.
- 13 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census of Population, preliminary results.
- 14 No less than 11,000 students left school at the end of 1977, of whom only 2,000 found places for employment and further training.
- 15 Fisk, *Political Economy*, pp. 39-41.
- 16 Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census of Population, preliminary results.

## Chapter 2

- 1 This is not the place for a detailed treatment of Fijian social organisation, which the reader may find in works such as G. K. Roth,

- Fijian Way of Life*, OUP, Melbourne, 1975, 2nd ed., 1973; M. D. Sahalin, *Moala*, University of Michigan Press, 1962; R. R. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, OUP, Melbourne, 1975. This chapter aims only to highlight some of the main features of the social system and how these have changed since 1959.
- 2 O. H. K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, Council Paper 13, 1959, p. 8 (subsequently referred to as the *Spate Report*).
  - 3 The three dominant kingdoms at the time of Cession in 1874 were Bau, Rewa and the Tovata (Lau and Vanua Levu). Today these units form the basis of any ceremonial participation involving the Fijian people as a whole.
  - 4 Although the social system as a whole has remained relatively static for generations there have been shifts within it. C. S. Belshaw, *Under the Ivi Tree: Social and Economic Growth in Rural Fiji*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964, has noted the ambiguity of the *yavusa* which could become a *mataqali* as a result of population decrease; population increase in the past could also result in a *mataqali* gaining *yavusa* status. Many fijians interchange the names of their *yavusa* and *mataqali*. Although Belshaw was writing about the Sigatoka Valley, his comments apply to many other parts of Fiji.
  - 5 Secretary for Fijian Affairs, *Annual Report for 1950*, Council Paper No. 5, 1952, p. 1.
  - 6 Roth, *Fijian Way of Life*, pp. 58-64 describes in some detail the roles of the principal social units, i.e. *turaga*: chief; *sauturaga*: chief's executive officer; *matanivanua*: chief envoy; *mataisau*: craftsman; *gonedau*: fisherman.
  - 7 Native Lands Commission, *Final Report: Tailevu North, Rewa, Naitasiri and Colo East*, Vol. 4, Government Printer, 1959, p. 66.
  - 8 Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, p. 17.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
  - 10 G. B. Milner, Introduction to the second edition of Roth, *Fijian Way of Life*, p. xxvii.
  - 11 *Spate Report*, p. 5.
  - 12 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
  - 13 Ratu J. L. V. Sukuna, *Address to the Council of Chiefs 1944*, Council Paper No. 10, 1945, p. 2.
  - 14 Today there are fourteen provinces which are subdivided into seventy-four districts (*tikina*), each of which may have around twenty villages.
  - 15 In 1959 the Council of Chiefs had a total membership of about forty; there were six chiefs nominated by the Governor, the *Roko* of the fourteen provinces, one representative of each provincial council (two in the case of provinces with more than 10,000 people), one Fijian magistrate, one assistant medical officer, and one Fijian school teacher.
  - 16 Adviser on Native Affairs, *Fijian Affairs: Reconstruction Paper No. 2*, Council Paper No. 22, 1944, p. 1.

- 17 *Spate Report*, p. 8.
- 18 Personal communication from the Director of Social Welfare, Government of Fiji. These allowances are paid by the Department of Social Welfare to recipients whose needs are determined on the basis of actual essential expenses such as food, fuel and transport cost. The maximum allowance payable under the scheme is \$40.00 per month. Both the criteria for payment and the amounts paid are being reviewed by a committee specially appointed by the Minister of Social Welfare.
- 19 *Spate Report*, p. 8.

### Chapter 3

- 1 For example, the village of Korobebe in Nawaka, Nadi was rebuilt after the devastating hurricane in October 1972 on an elevated site away from its old site on the river bank
- 2 *Spate Report*, pp. 22-6.
- 3 See for example R. F. Watters: *Koro*, OUP, Melbourne, 1969, p. 75; he was disappointed to see that the only bull in Nalotawa village, Ba, was killed for a feast when he returned there for his second spell of fieldwork.
- 4 Native Lands Ordinance, Cap. 14, Section 3, Laws of Fiji, 1967, p. 1522.
- 5 The ownership and use of such lands are confined to the descendants of the original owners and the land reverts to the granting *mataqali* when the descendants die. *Kovukovu* is not confined to people of the same village, and when it involves people of different villages and islands or even provinces it is very often the result of some special links or conquest.
- 6 *Spate Report*, pp. 10-12.
- 7 NLTB Files 4/14/314, 4/14/1161, 4/14/1119.
- 8 Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, *Native Reserves: Tokatoka, Tailevu*, Vol. XIX, 1950.
- 9 *Spate Report*, p. 12.
- 10 Sukuna, *Native Reserves*, p. vi.
- 11 *Spate Report*, p. 21.
- 12 Watters, *Koro*, pp. 19-20.
- 13 Adviser on Native Affairs, *Report of the Meeting of the Council of Chiefs, 18 November 1930*, Council Paper No. 3, 1931, p. 4.
- 14 *Ibid.* p. 9.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Ratu J. L. V. Sukuna, Speech at Meeting of the Council of Chiefs, 1936, typescript. During the debate on the subject most of the members and paramount chiefs supported Ratu Sukuna's proposal, and when it was put to the vote, only two chiefs opposed the motion.
- 17 Areas already declared reserves can only be leased to Fijians; non-Fijians can lease such lands only after they have been dereserved by the NLTB, but only with the specific approval of the owners. The total area of reserved land was 544,458 hectares in 1976.

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- 18 Native Land Trust Board, *Annual Report for 1976*, Suva, 1977, p. 18. The bulk of leased native land is leased to non-Fijians.
- 19 Adviser on Native Affairs, Report of a Meeting of Council of Chiefs, 1936, p. 2.
- 20 Population Census Reports for 1956 and 1966.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 R. D. Bedford, *Kabara in the 1970s, Project Working Paper No. 3*, Population and Environment Project: Eastern Islands of Fiji, UNESCO/UNFPA, 1976, p. 19.
- 23 T. Bayliss-Smith, *Koro in the 1970s: Prosperity Though Diversity?*, Project Working Paper No. 7, Population and Environment Project: Eastern Islands of Fiji, UNESCO/UNFPA, 1976, p. 24.
- 24 Population Census Reports for 1946 and 1966, and preliminary results of the 1976 Population Census.
- 25 Bayliss-Smith, *Koro in the 1970s*, p. 54.
- 26 UNESCO/UNFPA, *Population, Resources and Development in the Eastern Islands of Fiji*, MAB Project 7, p. 213.
- 27 The NLTB has calculated that no less than \$3 million are owed Fijian landowners in rent outstanding for a number of years. It is estimated that of this amount about \$1 million is owed by Fijian tenants allocated land for coconut planting during the period of the coconut subsidy scheme in the 1960s.
- 28 Bayliss-Smith, *Koro in the 1970s*, p. 55.
- 29 Sukuna, *Native Reserves*, p. 91.
- 30 *Sbate Report*, p. 78.

#### Chapter 4

- 1 F.H.A.G. Zwart, *Report on the Census of the Population 1966*, Council Paper No. 9, 1968, p. 7.
- 2 Ibid., p. 7.
- 3 Ibid., p. 52.
- 4 UNESCO/UNFPA, *Population, Resources and Development in the Eastern Islands of Fiji*, MAB Project, No. 7.
- 5 Bedford, *Kabara in the 1970s*, p. 19.
- 6 School of Social and Economic Development, USP, *The Characteristics of Some Urban Households*, Urban Report No. 5, 1976, p. 55.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 UNESCO/UNFPA, *Population, Resources and Development in the Eastern Islands of Fiji*, 1977, p. 226 which shows that the bulk of the cash income earned by Waciwaci farming families in 1975 was derived from *yaqona* and *copra* (in that order).
- 9 J. Harre, An Interim Report on Raiwai Village, Urban Report No. 1, School of Social and Economic Development, USP, 1970, typescript.
- 10 A joint effort by the Ministry for Urban Development and Housing, the Housing Authority and the Native Land Trust Board ensured the provision of land in Laqere where 180 acres are being subdivided for



the resettlement of the residents of Tutaleva and others willing and able to take up housing sites there.

- 11 Chuen-Yan David Lai, Human Crowding in Hong Kong: A Study of its Earliest Type of Public Housing, in M. C. R. Edgell and B. G. Farrell (eds.), *Themes on Pacific Lands*, Western Geographical Series, Vol. 10, 1974, p. 151.
- 12 Zwart, *Report on the Census*, p. 53.

## Chapter 5

- 1 Department of Education, *Annual Report for 1965*, Council Paper No. 27, 1966, p. 4.
- 2 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Annual Report for 1975, 1976, typescript, p. 17.
- 3 Ibid., Council Paper No. 27, 1966, p. 4.
- 4 Department of Education, Council Paper No. 27, 1966, p. 4.
- 5 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Achievements 1965-75, 1976, typescript, p. 13.
- 6 Education Department, *Annual Report for 1965*, Council Paper No. 27, 1966, p. 3.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 No less than 730 untrained teachers were employed in primary schools and 435 in secondary schools in 1975; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, *Annual Report for 1975*, p. 11, *Annual Report for 1965*, Education Department, Council Paper No. 27, 1966, p. 4.
- 9 All the figures on wastage rates were supplied by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.
- 10 The figures on examination results were obtained from the relevant Fiji Annual Reports, and the relevant Annual Reports of the Education Department.
- 11 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Annual Report for 1975, typescript, pp. 24-6.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Fisk, *Political Economy*, p. 41.
- 14 Report of the Fiji Education Commission, *Education for Modern Fiji*, Council Paper No. 2, 1970, pp. 68-9.
- 15 Ibid., p. 69.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid., p. 70.
- 18 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Achievements 1965-75, typescript, 1976, p. 10.
- 19 Ministry of Education, personal communication.
- 20 USP Calendar, 1977.
- 21 Bayliss-Smith, *Koro in the 1970s*, p. 44, has noted that in Nacamaki village in 1975 the community installed a generator for the provision of electric light to the homes, the church and the school. This is a positive communal effort which undoubtedly improved the conditions for study in the homes and in the village school.

- 22 Ba Provincial Council, the largest of the fourteen provinces and perhaps the most viable financially, set aside \$14,000 in 1978 to help pay the school fees of students from the province attending secondary schools throughout Fiji.

### Chapter 6

- 1 *Sbate Report*, p. 5.
- 2 Zwart, *Report on the Census*, pp. 175-9.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 180-3.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 200-26.
- 5 Bureau of Statistics, Population Census 1976, preliminary results.
- 6 Zwart, *Report on the Census*, pp. 100-226.
- 7 *Sbate Report*, p. 48.
- 8 Brian Hardaker, Economic Aspects of Agriculture and Marketing in Taveuni, in *Papers on Crops, Farmers and Marketing, Population and Environment Project, Eastern Islands of Fiji*, pp. 15-16.
- 9 Fictitious names are used to protect the identity of the individuals studied.
- 10 Early in 1968 about \$42,000 were allocated to the provinces of Ba, Bua, Kadavu, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga-Navosa, Ra, Rewa and Tailevu for development purposes, to be used as a revolving fund at an interest rate of 3 per cent per annum. This money came from the unspent balance of subventions annually paid to the Fijian Affairs Board for a period of years up to the end of 1967.
- 11 In the province of Lomaiviti funds collected through annual festivals and a loan from the Fiji Development Bank enabled the purchase in 1976 of a controlling interest in a laundry business based in Suva and in the Western Division.
- 12 NLTB File, Nabou Pine Scheme, 4/11/1737, 4/11/4336.
- 13 NLTB File, Uluisaivou Cattle Scheme, 4/13/2686.
- 14 John Samy, Crumbs from the Table? The Workers Share in Tourism, in Finney and Watson (eds.) *A New Kind of Sugar*, p. 112.
- 15 NLTB File, Namosi, Amax 4/12/744.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 A. Mamak, *Namosi Data Paper*, Amax, 1977, p. 34.

### Chapter 7

- 1 Central Planning Office, *Seventh Development Plan 1976-1980*, Government Printer, Suva, 1975, p. 5 (referred to subsequently as Development Plan Seven).
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 225.
- 4 Many villagers have jokingly told the story that they were visited on Monday by officials of the Agriculture Department, on Tuesday by the Cooperative Department, Wednesday by Health, Thursday by the District Officer, and Friday by the PWD. On Saturday they prepare

- for Sunday. This illustrates the real problem of co-ordination and at times conflicting advice is given to the people.
- 5 United Nations, *Regional Planning Project, Fiji*, 1977. The report has identified new areas of development outside existing urban centres, and this will lead to a redistribution of economic activity and population. It is long-term and looks forward to the year 2006.
  - 6 During 1974-5 a Resource Base Survey was undertaken in parts of the Eastern Division and in Taveuni Island. It seems desirable that such a survey be undertaken in Fiji in order to determine accurately the local basis of development.
  - 7 It would appear that primary co-operatives depend heavily on government officials to give some direction.

### Chapter 8

- 1 Robinson to Carnarvon, Despatch No. 7, 16 October 1874, p. 4.
- 2 Legislative Council Debates, 24 February 1944, p. 36.
- 3 *Spate Report*, p. 9.
- 4 In contrast to this recommendation one might cite Spate's suggestions aimed largely at making the system work more smoothly. *Spate Report*, pp. 38-9.
- 5 Ministry of Information, News Release No. 24, 12 January 1976.
- 6 Fijian Affairs Ordinance, Section 12.
- 7 Early in 1978 the board formed subcommittees on economic development, social welfare and administration. This is a clear sign that the board intends to play an active role in Fijian development.
- 8 F. J. West, *Political Advancement in the South Pacific*, OUP, Melbourne, 1961, p. 44.
- 9 Regulation 2 of the Fijian Affairs (Council of Chiefs) Regulation, paragraph (1).
- 10 At the beginning of 1978 a similar percentage were non-chiefs. Of the thirty-one representatives of provincial councils in the Council of Chiefs at the beginning of 1978, 60 per cent were non-chiefs.
- 11 J. N. Kamikamica, Recent changes in Fijian leadership, in Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, p. 143.
- 12 Fijian Affairs Ordinance, Section 4, Subsection 2.
- 13 O.H.K. Spate, *Let Me Enjoy: Essays, Partly Geographical*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1965, p. 50, and *Spate Report*, p. 36.
- 14 Although the appointment of provincial staff paid from the government subvention is still the responsibility of the Fijian Affairs Board, provincial councils are always consulted and their recommendations invariably adopted.
- 15 Minister for Fijian Affairs, *Ten Year Review 1957-66*, Council Paper No. 33, 1967, p. 3.
- 16 *Spate Report*, p. 36.
- 17 Spate, personal communication.
- 18 Minister for Fijian Affairs, *Ten Year Review*, p. 6.
- 19 Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, quoted in FDFB *Annual Report for 1961*, p. 1.

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- 20 Chairman, FDFB, *Annual Report for 1971-72*, pp. 1-2.
- 21 Legislative Council Debates, 22 February 1940, p. 108.
- 22 Minister for Fijian Affairs, *Ten Year Review*, p. 7.
- 23 This point was discussed by the Council of Chiefs at its meeting in January 1978. The council agreed to ask the government for financial assistance to the NLTB.
- 24 This plus the need for financial assistance by the government has been recommended by T. L. Davey, a consultant from the UK recruited by the government at the request of the NLTB to review the organisation and functions of the board.
- 25 NLTB, *Vanua: NLTB Newspaper*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1977, p. 3.

### Chapter 9

- 1 Letter from Fijian Members of Legislative Council, *Constitution of the Legislative Council*, Council Paper No. 47, 1935, p. 2.
- 2 About this time the Indians were clamouring for a greater say in the affairs of Fiji. See K. L. Gillion, *The Fiji Indians: Challenge to European Dominance 1920-46*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1977.
- 3 Representatives of the Indian Community of Fiji, Memorandum for Sir Alan Burns, Chairman and Members, Commission of Enquiry, Suva, MS, 4 July 1959, Para. 42.
- 4 Legislative Council Debates, November-December 1961, p. 682.
- 5 Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, p. 102.
- 6 Watters, *Koro*, p. 268.
- 7 Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, *Selected Speeches*, Government Printer, Suva, 1977, p. 142.
- 8 It has been said that the protection provided by the constitution to Fijian land and custom is too tight, so that even if the Fijian people wish to change laws affecting their land and custom, the agreement of non-Fijian members of Parliament will be necessary, though this cannot be guaranteed.
- 9 Legislative Council Debates, November-December 1961, p. 679.

### Chapter 10

- 1 Watters, *Koro*, pp. 279-80.
- 2 Spate, personal communication.

## Glossary

<i>Buli</i>	the administrative head of a district ( <i>tikina</i> ) in the Fijian Administration
<i>dalo</i>	taro
<i>galala</i>	independent or exempted Fijian farmer who paid a commutation rate to be released from communal services under the old Fijian Regulation.
<i>i tokatoka</i>	family group, subdivision of a <i>mataqali</i>
<i>kalou vu</i>	ancestor god
<i>koro</i>	village
<i>kovukovu</i>	encumbrances on <i>mataqali</i> land, given for example as dowry and reserved for a woman's agnatic descendants
<i>mata</i>	representative
<i>matanitu</i>	the largest political unit in pre-Cession Fiji; the state
<i>mataqali</i>	a sub-clan; subdivision of a <i>yavusa</i> ; the primary landowning unit
<i>na</i>	the
<i>ni</i>	of
<i>qau</i>	mine; what I eat
<i>Roko</i>	administrative head of a province under the Fijian Administration.
<i>tabua</i>	whale's tooth, used in exchange and other ceremonies
<i>talasiga</i>	sunburnt land
<i>tamata</i>	people
<i>tanoa</i>	large wooden bowl carved out of <i>vesi</i> wood for mixing <i>yagona</i>
<i>tikina</i>	administrative division of a province
<i>turaga</i>	chief
<i>turaga-ni-</i> <i>tamata</i>	chief of the people
<i>turaga-ni-</i> <i>koro</i>	village headman, not necessarily a chief
<i>turaga-ni-</i> <i>vanua</i>	chief of the land
<i>vakavanua</i>	in the manner of the land; customary
<i>vanua</i>	land; association of <i>yavusa</i> and in this way also referred to the people in such association.
<i>vesi</i>	<i>Intsia bijuga</i> wood used in carving items of handicraft

222 *Glossary*

- yaqona* drink made from the root of the *yaqona* plant, *Piper methysticum*; also refers to the plant; the *kava* of Polynesia
- yasa* migrant living away from his village and working in an urban area
- yavusa* widest patrilineal kinship group, descended from a common ancestor
- yavutu* place of origin, usually marked by raised site

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