

CORRIGENDA

p.13, para 1, line 12. For 'rising costs' read 'rising revenues, or even receiving adequate adjustment for rising costs'.

p.55, para 5, line 3. For 'supposition' read 'superimposition'.

MELANESIANS' CHOICE

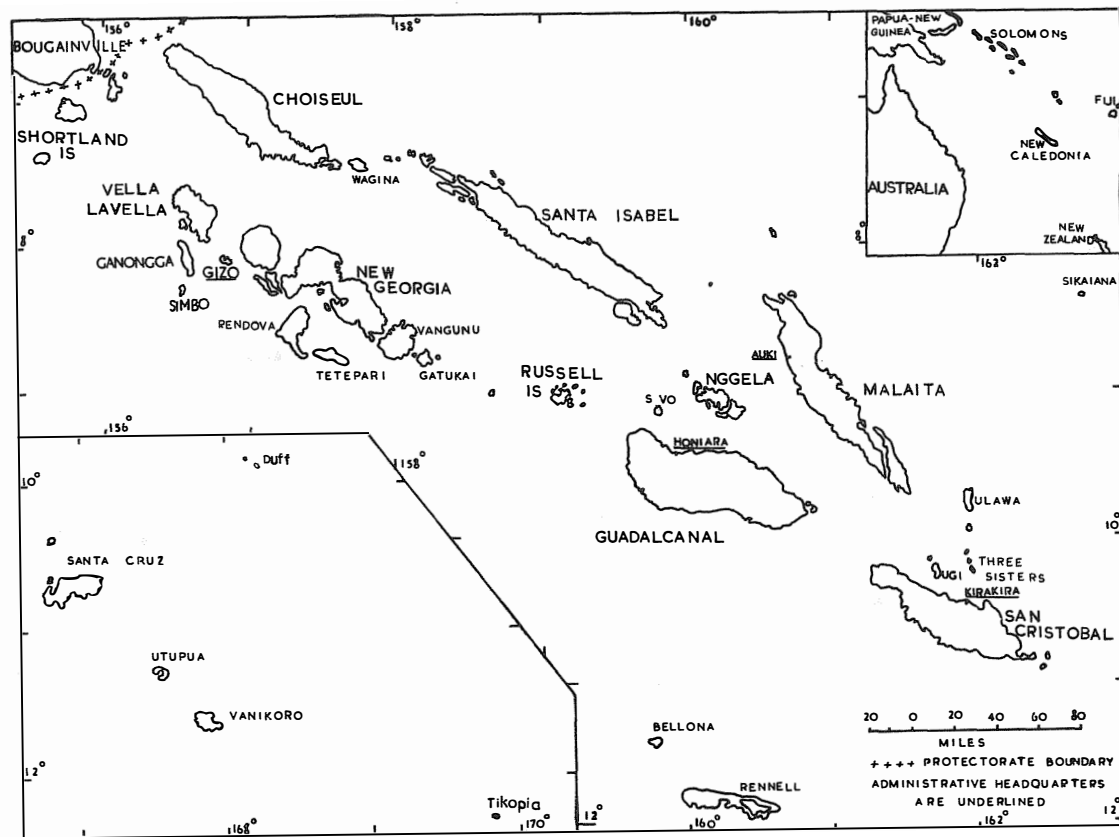


Fig. 1. The British Solomon Islands Protectorate

New Guinea Research Bulletin no. 46

MELANESIANS' CHOICE

Tadhimboko participation in the
Solomon Islands cash economy

I. Q. LASAQA

New Guinea Research Unit
The Australian National University
Port Moresby and Canberra

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Printed and manufactured in Australia by
Allans Printers, Canberra

Cover design, Marlous Ploeg

National Library of Australia
card no. and ISBN 0 85818 010 3

Library of Congress catalog
card no. 72-86234

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The problem examined

This is a study of Melanesian¹ participation in the cash economy. The Tadhimboko of the northern plain of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands have been subjected to many varied influences from the external world. Discovery and contact were followed by the recruitment of labour for sugar plantations in Australia (particularly Queensland) and Fiji, and by trade in copra and other products. Land alienation began in the late nineteenth century, followed by the establishment of plantations and permanent trading stations. Local wage employment, mainly on the plantations, thus became available before recruitment ceased for Queensland in 1904 and Fiji in 1912. Coconut planting by the Tadhimboko was not encouraged, and plantation work continued to be their only significant source of cash until 1942. In that year the Tadhimboko homeland became the scene of one of the hardest-fought battles of the Pacific War. From 1943 to 1946, following the Japanese defeat, it was a major base and transit camp for American military personnel. Opportunities for paid work during this period were suddenly unlimited, especially in construction work and on the huge Army vegetable farm at Ilu. Except for those employed in the British-controlled Labour Corps, wages far exceeded pre-war levels. After the war the diversification of commercial agriculture became government policy in order to relieve the Solomons of complete dependence on copra. In this process - which included the establishment of a new capital at Honiara on the fringe of Tadhimboko country - the range of cash-earning

¹ This Bulletin follows the Solomons' practice of referring to the indigenous people of the Protectorate as Melanesians.

choices was greatly widened. It now includes wage employment, land rent, copra sales, tradestore and transport operations, sale of produce in Honiara market, cocoa production, and cattle grazing.

The aim of this Bulletin is to examine the background to, and the present pattern of, Tadhimboko involvement in the cash economy, and the choices available to them. Although the external or 'industrial' sector of the Solomon Islands economy impinges heavily on Tadhimboko, it is discussed mainly as an external force because this study is primarily concerned with the 'peasant' sector and changes within it. Analysis of Tadhimboko participation in the market economy is made within the context of their traditional economy, including access to land and other factors of production. The opportunities and limitations of each opening are elucidated, and the range of, and areal variations in, effective economic choices are clarified. Expressed another way, is a given means of making money equally available to all Tadhimboko? What factors affect Tadhimboko involvement in any particular sector of the market system? The basic hypothesis of the study is that freedom of choice is exercised within a framework of competing preferences, resource allocation priorities, varying returns to labour, and the producer's place in the social milieu. The Tadhimboko not merely consider these variables in making their decisions but, within the limits of their understanding, make a wise selection.

It will be obvious that this material has much relevance to the evolving theory of dual economies, summarised in some detail by Higgins (1959), but resting principally on interpretations of the course of development in Indonesia. There are also many points at which comparison can be made with other areas in the Pacific and elsewhere, including my own country (Fiji). These wider aspects are not developed here, and are referred to only briefly in the concluding chapter. Rather, this work attempts to see the Tadhimboko people and country, the Solomons and the wider world, so far as possible through Tadhimboko eyes.

The area studied

The area studied is an electoral ward or sub-district of the Guadalcanal Local Government Council as constituted in 1964 under the British Solomon Islands Protectorate Local Government Ordinance 1963. Tadhimboko West, on the Guadalcanal Plains, is roughly rectangular in shape: it is bounded by the Balesuna River in the east, the Kongga road

in the west, foothills in the south, and sea in the north (see Fig. 2.1). A district headman represents the Government in this sub-district and also in Tadhimboko East, part of which is within the plains. Unless otherwise stated, 'Tadhimboko' refers throughout this Bulletin to both the people and the land comprising Tadhimboko West.

I chose the Tadhimboko region as the locale for examining Melanesian involvement in the cash economy after a reconnaissance survey of much of the Solomons during July and August 1965. It was chosen because in Tadhimboko the present pattern of cash earning by Melanesians has developed from the unique interaction of such influences as the abundance of land resources, the choice and location of the capital west of the region, Allied war efforts, government action, and access to an expanding urban market.

It goes without saying that this work has benefited greatly from the information freely given by the Tadhimboko themselves. Because of the 'internal' perspective and the nature of certain aspects of the work, it seemed expedient to disguise the identity of most informants as much as possible. However, this is not done with the most prominent persons, including Jacob Vouza and Samuel Saki, since they are well known to all Tadhimboko and to others familiar with the area east of Honiara. For less important persons, Fijian names are substituted for Tadhimboko names.¹ The names of all Europeans and Asians, except the most important, are also altered to conceal identities, but the names used do not necessarily apply to living persons.

The fieldwork

Intensive fieldwork was undertaken between January 1966 and February 1967. A social survey of the region was conducted, as well as studies of land-use, produce marketing, commercial enterprises, and wage employment - all factors relevant to the pattern and level of Tadhimboko cash earning and participation in the market economy. The social survey aimed to ascertain the population characteristics,

¹ Where Fijian names appear the standard Fijian spelling is used, and the convention is as follows: b is pronounced mb (as in timber), c is pronounced th (as in thy), d is pronounced nd (as in band), g is pronounced ng (as in singer), and q is pronounced ng (as in finger).

social organisation, system of land rights, and land-holdings of various groups. The lack of precision in the indigenous concept of time was a continual problem, overcome to some extent by using a table of notable events in the lifetime of most Tadhimboko.¹ By this means, ages of people, and the periods in which post-war coconut groves were planted, were calculated with reasonable accuracy. The study of land-use involved not only the mapping of food gardens and cocoa and coconut groves, but an investigation into the land-use rights of the block-user and his links within the society. The manipulation of village labour for agricultural work was also examined. Produce marketing entailed a study of food crop sales at the market and other places in Honiara, and copra sales to Chinese traders and the Copra Board in Honiara. The few successful indigenous commercial enterprises in the region were studied, as well as some of the unsuccessful ones. All wage-earners were interviewed about their experience, skills, wage rates, conditions of work, and home districts.

Pidgin English, which is spoken by all men and most women in the region, was used throughout fieldwork. Its lack of precision made cross-checking of all data essential. As fieldwork progressed, however, I was able to follow the local language (Lengo) to some extent. Interview, informal discussion, and observation were the main methods of data collection.

Throughout this Bulletin the present tense refers to the period 1966-67, when fieldwork was carried out. Although much has changed since then, it has not been possible to undertake a systematic updating of material, and hence it was thought best to avoid a partial updating which could only confuse the presentation of data. Unless otherwise stated, all data in tables and figures were obtained during fieldwork. Australian currency is used throughout this Bulletin.

Acknowledgments

The research involved in the production of this Bulletin was undertaken while I held an Australian National University Research Scholarship from April 1965 to July 1968. Grateful acknowledgment is made of this substantial assistance, especially to Professor O.H.K. Spate. The Bulletin

¹ See Appendix A, p.299.

gained much from the critical comments of Dr H.C. Brookfield, formerly of ANU but now of McGill University, Montreal, and Susan Tarua, manuscript editor of the New Guinea Research Unit. Most maps were drawn originally by the Cartography Section of ANU and some were redrawn by Marlous Ploeg to accord with Bulletin style. Permission to use photographs and maps obtained from both official and non-official sources is acknowledged in the text.

While on fieldwork in the Solomons I received the assistance of many people, including government officials. I acknowledge specifically the BSIP Government's subsidy in the publication of this work. This is significant because in places I may appear unduly critical of Government. In Tadhimboko itself I was cordially received wherever I went, especially after my motives were better known. Without the co-operation of the Tadhimboko people, data collection would have been impossible. Some of them may have the opportunity to read this work; others will hear it talked about. I may appear to have offended some while others may disagree with my conclusions. To all who have assisted me I can only say that I have tried objectively to assess and interpret the data available to me.

Chapter 2

Environment of the Solomon Islands and the Guadalcanal Plains

The land and its people

The British Solomon Islands Protectorate, hereafter referred to as the Solomons, is an archipelago flanking the northeast coast of Australia. It is scattered over nearly half-a-million square miles of the western Pacific Ocean, and forms a double chain of islands which are almost regularly dispersed over a distance of at least 900 miles southeast from Bougainville, in Papua New Guinea. The islands are large and compact (see Frontispiece), with rugged, broken central ranges and exposed windward or 'weather' coasts.¹

The Solomons is geologically complex and contains a wide range of rock types, including Mesozoic schist and plutonic rocks, Tertiary andesitic and basaltic lava, and Recent unconsolidated sedimentary material (Coleman et al. 1965: 17). On the main islands especially, there is intense folding and faulting. In many islands, Pliocene limestone terraces lie between the narrow and often discontinuous coastal plains and the steep slopes of the higher ranges, testifying to past submergence and geologically recent uplift (Coleman 1960:8).

Much of the Solomons is still under a dense tropical forest, the result largely of high average temperatures and high annual rainfall. However, extensive tracts of indigenous and introduced grasses cover the northern

¹ The approximate size (in square miles) of the major islands is as follows: Guadalcanal, 2,180; Malaita, 1,870; Santa Isabel, 1,460; San Cristobal, 1,270; Choiseul, 1,170; and New Georgia, 820 (BSIP Department of Lands and Mines, Annual Report for 1963 1964:1).

plains of Guadalcanal, where rainfall is about 90 inches per annum. In the interior, as in other islands in the Solomons, average annual rainfall ranges from 100 to 150 inches.

The population of the Solomons at the end of 1966 was estimated at 142,740, 90 per cent of whom are Melanesians.¹ Most people live on or near the coasts where access is easy, although there are concentrations of population in the interiors of Guadalcanal and Malaita. The average population density is about 12 persons per square mile, but there is considerable variation throughout the islands. This low average population density reflects the small size of Solomon Islands communities, which normally contain a few hundred persons. The most significant feature of Solomon Islands social structure and organisation is their diversity. The patrilineal and matrilineal systems of descent are both adhered to, while links based on kinship, marriage, residence and mutual obligation everywhere play an influential part in the conduct of daily affairs. The local big-man commands a central manipulating role in community activities. His position depends largely on his ability to accumulate and distribute traditional wealth and thereby to establish and strengthen social links.

Contact and the declaration of the Protectorate²

Mendaña's voyage of discovery in 1568 brought about the first contact between Solomon Islanders and Europeans, but for the next 200 years the Solomons was ignored; its very existence was doubted in certain quarters. Carteret, Bougainville and Surville, all experienced mariners, sighted islands in the group between 1767 and 1769 without recognising them as parts of Mendaña's Islands of Solomon. It was not until 1791 that the islands were fully explored by d'Entrecasteaux during his search for La Perouse, and the names given by the Spaniards restored to usage.

Contact became closer and more frequent during the nineteenth century. Whalers were followed by traders in sandalwood, but as both operated from vessels, even temporary stations were not established ashore. The first missionaries arrived about the middle of the nineteenth

¹ BSIP Annual Report for 1966 (1967:74)..

² See Jack-Hinton (1969) for further details.

century. By 1900 mission stations dotted the islands, and Melanesians were being trained as village catechists.

The labour traffic to Queensland and Fiji plantations started in the New Hebrides in the 1840s and spread to the Solomons in the 1860s, reaching its peak in the 1870s. Trade goods, firearms and liquor were imported during these two decades. By the 1880s many Melanesian labourers had returned from Queensland, fluent in Pidgin English and with their world view widened.

By 1900 European traders were firmly established in various parts of the Solomons, plying its coastal waters in their inter-island schooners. As early as 1886 John Macdonald was trading in the western Solomons, Lars Nielsen was at Gavutu, while Thomas Woodhouse had established a firm trading link with northern Guadalcanal (Woodford 1890:19-20).

The British policy of minimal involvement during this period was forced to change as a result of both local and international considerations. Widespread dealing in arms by foreigners in the 1880s made desirable the establishment of permanent civil control. Moreover, by 1892 Queensland had reopened the labour traffic and its effective supervision by a resident administration seemed imperative. International rivalry in the Pacific placed Britain in a position which made annexation of the Solomons unavoidable. Annexation by any other power would have antagonised feelings in Australia, particularly Queensland with its interest in obtaining labour (Scarr 1968:252-4). Thus Britain declared a protectorate over the Solomons in 1893, with the hope that the latter would become financially self-supporting (Scarr 1968:256). Charles Woodford was appointed first Resident Commissioner in 1896, which he remained until his retirement in 1918.¹

British control and the impact of war

Although the first three decades of British control involved direct rule, the meagre known resources of the islands, distance from London, and inadequacies in the Colonial Office forced the resident administration to confine its efforts to the maintenance of law and order.

¹ See pp.28-9 for an outline of the impact of contact on Guadalcanal.

Commercial development was in the hands of itinerant Chinese traders and European planters, while education was undertaken by the Christian missions. The isolation of the Solomons created a colonial policy characterised by such a minimum amount of action that it bordered on neglect. The arrangement which made the Solomons part of an unwieldy political unit,¹ controlled very remotely from London by way of Suva until 1952 (when headquarters were transferred to Honiara), must also partly explain the paucity, until recent decades, of government programmes of economic advancement.

The Government first attempted to involve the indigenous people and their institutions in the administration of the territory in the 1920s (Allan 1957:47); later native councils and native courts were set up. However, the economic depression of the 1930s, especially the drastic fall in the price of copra, made the success of these experiments extremely difficult to achieve.

Upon this stagnant economic and political scene came World War II, Japanese invasion, and American occupation. There was bewilderment among the Melanesians who saw for the first time the accumulation and lavish use of vast quantities of resources and wealth. Private commercial enterprise withdrew and government commerce (the trade scheme) was forced to take its place. The whole economy and much of the society experienced a rapid reorganisation.

After the war, reconstruction of the copra-dominated economy became the immediate task. However, not all the plantations (which produced 80 to 90 per cent of the total pre-war copra production of over 21,000 tons per annum) were rehabilitated (Eden 1960:23); many remained choked with weeds, and cattle were either killed or ran wild into the bush. This was especially so in the Western District which received the first impact of the Japanese thrust. Because of the one-sided nature of the economy, and the

¹ The Solomons is part of the Western Pacific High Commission (WPHC) area, together with the New Hebrides Condominium, the Line Islands, and, until 1972, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. Until 1952 the Governor of Fiji held the post of High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, while Resident Commissioners were responsible for on-the-spot administration.

lack of reliable information about resources, basic data needed for economic planning had first to be collected before reconstruction could begin.

Post-war assessment of resources

Since the establishment of the Geological Surveys Department in 1950, much geological information has been collected and areas of heavily mineralised rocks located (e.g., gold, silver and copper at Gold Ridge, Betilonga and Sutakiki Valley, and asbestos in the Kumboro area of eastern Choiseul). Further information indicating other mineralised areas worthy of detailed investigation was gained from an aero-geophysical survey in 1966 (Allum 1967).

Little is known of the soils over much of the Solomons. Detailed survey of soils has, until recently, been confined largely to Guadalcanal and Malaita (Ballantyne 1961; Leach 1966). These were ad hoc surveys and did not provide basic data for national agricultural planning and development.

The forest in the Solomons, as in other parts of Melanesia, has always provided shelter and subsistence, but the vast stands of economic timber trees have only been exploited on a large scale since about 1956. The Department of Forestry, established in 1952, is currently implementing a territory-wide forestry policy which aims to create a permanent forest estate of about 500 square miles (BSIP 1968:23).¹ Today timber extraction is centred in the Western District. Expansion to other islands will depend on the extent of their stands of commercial timber, and encouragement of investment in timber milling, which in turn requires long-term security of tenure.

As in other island groups in the Pacific, the traditional land tenure system is in conflict with the modern economic aspirations of the people. Although there have been inroads into the system, its essential outline persists. Until the early 1950s the Government made little attempt to understand indigenous land tenure concepts; instead, regulations concentrated on the procedures and conditions under which land could be alienated (Allan 1957:55-60). There was a clear lack of correspondence between Melanesian and European concepts of interests in, and ownership of, land.

¹ See also BSIP News Sheet, nos 17-18 of 1968, p.4.

Melanesian interest in land involves numerous sets of relationships within and between land-owning groups. Government maintained that although descent through the matrilineal line was a widespread practice, the society was very atomised and not amenable to any clear division which might be used as the basis of native land tenure. This belief led to inaction, and no systematic investigation into traditional land tenure was undertaken until 1956 (Allan 1957). Today Government is committed to the evolution of customary tenure towards the registration of individual titles to land (Land and Titles Ordinance, BSIP 1961b:chapter 56), in the belief that this is the best way to develop Melanesian society in the rural areas. Whether this policy and all its implications are understood and supported by Melanesians is difficult to determine.

An underdeveloped economy

Today the commercial economy of the Solomons is a one-crop economy vulnerable to wide fluctuations in world market prices. The copra industry is the largest earner of overseas exchange (see Table 2.1), provides employment for about one-third of the country's 11,000 wage-earners, and contributes in export duty on copra no less than 25 per cent of the Solomons' ordinary revenue of about \$2m a year (BSIP 1965:27).

The volume and value of domestic exports have increased markedly since the war, but the value of imports has increased more quickly. Between 1959 and 1964 the annual per capita value of domestic exports fell from \$38.62 to \$24.83, while the annual per capita value of imports rose from \$25.91 to \$39.98. When one compares the differential growth rates in trade with a rate of population growth of approximately 1.5 per cent per annum (McArthur 1961c:49), the Solomons' economic plight becomes clear. However, the inhabitants, especially those dependent on a cash income, were spared a rapid deterioration in living conditions and services by the post-war copra price and United Kingdom subsidies, grants and Commonwealth Development and Welfare funds which masked a wholly unsatisfactory state of economic affairs. Overseas financial assistance must increase in future years, especially if the country is to provide the standard of social and economic services which the people increasingly demand.

Economic diversification

Since the end of the war the Government has embarked on four development plans. Early development plans

Table 2.1

Percentage value of Solomons' exports, 1937 and 1949-66

Year	Copra	Trocas shell	Timber	Green snail shell	Crocodile skin	Ivory nuts	Non-ferrous scrap metal	Ferrous scrap metal	Gold	Cocoa	Other items	Total %	Total value of exports (\$)
1937	89.34	6.85	1.86	0.66	0	1.29	0	0	0	0	0	100.00	655,990
1949	71.34	1.86	2.33	0	0	0	4.46	6.72	0	0	13.29	100.00	1,411,192
1950	71.17	1.19	n.a.*	0	0	0.02	22.34	2.56	0	0	2.72	100.00	1,715,960
1951	86.99	5.31	3.75	0	0	0.008	3.17	0.77	0	0	0	100.00	2,152,012
1952	64.58	1.80**	4.82	0	0	0.01	2.32	26.47	0	0	0	100.00	3,012,686
1953	82.17	5.79	2.53	0.76	0	0.006	3.99	2.97	0	0	1.78	100.00	3,243,522
1954	85.25	9.90	3.70	0.75	0.24	0.020	0.10	0.04	0	0	0	100.00	3,746,350
1955	84.31	9.24	5.03	1.15	0.22	0.002	0	0	0	0	0.05	100.00	3,998,970
1956	84.61	7.59	4.42	2.52	0.47	0	0	0	0	0	0.39	100.00	3,951,162
1957	78.40	9.04	4.41	1.26	0.35	0	5.91	0.56	0	0	0.07	100.00	3,094,442
1958	81.13	5.09	4.91	0.30	0.61	0	4.77	3.19	0	0	0	100.00	3,651,636
1959	92.73	1.47	2.97	0.27	0.48	0	2.00	0.08	0	0	0	100.00	4,635,590
1960	89.16	0.90	3.37	0.35	1.63	0	1.00	3.59	0	0	0	100.00	3,585,990
1961	90.20	2.21	2.84	0.66	2.20	0	1.03	0.72	0.03	0.11	0	100.00	3,479,368
1962	88.80	1.90	5.30	0.29	0.98	0	1.95	0.04	0.39	0.35	0	100.00	3,178,368
1963	91.40	1.07	3.80	0	1.42	0		1.60	0.28	0.36	0.07	100.00	3,648,702
1964	88.25	1.22	7.52	0	1.34	0		0.99	0.07	0.47	0.14	100.00	3,995,578
1965	93.34	0.57	4.12	0	0.41	0		0.67	0.17	0.40	0.32	100.00	4,758,134
1966	84.77	0.73	11.24	0	0.28	0		1.17	0.24	0.62	0.95	100.00	3,570,510

* Figure not available.

** Includes green snail shell.

Source: BSIP Annual Reports for 1937 and 1949-66 (1938 and 1950-67).

emphasised communications, but in the 1963-66 plan 85 per cent of development expenditure was allocated almost equally to natural resources and social services. However, the small amount of finance available locally and from overseas, and the fact that there were few foundations upon which the plans could build, have contributed to the relative economic backwardness of the Solomons today.

To strengthen and diversify the economy, and to give the non-copra producers a permanent cash crop, cocoa was introduced in the mid-1950s, especially on Malaita. On the whole, the future for cocoa seems uncertain - more so now than when it was introduced. Although cocoa exports have been increasing since 1959, cocoa has not significantly diversified the export economy. The reasons for this are many and complex. Soil deficiency, a very humid climate conducive to the spread of pests and disease, the novelty of the crop and its new demands on the people, marketing difficulties, and severe price fluctuations partly explain the present apathy among cocoa farmers and the disparity between actual production and government targets.¹ Government is less enthusiastic about cocoa today than in 1958.

Rice has received much government attention. Investigation into the best padi strains for Guadalcanal Plains conditions, under a joint scheme by Government and the Commonwealth Development Corporation² (BSIP 1962a:6), suggested that wet rice production was uneconomic although soil conditions and water supply on the western half of the Guadalcanal Plains have been shown to suit wet rice (Ballantyne 1961:13). A new company, Guadalcanal Plains Ltd, is producing about 800 tons of dry land rice per annum under mechanised conditions and is also practising irrigation. Further expansion is envisaged and prospects for exporting Guadalcanal rice appear bright.

¹ It was estimated that the Solomons would produce 360 tons of cocoa in 1966 but actual production was 95.5 tons (BSIP 1964:20; BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1966 1967:4).

² The Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) is a quasi-official organisation supported by the UK Government and is involved in development projects in various parts of the world.

Soya beans and oil palms are grown experimentally on the Guadalcanal Plains by the Commonwealth Development Corporation in an endeavour to ascertain the economics of commercial cropping. Apart from these, few crops of any promise are being introduced and copra will continue to dominate the economy for some time to come.

In view of this, it is difficult to understand why the Government has not made extensive provision to raise rapidly both the total production and quality of copra, in particular Melanesian-produced copra which contributed 52 per cent of total production in 1964. The Copra Board sees its main job as stabilisation of the price of copra, and has accumulated approximately \$1m for this purpose since about 1956. However, the proportion of third-grade copra, nearly all Melanesian-produced, has increased in recent years. To the Melanesian, who does not produce copra by the ton, a price difference of \$14 between first- and third-grade copra (\$140 and \$126 per ton respectively) is insignificant, and the differential does not appear to be producing the intended result. Despite a stable copra price of over \$100 per ton for some years, total copra production has not increased markedly. In fact, the pre-war peak (25,073 tons in 1937) was not exceeded until 1963 when production reached 25,199 tons. However, Government, in conjunction with Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd, is making good progress in coconut research at the latter's plantations in the Russell Islands, although there is still a great shortage of good seed nuts.

These, then, are some of the broad features of the Solomons' environment and economy. The environment is diverse and offers varied development problems and possibilities. Some resources are being actively exploited while others remain obscure, inaccessible and untouched. The soil resources, except on the Guadalcanal Plains and other smaller areas, are unknown and their potential for agriculture untapped. A number of crops appear to hold bright prospects but the shortage of funds prevents investigation into their economic and agronomic possibilities. This financial drawback has been a great disadvantage in national development planning in the post-war years. Thus there is a continuing lag in the provision of essential economic overheads, such as roads and a shipping service. Despite advances in internal air transport, an adequate shipping service remains essential not only for the movement of people and goods, and the reduction of parochialism, but also for on-the-spot planning and execution of development projects in areas distant from Honiara. The

Government's fleet of vessels is used mainly for administrative tours, and inter-island commercial transport is largely undertaken by Chinese and local traders.

Guadalcanal Plains environment

Guadalcanal is the largest island in the Solomons and commands a central position in the archipelago. It is 95 miles long and 32 miles wide, with its longer axis trending east-west. The central core of the island - the Kavo Ranges - is a mountain system in which numerous ranges exceed 6,000 feet above sea level (see Fig. 2.1); the highest peak, Mt Popomanasiu, is 8,005 feet high. This central spine is largely block-faulted (Coleman 1965:18). Very steep slopes, with deeply dissected terrain and isolated valleys, are common yet striking landform features. The area is rain-drenched, cloudy and jungle-clad. It is a difficult, inhospitable and therefore economically unattractive environment, yet it has a population of about 3,000.

The Kavo Ranges fall steeply to the south. Thus the south coast is very much a part of the central ranges in physical character. It is exposed, wet, for the most part densely forested and steeply sloping, with very few coastal plains and river valleys of any size. Despite these physical handicaps, the population is substantial.¹

North of the Kavo Ranges the land falls gradually through basins, foothills, and limestone terraces to the Guadalcanal Plains. This area is the only substantial lowland in the Solomons. Until recently, little was known of the precise capabilities of much of the plains, particularly in terms of commercial cropping other than copra production. Copra production, whether on European-managed estates or in indigenous groves, has been confined to the littoral, and until recently the interior remained virtually unexploited.

Location, geology and landforms of the Guadalcanal Plains

No attempt is made here to give a detailed account of the physical geography of this part of Guadalcanal. Rather

¹ The 1959 sample population census indicated that at least 2,500 people, or 17.8 per cent of the estimated population of Guadalcanal, resided in the 'weather coast' (McArthur 1961c:50).

the aim is to examine and emphasise some of the basic elements in its physical geography, especially elements important to the utilisation of its land resources.

The Guadalcanal Plains approximate the shape of a convex lens with the longer axis running east-west and parallel to the southern ranges. They are about 35 miles long and 5 miles wide, with a total area of about 75,000 acres. The area is drained by eight main rivers, some of which pose obstacles to the movement of people and produce (see Plate 2.1).



Photo: Ted Marriott, BSIP Government Photographer

Plate 2.1. Metepono River and Koli airfield after Nov. 1966 floods

The plains are the product of a long period of deposition of weathered debris derived from the mountain axis to the south. Geological study shows that they consist of a thick mass of poor to unconsolidated Pleistocene to Recent sediments, of which sandstone and grits of volcanic origin, conglomerates, gravels, sands and mudstones are the most common components (Coleman 1960:8, see also Fig. 2.2). In many places sorting is poor as a result of the rapid transportation and deposition of sediments - of different sizes - over short distances from a rugged southern source area.

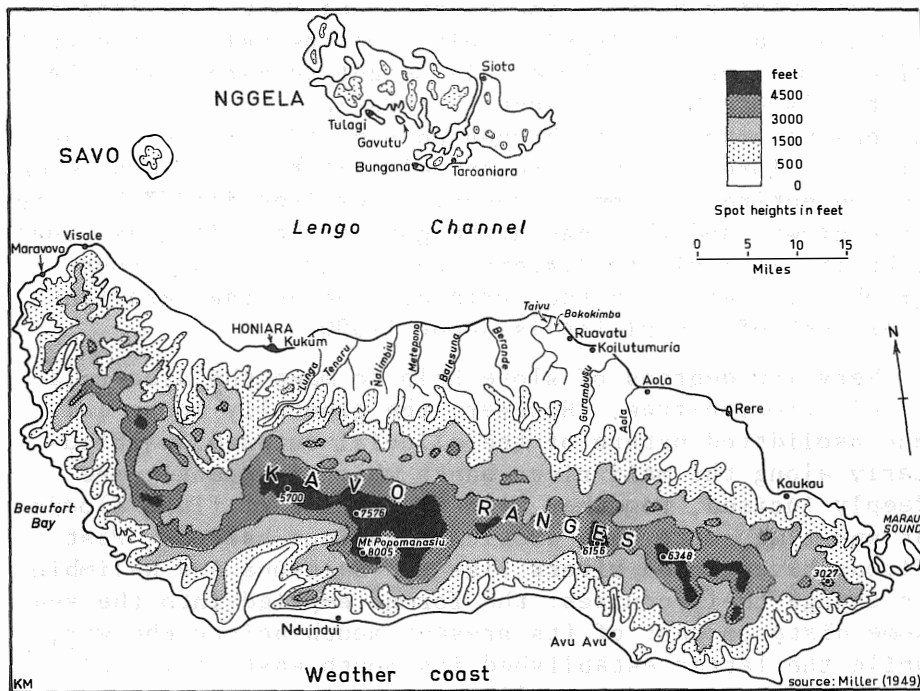


Fig. 2.1. Relief map of Guadalcanal and adjacent islands

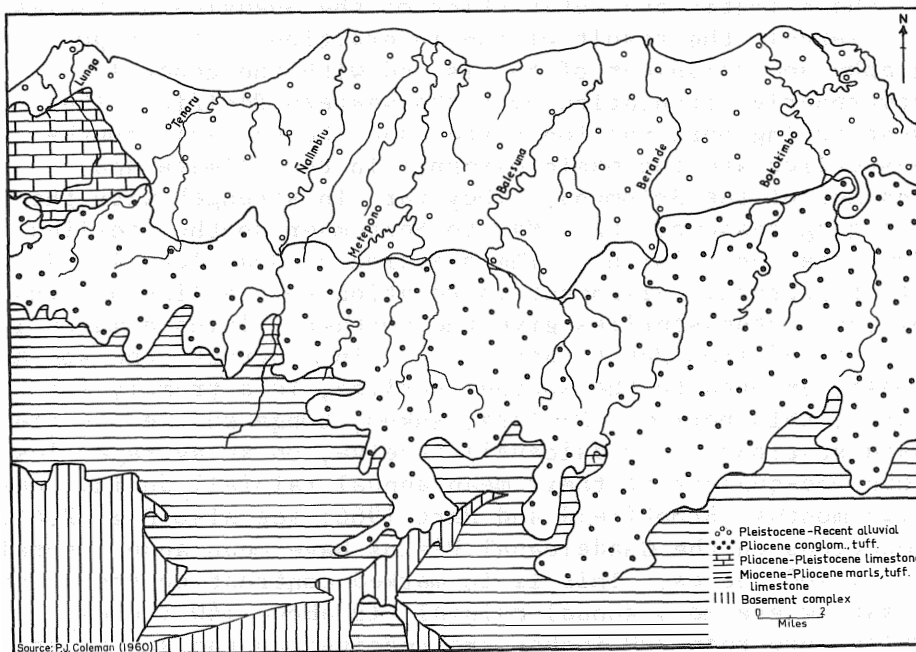


Fig. 2.2. Geology of Guadalcanal Plains

The greater part of the Guadalcanal Plains is less than 100 feet above sea level. Only a narrow belt to the south rises imperceptibly above this height to merge with the foothills of the Kavo Ranges. This low elevation and the extensive grass cover, broken only by finger-like projections of forest, give a remarkably smooth surface appearance to the entire area on a synoptic view (see Fig. 2.3). Dense tree growth and the regular height of the tall grass cover make it difficult to discern, on the ground, any topographic variation in the surface. The average gradient over much of the plains is about 1:500.

Very low degrees of slope help to make the area relatively erosion-free. However, the generally loose and unconsolidated nature of the alluvial outwash, particularly along the main river banks which frequently are deeply incised, together with the threat of flash floods at any time, make bank erosion a serious hazard. Past floods have caused rivers like the Balesuna and Nalimbiu to change their courses: the former emptied into the sea some distance east of its present mouth before the war, while the latter established its mouth east of its old outlet during floods in 1948.

Climate and weather

The climatic characteristics of the Guadalcanal Plains are largely the result of the interaction of the topography and alignment of the island with the general atmospheric circulation over the western Pacific. The west-moving perturbation system and the variable southeasterlies are the basic elements in the climate and weather of the Solomons. They vary in strength with the changing seasons. From May to September southeasterlies dominate the Solomons. The position of Guadalcanal and its topographic alignment in relation to the line of flow of the southeasterlies give the northern plains a markedly dry period from May to September. In contrast, the south coast, exposed to the southeasterlies, is extremely wet during this period. Honiara, Kukum, Lunga and Tenaru (leeward stations on Guadalcanal) receive, on an average, less than one-quarter of their mean annual rainfall during these five months (Brookfield and Hart 1966; see also Fig. 2.4). Locations on the Guadalcanal Plains have mean annual totals below 100 inches. This is in marked contrast to the south coast, where mean annual rainfall is above 140 inches, while more than 200 inches are received on the southeast coast of the island.

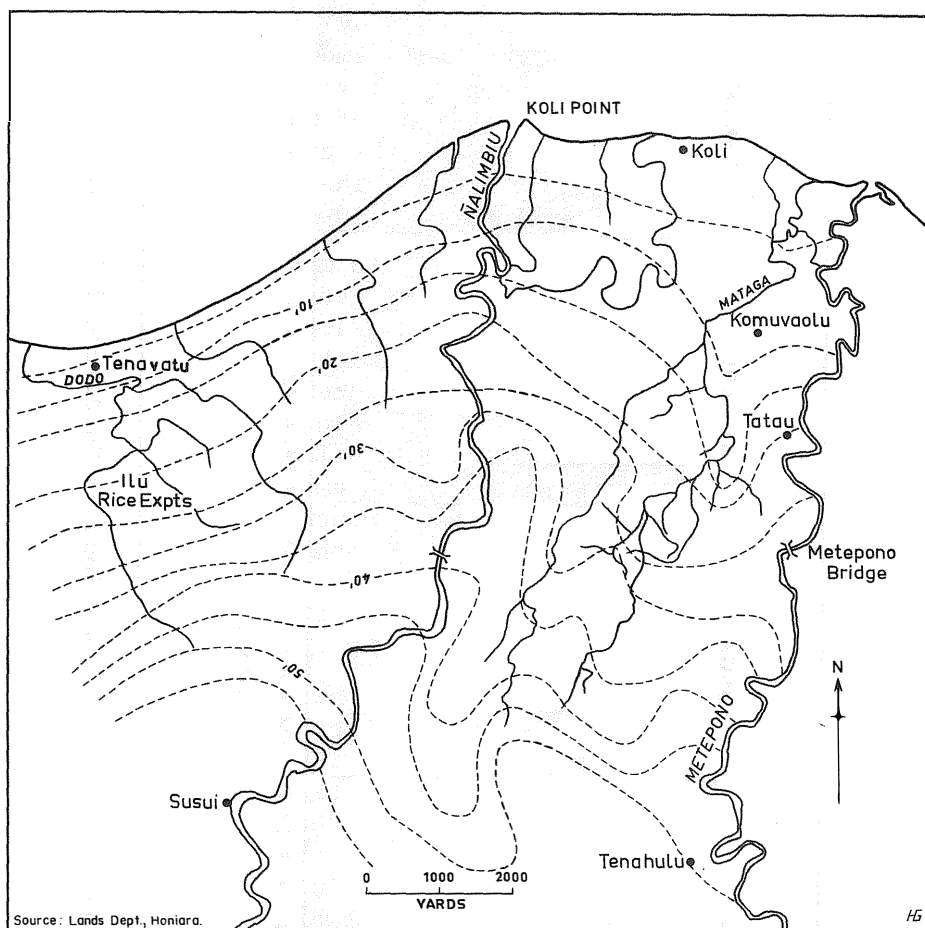


Fig. 2.3. Surface undulations of Guadalcanal Plains

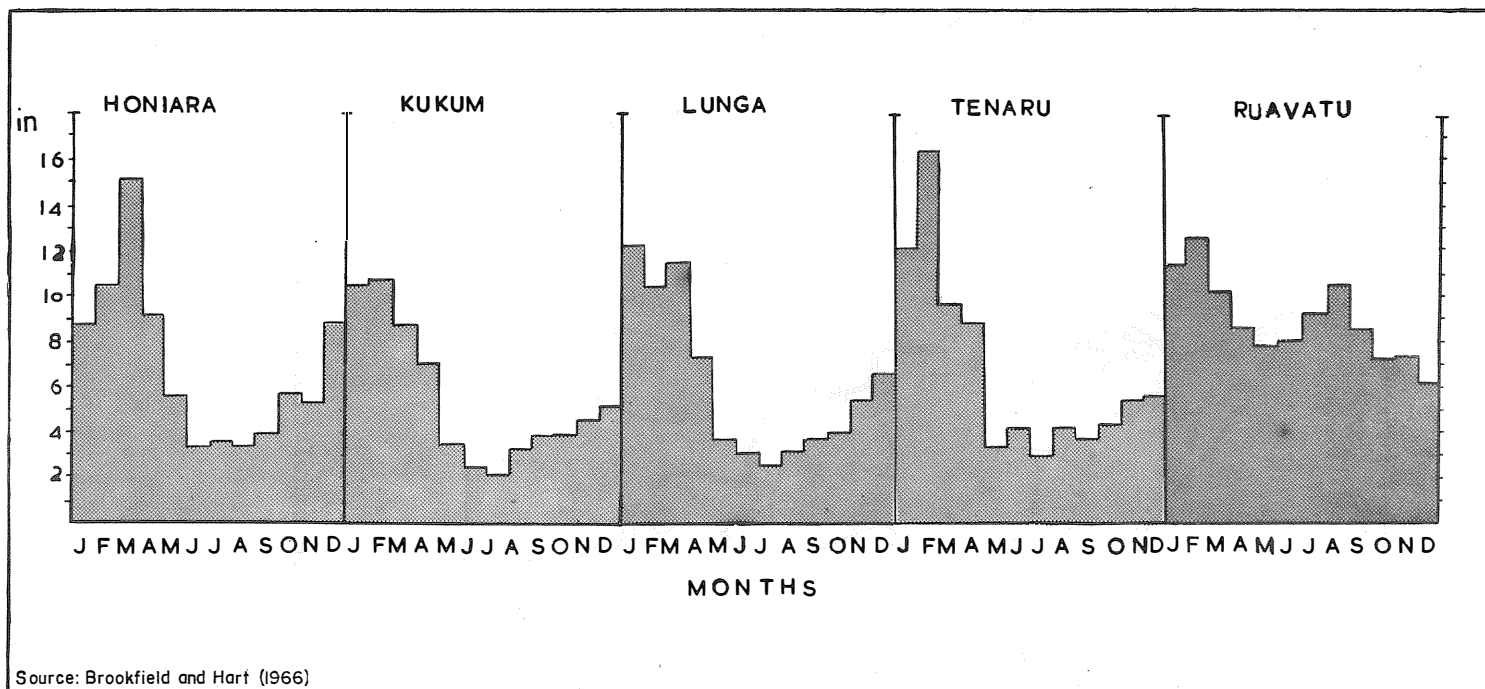


Fig. 2.4. Mean monthly rainfall at selected locations on Guadalcanal Plains

During each month, including the dry mid-year months, there is likely to be considerable variation in rainfall throughout the plains. For example, in 1965, which was a generally wet year throughout the Solomons, rainfall at three stations between Honiara and the Balesuna River varied in frequency of occurrence, although the annual totals did not differ markedly. Honiara, with an annual total (95.86 inches) 14 per cent above its annual mean, had its rainfall spread over a greater number of days (215) than the other two stations - Ilu Rice Experiments and Tetere Leprosarium (179 and 154 rain-days and totals of 86.38 inches and 87.52 inches respectively). Spells of wet weather during 1965 were comparable for the three stations. However, for reasons unknown, spells of dry weather (14 days at Honiara, 20 at Ilu, and 11 at Tetere) varied considerably. But in strict statistical terms the plains do not frequently experience spells of more than three months of dry weather in which monthly rainfall is less than 2.36 inches. This is regarded crudely as the critical minimum figure below which plants cease to grow.

During the period November to March tropical cyclones are likely to affect the Solomons as this is the hurricane season in the tropical southwest Pacific. Normally these cyclones begin within a zone bounded by Fiji, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, and the New Hebrides (Hutching 1953). Less commonly they begin north of Santa Cruz in the eastern Solomons, and still more rarely further west in the Solomons' region. High velocity winds of eighty miles per hour or more, heavy rains and high seas are features of such cyclones. Although cyclones are 'young' and small in this region, they are often intense and cause much damage to buildings and gardens.

Climate and Melanesian agriculture

There is an intimate relationship between the climate of the Guadalcanal Plains, indeed of the Solomons as a whole, and Melanesian economic activity. The people recognise, and plan their agricultural work in accordance with, the changes in the seasons. Yam gardens are commonly prepared and ready for planting before the perturbation season rains begin about October. To the copra producers of the coastal villages, and particularly to the majority who depend on the sun for drying copra, spells of dry and sunny weather are vital. At the same time, prolonged spells of both dry and wet weather can

seriously affect their overall production. The sweet potato is an introduced crop which has few specific requirements regarding time of planting or climatic conditions, although prolonged spells of dry weather can be critical to its growth. All gardening phases are affected by climate. Weed growth, for example, is greatest in the early stages of garden operations before the food crops form a complete cover. The regeneration of abandoned gardens to secondary growth, and weed growth generally, benefit from the more humid conditions at the beginning and end of the year. This is an important factor in the length of the fallow period which is determined empirically and in terms of the denseness and size of tree growth.

Vegetation

Forest and grass are the major plant communities found on the Guadalcanal Plains. East of an area between the Balesuna and Bokokimbo rivers the forest is compact and forms an almost continuous cover, broken at only a few places by small patches of grass and food gardens. On the western half of the plains, by contrast, grassland is dominant (see Fig. 2.5). Themeda-dominated grassland occupies most of the near-level interfluves, while bush dominates only the banks of the main rivers and their tributaries. In some places small patches of bush are completely enclosed in a sea of grass. The boundary between bush and grass is usually very sharp.

Today grass covers more than 60 per cent of the surface of the Guadalcanal Plains. The reasons for this are not clear. If grass is a fire-induced climax vegetation, then its total area should be much greater than at present. The gardening work of the Melanesians should add weight to this suggestion. However, the boundaries of the grassland have been virtually unchanged since about 1942 (see Fig. 2.6), and there is no encroachment of forest by grass or vice versa. The factors controlling the distribution of grass and forest over the plains are reasonably constant. One point is certain: the forest is mainly secondary. But why either the forest or the grassland has remained practically unchanged in extent is not known. Ballantyne (1961) showed that sufficient moisture exists below three feet on the grass plains to maintain tree growth, even after long, dry periods. He suggested that the limiting factor is excess water during the wet season when temporary water-logging occurs, and that grass but not forest could tolerate this condition. However, the

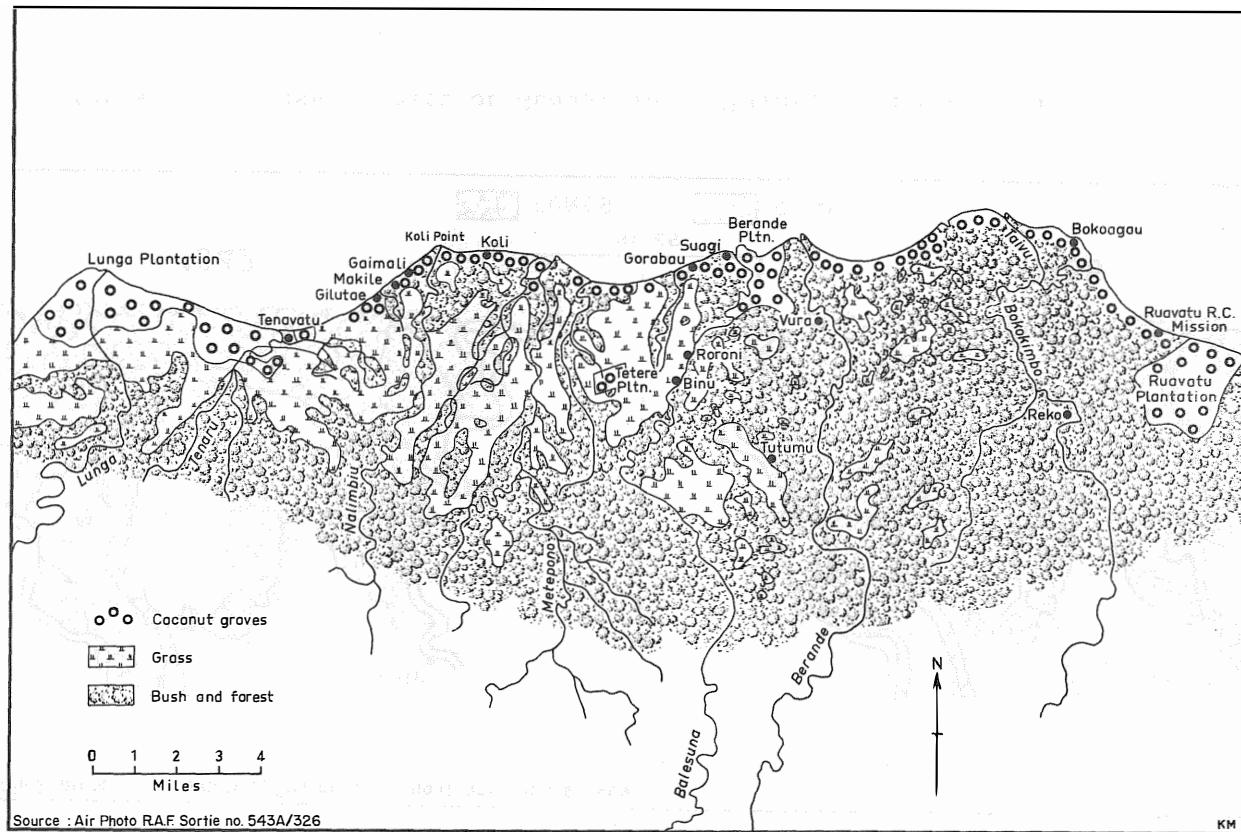


Fig. 2.5. Generalised vegetation distribution on Guadalcanal Plains, 1966

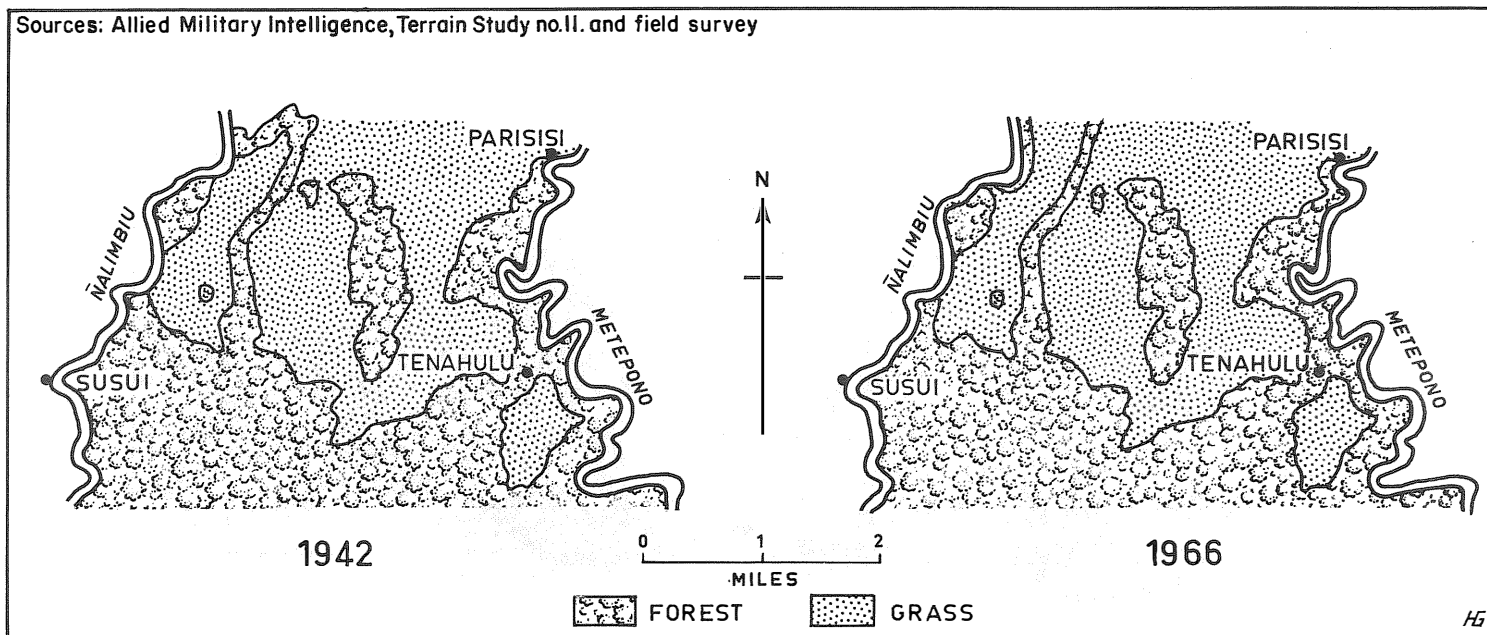


Fig. 2.6. Forest and grass on part of Guadalcanal Plains, 1942 and 1966

recent soil survey east of the Balesuna River (Leach 1966) has cast doubt on this hypothesis, which also fails to take account of forest outliers in various parts of the plains. More investigation is needed before the distribution of forest and grass in northern Guadalcanal is adequately explained.

Soils

The soil is the major natural resource of the Guadalcanal Plains. The main soil types found on the plains are recent and older alluvium. The recent alluvium consists of yellowish, structureless, fine-textured silt and silt loam of the river courses, and coarse-textured sand to sandy loam of the coastal strand. Recent alluvium has a low organic matter content, is extremely permeable and dries rapidly.

The older alluvium may be divided arbitrarily into two sub-groups based on permeability, which is determined by the thickness of the top clay layer.¹ Much of the older alluvium is excellent for irrigated rice production, which requires the impounding of water. Also, oil palm shows promise on older alluvium in the Ilu area.

In places like the Berande-Balesuna area, the impermeability of the clay layer is a definite drawback as development there, and perhaps east of it too, needs drainage and flood control. This problem is not encountered west of the Balesuna. Chemical analysis has shown that the soils west of the Balesuna are well suited to a wide range of plant growth (Hutton 1962:1). Frequent fires and consequent potash accumulation on the grassland influence the low acidity of these soils. East of the Balesuna River the soils are less fertile than those to the west, due largely to the high water table and heavy leaching. The variable potassium content of much of the soil is likely to be depleted with continuous cultivation.

The distribution of the soils recognised here is the result of many factors, including the nature of the material comprising the soils, the location of their source areas, the weathering agents acting on the soil parent material, and the transporting and depositional agency (see Fig. 2.7).

¹ Heavy-textured older alluvium has at least 24 inches of clay layer at the top while light-textured older alluvium has a top clay layer less than 24 inches in depth.

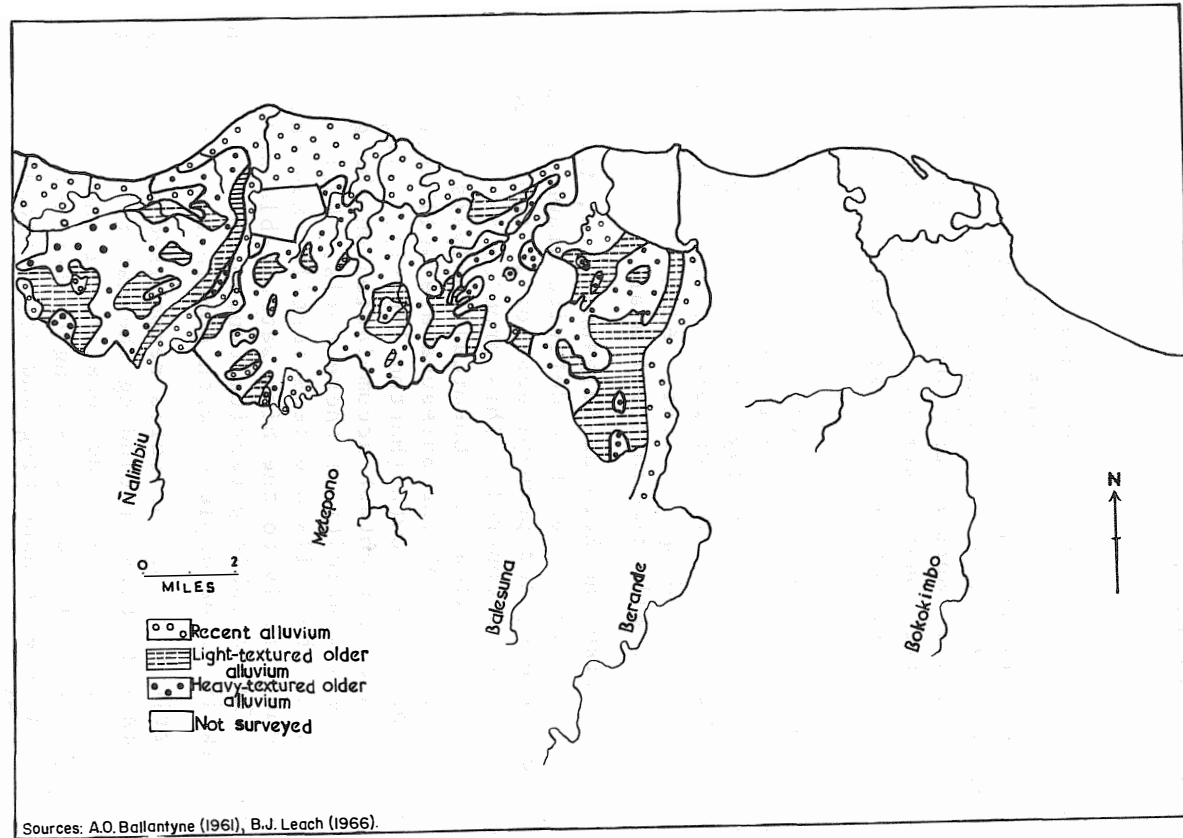


Fig. 2.7. Soils of Guadalcanal Plains, 1966

Soils and crops

The Melanesians of the plains have evolved, through trial and error, an agricultural system in which certain crops are associated with specific soils. Along the Nalimbiu River nearly all gardens utilise forested, recent and light-textured older alluvium. At Koli Point all the gardens use forested sandy alluvium, while at Roroni the practice along the Nalimbiu is repeated. It does not necessarily follow that the Melanesians of the plains have no tradition of gardening on the grass areas of older alluvium. There are a few panna (Dioscorea esculenta) gardens on the grassland, but these do not make for a long or widespread tradition. The Tadhimboko insist that certain grassed areas gave heavy crops of panna before the war, but the extensive interference and debris of battle have left much of the land agriculturally useless in the light of the simple village technology. The quick-maturing nature of the recently introduced sweet potato has also led to the decline of panna and uvi (D. alata) as major items of consumption, and hence of the cultivation of panna on grassland soils.

Long-established European commercial agriculture on the plains has concentrated almost exclusively on copra production based on the sand or sandy alluvium of the coastal strand. Vast expanses of grassed older alluvium can be used for commercial wet rice production, provided problems of rice varieties, weeds and pest control are solved. However, Guadalcanal Plains Ltd has demonstrated that dry land rice and soya beans can be successfully grown in rotation on the older alluvium of the grass plains.

Chapter 3

Development of the Guadalcanal Plains

Contact history

On 12 May 1568 Mendaña's two ships anchored at Point Cruz, where a cross was erected and Guadalcanal taken in the name of Spain. There the Spaniards had their first contact with the inhabitants of Guadalcanal, two of whom were killed in an ensuing clash. A number of expeditions were sent inland. Mendaña reported that from the summit of a hill they could see densely populated plains to the West (Amherst and Thompson 1901:xxxv). Mendaña seems to have exaggerated the resources of Guadalcanal and its suitability for Spanish colonisation, and hence one can doubt his statement regarding the dense population of the plains. A brigantine constructed at Santa Isabel was used to explore the coast east from Point Cruz. Members of the brigantine's crew tried to obtain food from the Tadhimboko, and burned down houses when villagers refused to co-operate. Near the mouth of the Bokokimbo River the Tadhimboko tried without success to pull the brigantine ashore amid great excitement, shouting 'mate! mate!' (Beaglehole 1966:48).¹

Thereafter there was a long period of minimal contact, and it was not until the nineteenth century that European contact with Tadhimboko became frequent. Whalers, traders in sandalwood, and missionaries arrived, in that order. Melanesian Mission teachers from Nggela gained a strong foothold among the Tadhimboko, perhaps because there had been frequent contact between Nggela and northern Guadalcanal before Europeans came. Labour was recruited for Queensland and Fiji plantations from northern Guadalcanal,²

¹ Beaglehole translated mate to mean danger, but in fact mate means die.

² Woodford met an ex-Queensland labourer at Aola in 1887 (Woodford 1890:121). When the ill-fated Austrian expedition to Mt Tatuve was attacked in 1896, there was among

and by 1890 trade in copra and cheap consumption goods was fairly well established. Further expatriate development was encouraged by the declaration of the Protectorate.

Land alienation

With the establishment of a government presence after 1893, traders were indirectly encouraged to widen the scope and strengthen the base of their enterprises, which they did by purchasing land from the Melanesian owners. In the original land purchases on the plains, which were made between 1886 and 1920,¹ both Government and traders were prominent. Five traders bought a total of 22,720 acres for £171; T.G. Kelly of Sydney, who acquired all the land between the Matanikau and Tenaru rivers (see Fig. 3.1), purchased more than 86 per cent of this land. Much of it was paid for in trade goods, which seemed to have satisfied the vendors. Only since 1943, with increased land consciousness and economic sophistication, has the feeling grown among the local people that they were 'cheated' in these early land sales and that a few members of the land-owning groups 'swindled' others who had an interest in the land sold.

Although trading stations were established on alienated land, little agricultural development occurred until about 1907. The exception was on T.G. Kelly's holding, about 19 per cent of which had been planted under coconut by 1905. The relative lack of development led the Resident Commissioner to believe that the early land purchases were highly speculative, an opinion which he communicated to the High Commissioner WPHC.² The result was the Solomons Land Regulation no.4 of 1896 which aimed to restrict the alienation of land by preventing speculative purchases. For instance, a Mr Voss, who had been engaged in business and the labour trade in northern Guadalcanal, claimed to have

2 (continued)

the expedition a guide called John Parramatta from Balesuna village (now Suagi), so named because of his labour experience in Australia (Woodford to Thurston (1896) in WHPC 1896-1910, Inward Letters 1896-1910, microfilm, Suva; hereafter referred to as Woodford to Thurston (1896)).

¹ See Appendix B for a detailed list of land alienation on the Guadalcanal Plains from 1896 to 1964.

² Woodford to Thurston (1896).

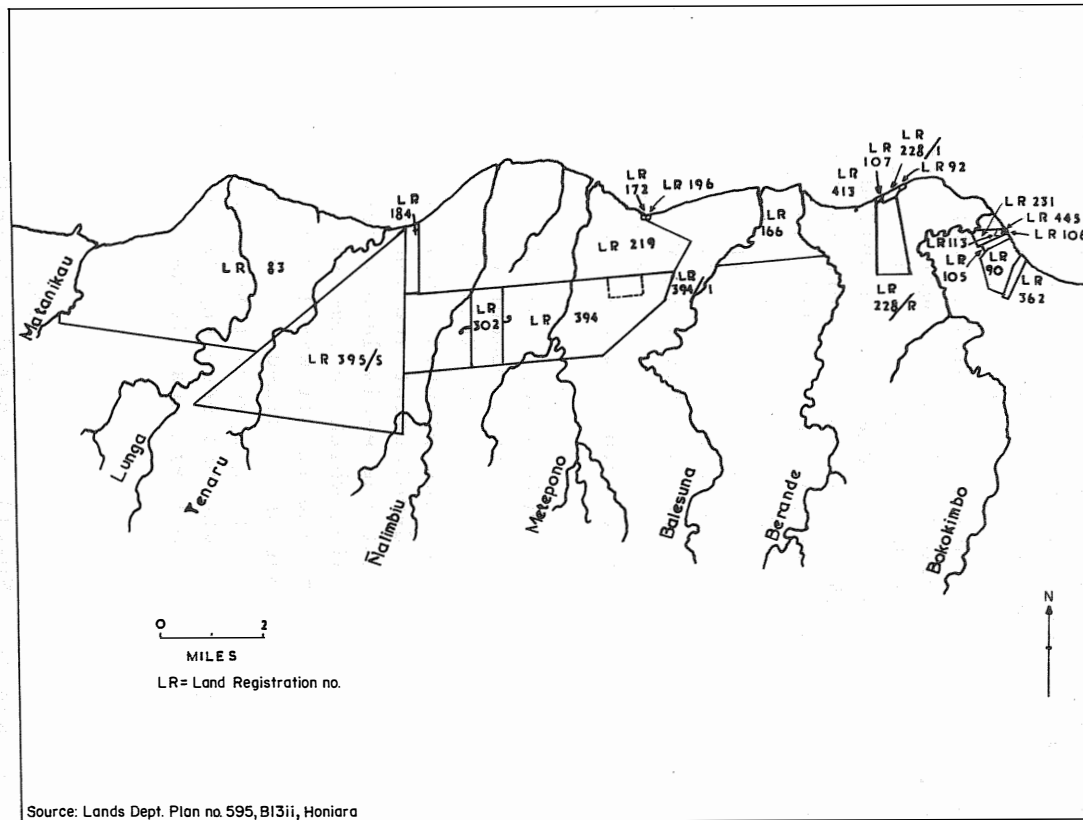


Fig. 3.1. Land alienated on Guadalcanal Plains by 1942

purchased the land between the Taivu and Balesuna rivers (see Fig. 2.1). Woodford questioned the validity of the sale because, at the time of the alleged transactions, the Melanesian owners had been driven eastward by a powerful bush 'chief' named Kokorepa and had not returned by mid-1896.¹ Voss's claim was disallowed by the High Commissioner. Other land was purchased on the coast of northern Guadalcanal between 1900 and 1910 but the areas involved were minor compared with the acquisition of T.G. Kelly and the attempted alienation of Voss.

Between 1893 and 1920 the Government's role in land alienation was to apply the concept of 'waste land' to the Solomons and to purchase directly from Melanesian owners. The official initiative in the former regard was apparently taken by Woodford, who stated² in July 1896:

I...suggest that, if possible, Your Excellency should assume ownership of all unoccupied lands in the absence of evidence of native ownership. A system of long leaseholds or conditional purchases might then be inaugurated which would be a source of revenue and I believe there would be no lack of applicants who would be glad immediately to occupy and cultivate.

The superficial assessment which followed of the nature of the traditional tenure added support to his case:

The native tenure of land appears here to be so insecure and they are so frequently changing their places of residence that no injustice would be likely to arise and might be easily guarded against.

Clause 10 of the Solomons Land Regulation no.4 stated:

Leases may be granted by the High Commissioner on behalf of Her Majesty of land (other than land found to be acquired bona fide for valuable consideration by a non-native person) being vacant by reason of the extinction of the original native owners and their descendants.

Provision for the declaration of 'waste land' was made under the Solomons (Waste Lands) Regulation 1900. Clause 2 defined 'waste land' to mean 'land which is not owned,

¹ Woodford to Thurston (1896).

² Woodford to Thurston (1896).

cultivated, or occupied by any native or non-native person'. It further stated that any 'waste land' should be occupied only after the issue of a certificate of occupation by the High Commissioner. The following year an amendment required the occupier to obtain the written permission of the High Commissioner before he could sub-let any part of the land included in his certificate of occupation. A further amendment in 1904 gave the Resident Commissioner power to approve an application for a certificate to occupy land deemed to be 'waste land'. Previously the Resident Commissioner merely received and forwarded to the High Commissioner any applications to use waste land. Obviously a major aim of the 1904 amendment was to speed up the declaration of waste land in the belief that the Protectorate had to stand on its own feet financially as soon as possible. This end could be attained not by relying on the initial sources of local revenue (taxes on trading stations and on trading and recruiting vessels), but only by attracting companies prepared to invest large sums in copra plantations (Scarr 1968:264).

There were difficulties in the implementation of the Waste Lands Regulation and also in the concept of 'waste land' itself. In the schedule to the 1904 regulation, the applicant was required to give an estimate of the area of land involved and declare that 'to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is neither owned, cultivated, occupied by any native or non-native person'. With intertribal skirmishes occurring on the plains during this period, it would have been unreasonable to expect a prospective applicant to make an exhaustive inquiry into the ownership of the land he required, even if this were possible; neither could the Government do so, because of its limited staff and meagre financial resources. The shifting nature of Melanesian settlements also created problems. But perhaps the basic problem, and certainly the main source of later conflict between Government and the Tadhimboko, was the concept of 'waste land' itself. To the Tadhimboko, waste land as such did not exist. Any piece of unoccupied or uncultivated land always had claims of ownership attached to it, and custom provided for the transfer of ownership rights if the land-owning group died out. Thus the European idea of continuous occupation and use as the visible evidence of ownership clashed with the traditional Melanesian practice of shifting gardens within a framework of pre-existing and locally recognised ownership rights. Today Government admits that when the Waste Lands Regulation was applied to the Tadhimboko region, no investigation

was made to ascertain the vacancy or otherwise of the land involved.¹

The first ninety-nine-year certificate of occupation for land on the Guadalcanal Plains was granted to the Pacific Islands Company in 1903 over a triangular block of land south of the Tenaru River as well as lands in other parts of the Solomons. Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd (LPPL) acquired these lands - 200,000 acres in all - from the Pacific Islands Company in 1906,² although the certificate was not issued until 19 October 1914. Pressure from LPPL representatives, who insisted that a period of ninety-nine years was too short for coconut development,³ and the Government's desire to attract a taxable millionaire tenant into the Solomons, led to the lease being extended to 999 years.

The second certificate of occupation was issued to Burns Philp on 1 June 1908 over 10,000 acres at Muvia, but was transferred the following year to the Solomon Islands Development Company (SIDC).

The Solomons (Waste Lands) Regulation of 1904 was repealed by the King's Regulation no.3 of 1914, although rights and obligations incurred under the former regulation remained in force. The sale of Melanesian land to non-Melanesians was prohibited, but there was provision for leases of such land for up to ninety-nine years. At the same time, the Crown alone could 'buy or compulsorily acquire for public purpose land not used and not needed in future by natives'. Thus certain conditions of the 1914 lands regulation circumvented the repealing clause itself, and in effect the provisions of the Solomons (Waste Lands) Regulation 1904 could be attained by applying the relevant clause of the 1914 lands regulation. For example, in response to a SIDC request, the Government issued another certificate of occupation on 1 January 1918 for lands on both sides of the Nalimbiu River; shortly afterwards it

¹ BSIP Department of Lands and Surveys (n.d.), Land Register: Conveyances to other than Crown.

² Prior to this, the Pacific Islands Company found that the Deutsche Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft had registered its claim to much of this land with the WPHC in 1898. These interests were bought by the Pacific Islands Company in 1902 (Scarr 1968:265).

³ WPHC Minute Paper no.61, 1905.

issued the SIDC Certificate of Occupation Validation Regulation, under which the SIDC certificate for Muvia was withdrawn and a single certificate of occupation was issued to cover both Muvia and Nalimbiu. Although the Solomons (Waste Lands) Regulation 1904 had been repealed, the 1918 regulation validated the SIDC's title to both Muvia and Nalimbiu.

Even before the Solomons (Waste Lands) Regulation 1904 was repealed in 1914, the Government was purchasing from the Melanesian owners the land known as Gavaga. Between 1912 and 1916 it purchased Gavaga's 3,860 acres for £361.¹ In 1918 a certificate of occupation over this land for 999 years was granted to the SIDC. Other areas east of the Berande River were bought in fee simple by the Government and leased to individual European traders.

By 1920, 55,888 acres had been alienated on the Guadalcanal Plains. More than 27,500 acres were declared vacant and leased to two large companies while individual traders acquired title to 22,270 acres. The remainder was purchased by the Crown in fee simple and leased to private enterprise. Thus did the Government sow the seeds of future disputes with the Melanesian owners, disputes which were not settled until 1966.

Plantation establishment: from
small traders to large companies

The foundations of plantation enterprise were laid during the first three decades of British rule, but progress during the decade after 1893 was slow, mainly for economic reasons. Although the early traders and landholders on the plains operated over a wide area, their individual capital investments were small. Coconut plantations require an extensive initial outlay of capital over a ten-year period during which direct financial returns to the planter are nil. Labour, too, was relatively scarce: employment on plantations in Queensland and Fiji was more attractive than wage employment at home because one could see the world and also acquire a wider range of trade goods overseas.² As a result, the small traders and

¹ Later survey estimated the area at 4,055 acres.

² More than 22 per cent of the 61,000 Melanesian (here meaning Solomon Island, New Hebridean, Papua New Guinean and New Caledonian) labourers recruited for Queensland between 1871 and 1904 came from the Solomons. By 1906 Solomon Islands labourers in Queensland had returned home

land-holders planted only a small proportion of their land concessions. The firm of Kelly, Williams and Woodhouse had planted coconuts on only 19 per cent of its 19,740-acre grant between the Matanikau and Tenaru rivers when its interests were purchased by the trader, Oscar Svenson, in June 1905. This individual had already purchased Berande in December 1902 and had extensive trading interests throughout the central Solomons. Very few of his land concessions were planted under coconuts. Berande, for example, was sold by Oscar Svenson to George Darbyshire one year after it was bought from the Melanesian owners, while the Matanikau-Tenaru land was sold virtually undeveloped to LPPL in February 1907. In 1908 Burns Philp acquired a long-term lease on Muvia. As mentioned, this lease was transferred to SIDC the following year, together with Berande which SIDC had purchased from the trustees of Darbyshire who had gone into partnership with Harding in 1904. By about 1910 then, the small traders had already sold their land concessions on the western half of the plains to two large companies, LPPL and SIDC. The latter were largely responsible for the extension of coconut planting and copra production on the plains until the Japanese invaded the Solomons in May 1942.

Two dominant firms:

LPPL and SIDC

In 1906 LPPL acquired the interests of the Pacific Islands Company (1902) Ltd over 200,000 acres of land throughout the Solomons for £5,000.¹ Oscar Svenson's properties were purchased in 1907 for £40,000. In the same year LPPL purchased Ruavatu. Between 1904 and 1907 LPPL sold trade goods to, and purchased copra from, the Melanesians on the Guadalcanal Plains, and examined the properties it had acquired from the Pacific Islands Company. This latter task proved to be a source of disappointment. The total acreage of coconuts on the 200,000 acres was found to be much less than the figure given during the negotiation of the transfer. During those four

2 (continued)

(Parnaby 1964: appendix tables 1 and 4), and many were recruited again for plantation work within the Solomons.

¹ Unilever microfilm, Department of Pacific History, The Australian National University, Canberra (hereafter referred to as Unilever microfilm).

years capital investment by LPPL on its land in the Solomons was very limited. Resource exploitation was confined mainly to the working of existing coconut groves, most of which were planted by the original Melanesian owners who had been displaced by the application of the Waste Lands Regulation. The company also purchased whole nuts and copra from Melanesians who by then appreciated the commercial value of copra. Fresh planting of coconuts by LPPL was also hindered by the fact that its title over the leasehold was not finalised until 1914.

The year 1907 was a generally successful trading year for LPPL commercial operations in the Solomons so the company commenced purchasing freehold properties from European traders and land-holders who had found it difficult to continue investing in their land. Fresh planting of coconuts by LPPL followed. At Kukum more than 96 per cent of the present area under coconuts was planted between 1907 and 1915, much of it before 1910. About two-thirds of the coconut acreage at Lunga was planted between 1907 and 1916. Tenaru estate was planted between 1900 and 1915; about one-half of its total acreage was planted before 1910. Coconut planting at Ruavatu commenced in 1910 and ended in 1917. At Ilu, however, new coconut planting did not start until 1912, and it was only a small beginning. More than 96 per cent of the acreage in that estate was planted between 1914 and 1916 after clear title to the land, which was part of the Pacific Islands Company estates, was issued. Thus LPPL's coconut planting on the Guadalcanal Plains commenced during 1907 and was completed by 1917: 4,830 acres were planted in ten years (see Table 3.1 and Fig. 3.2). There is a discernible eastward expansion of development from Kukum in the west to Ruavatu in the east, with Ilu estate the one exception. Everywhere coconut palms failed to establish successfully on the grassland soils, but thrived on forest-cleared land. This is still the case today. A close examination of the ecology of grassland soils may help to explain this phenomenon.

In 1908 SIDC was granted a 999-year lease over Muvia and it purchased Berande in 1909. In 1918 Nalimbiu and Gavaga were added to its holdings and the lease extended to 999 years. Thus by 1918 SIDC was in control of approximately one-third of all the alienated land on the Guadalcanal Plains. SIDC coconut development efforts were confined to two main blocks: Tetere which covers 340 acres on the eastern part of Muvia, and Berande which covers

Table 3.1

Progress of coconut planting on LPPL Guadalcanal estates, 1900-17

Block no.	Year planted	Acreage	Percentage of total acreage planted
Kukum estate:			
1	1901-3	24	3.15
2A	1907	89	11.68
2B	1907	134	17.59
3	1908	133	17.45
4	1908-9	97	12.73
5	1911	53	6.18
6	1911-12	62	8.14
7	1913	33	4.33
8	1914	36	4.72
9	1915	20	2.62
10	1915	81	10.63
11	1911-12	6	0.78
Total, 1901-15		768	100.00
Lunga estate:			
1	1901-3	230	14.94
2	1901-3	67	4.35
3	1901-3	108	7.02
4	1901-3	85	5.52
5	1903	19	1.23
6	1907	39	2.53
7	1908	149	9.69
8	1909	47	3.05
9	1909	88	5.72
10	1909	175	11.37
11	1912	28	1.83
12	1912	98	6.37
13	1913	75	4.87
14	1915	100	6.51
15	1916	17	1.10
16	1916	77	5.00
17	1916	67	4.35
18	1914	70	4.55
Total, 1901-16		1,539	100.00
Tenaru estate:			
1	1908	213	17.49
2	1900	397	32.59
3A	1910	40	3.28
3B	1910	19	1.56
3C	1910	41	3.37
4A	1911	4	0.33
4B	1911	15	1.23
5	1911-12	71	5.83
6	1912	11	0.90
7	1914	200	16.42
8A	1915	32	2.63
8B	1915	97	7.96
8C	1915	62	5.09
9	1915	5	0.41
10	1911	11	0.91
Total, 1900-15		1,218	100.00
Ruavatu estate:			
1	1910	54	6.54
2	1913	166	20.10
3	1914	226	27.36
4	1915	245	29.66
5	1916	18	2.18
6	1917	57	6.90
7	1917	60	7.26
Total, 1910-17		826	100.00
Ilu estate:			
1	1912	16	3.34
2A	1914	12	2.51
2B	1914	59	12.32
3A	1915	132	27.56
3B	1915	28	5.85
4A	1916	62	12.94
4B	1916	89	18.58
4C	1916	70	14.61
4D	1915	11	2.29
Total, 1912-16		479	100.00

Source: 'Report on LPPL Guadalcanal lands', 1935, Honiara, typescript.

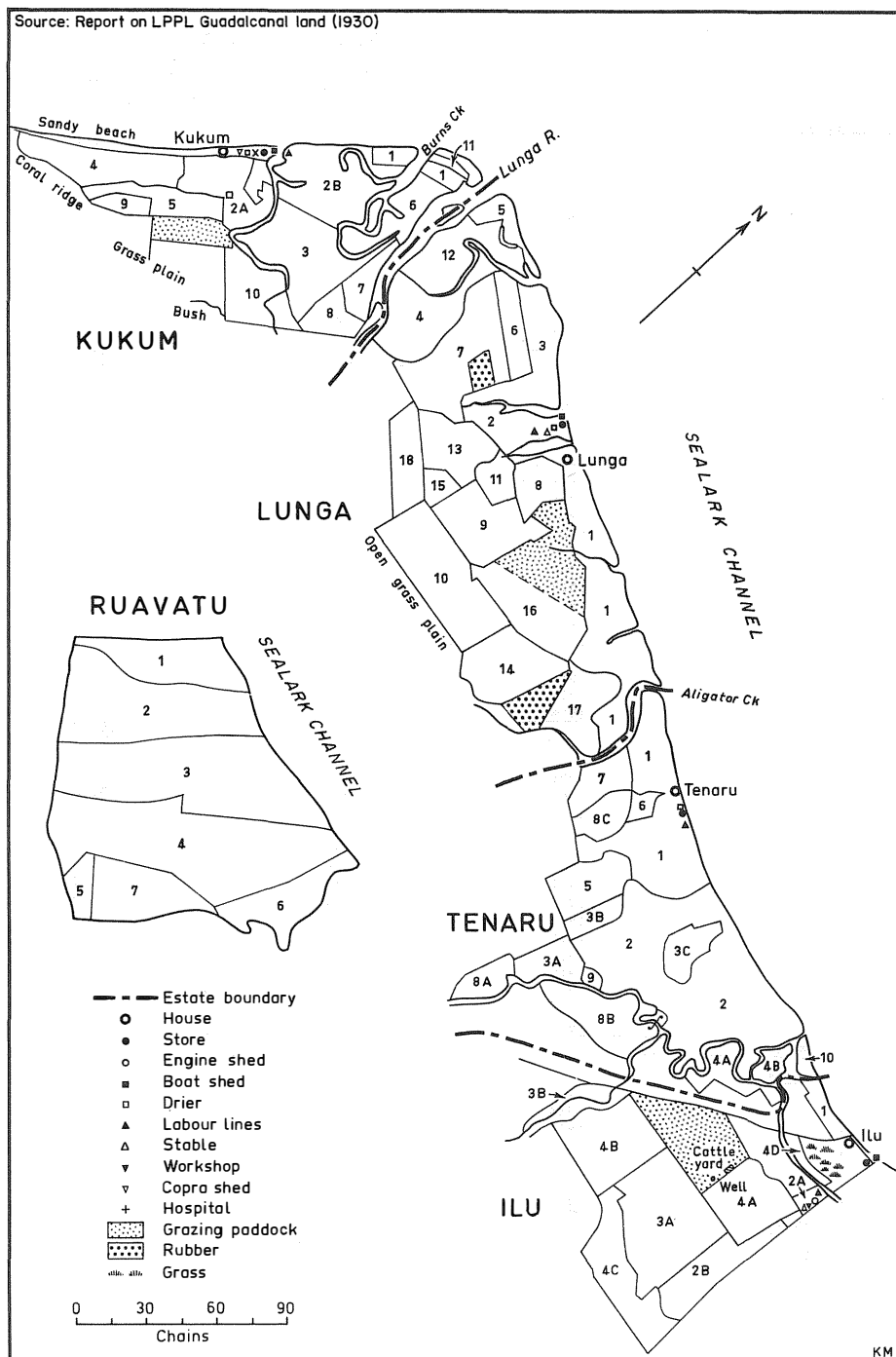


Fig 3.2. LPPL's estates on Guadalcanal Plains, 1930

2,400 acres. Like LPPL, much of the new planting by SIDC was undertaken between 1909 and 1916. LPPL's progress, however, was much quicker, mainly because, unlike SIDC, LPPL had an international parent organisation, which contributed capital expenditure for the planting period.¹

The disappearance of the small trader-land-holder

Company plantation development on the Guadalcanal Plains was restricted to the coastal fringe between the Matanikau and Berande rivers mainly because of transport problems. Ruavatu was the only large plantation property east of that area. However, much land in the eastern sector of the plains had also been alienated by both European traders and the Government.² The small European land-holders in the eastern Guadalcanal Plains concentrated on the sale of trade goods to Melanesians. A.A. Fitzgerald, for example, acquired three acres of land at Tadhimboko Bay in 1910 for a trading post. The following year W. Boucher established a trading station at Ruavatu on thirteen acres of land bought from the Melanesian owners. This land had some Melanesian-planted coconuts which the new owner utilised.

In 1912 the Malayta Company Ltd acquired 1½ acres of land for a store site adjacent to, and comprising part of the beach frontage of, W. Boucher's holding. The same year the Government completed the purchase of Benuta, which was leased to Boucher Brothers in 1913. Its coastal portion contained Melanesian-planted groves which produced some copra. However, the Bouchers concentrated on trading and undertook little new coconut planting on their holdings which were estimated to cover 300 acres. In 1916 the trader S.C. Ashley acquired the commercial and land interests of A.A. Fitzgerald and the Boucher Brothers. He also purchased Melanesian-produced copra and sold trade goods in competition with the Malayta Company. In 1911 the Marist Mission purchased 136 acres of land from the Melanesian owners at Ruavatu and coconut planting soon began, the intention being to promote self-sufficiency for personnel on mission stations. Excluding LPPL and SIDC, this mission was the only organisation which planted coconuts on much of the land it acquired at that time.

¹ Unilever microfilm.

² See Appendix B and Fig. 3.1.

By 1920 local traders were finding it difficult to continue operating economically. Copra fetched £18 per ton when delivered in Sydney; transport costs alone claimed one-third of this. The Government imposed an export duty on copra of approximately £1 per ton, and also considered an increase in import duties in order to raise much-needed revenue.¹ In 1922 and 1923 S.C. Ashley and the Malayta Company were forced to sell their holdings to the Marist Mission. A. M. Anderson obtained a ninety-nine-year lease from the Crown over Vono in 1920, but undertook little coconut planting between 1920 and 1930. LPPL and SIDC alone weathered these difficult conditions, which were made worse by the shortage of plantation labour.²

In its desire to overcome the shortage of local labour, LPPL proposed the importation of indentured workers from India. Although the Colonial Office and WPHC endorsed the idea, the Indian Office rejected it because public feeling in India was opposed to further emigration of Indians until their conditions overseas were improved substantially.³

Economic difficulties of the 1920s and 1930s

Coconuts planted on the plains between 1907 and 1917 came into bearing between 1917 and 1927, and the volume of copra exported during that decade reflects this development (see Table 3.2). After 1927, and until the outbreak of war, copra exports averaged 21,000 tons per annum. The pre-war peak was reached in 1937 when 25,073 tons of copra were produced.

Although the copra price recovered after 1922, the increase was too slow and too small to warrant large-scale expansion of planting in new areas. With high production costs and labour shortages, planters merely consolidated and maintained the areas already planted and under production. In order to lower maintenance costs, much of LPPL's Guadalcanal holdings were stocked with Shorthorn, Hereford and Red Poll cattle during this decade. Although the main purpose of grazing cattle was to keep down the weeds, some fresh meat was also provided for labourers. Copra prices were reasonably high between 1926 and 1930. At the same

¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 20 May 1922.

² Unilever microfilm.

³ Unilever microfilm.

Table 3.2

Volume and value of Solomons' copra exports, 1910-40

Year	Volume (tons)	Value* (\$)	Average value per ton (\$)
1910	4,165	141,328	33.93
1911	3,745	116,662	31.15
1912	4,365	149,994	34.36
1913	5,831	233,324	40.01
1914	5,418	149,980	27.68
1915	6,031	157,980	26.19
1916	6,030	183,326	30.40
1917	6,664	266,656	40.01
1918	10,000	310,000	31.00
1919	9,891	306,790	31.02
1920	8,160	388,092	47.56
1921	11,127	600,412	53.96
1922	12,109	347,832	28.73
1923	16,711	418,774	25.06
1924	18,278	547,126	29.93
1925	16,508	575,404	34.86
1926	19,206	738,566	38.45
1927	22,316	823,194	36.89
1928	21,957	697,586	31.77
1929	23,525	774,158	32.91
1930	21,300	608,176	28.55
1931	23,681	543,656	22.96
1932	21,209	275,686	12.99
1933	22,256	306,852	13.79
1934	21,119	140,758	6.66
1935	18,093	108,026	5.97
1936	20,699	313,064	15.12
1937	25,073	586,108	23.38
1938	22,937	518,732	22.62
1939	21,666	300,000	13.85
1940	12,299	200,000	16.26
Total	462,369	11,828,242	
Average per annum	14,915	381,556	25.58

* Sydney c.i.f. prices.

Source: BSIP Annual Reports for 1918-39 and 1948-53
(1919-40 and 1949-54).

time coconut pests appeared: it was found that the bug Amblypelta cocophaga was associated with early nutfall and that the beetle Brontispa froggati was responsible for damage inflicted on unopened leaves of the palm. North Guadalcanal was one of the areas seriously affected by Amblypelta and Brontispa damage. Copra yields per acre there dropped to 3 cwt per acre in comparison with 15 cwt per acre in the Russells, which were unaffected.¹ The economic depression of the early 1930s worsened the position of the planters. The volume of trade was reduced and fewer overseas vessels reached the Solomons. Many indigenous copra producers responded to the unfavourable economic conditions by ceasing to produce copra: in 1931 they contributed 3,000 tons of copra for export, but the following year their production dropped to 300 tons.²

The decade from 1930 to 1940 was the most difficult period ever for the copra industry. The average price per ton of copra remained very low although production persisted at the high pre-1930 level. To cope with the pest problem the Government in 1931 formed an agricultural committee of government officials and planter representatives. This body received a grant of \$10,000 from Commonwealth Development and Welfare funds and \$10,000 from the Protectorate's reserve funds.³ In 1934 LPPL offered to pay \$1,200 per annum for an extra entomologist to investigate coconut diseases. However, in 1937 the government entomologist was transferred to Fiji and entomological investigation by the Government was suspended until after World War II.⁴ Unfavourable spells of weather also hindered copra production. At Ruavatu a very dry year in 1935, for instance, contributed to the drop in copra produced in 1937 (see Table 3.3).

The generally unfavourable economic conditions of the 1930s meant that no planter could produce copra at a profit. Although copra prices fluctuated they tended to remain low. During the last quarter of 1936 the price of copra rose rapidly from \$20 per ton to \$35.50.⁵ It reached

¹ BSIP Annual Reports for 1930-38 (1931-39).

² BSIP Annual Report for 1933 (1934).

³ BSIP Annual Report for 1931 (1932).

⁴ BSIP Annual Report for 1938 (1939).

⁵ BSIP Annual Report for 1936 (1937).

Table 3.3

Copra production and annual rainfall at Ruavatu,
1934-39

Year	Productive acreage	Total tonnage	Yields per acre (cwt)	Total rainfall (inches)
1934	945	421.40	8.92	160.21
1935	946	346.42	7.33	91.36
1936	946	356.48	7.54	126.60
1937	946	296.36	6.27	92.86
1938	946	380.47	8.64	139.79
1939	946	246.49	5.21	123.57

Sources: production figures supplied by Lever Brothers, Sydney; rainfall figures from 'Report on LPPL Guadalcanal lands', 1935.

\$39 per ton in January 1937 but it fell gradually to \$15.22 per ton by December 1937.¹ Government was not unmindful of the difficulties facing the copra industry, which was and still is a major earner of government revenue, and a sliding scale was used to calculate the export duty on copra. Low prices after 1930 forced its reduction to 8c per ton in 1933 and 2c per ton in 1934.² Slight recovery led to an increase to 65c per ton in January 1935 and 80c per ton in November 1935.³ Planters renting Crown land had their rents remitted. In 1934 Government took a bold step by reducing the minimum wage for labourers from \$24 to \$12 per annum plus keep.⁴ This move accentuated further the rapid decline between 1927 and 1932 (Table 3.4) in the total number of Melanesians employed in the Protectorate, due largely to the difficult economic conditions.

LPPL employed about one-third of all labourers engaged in the Solomons during this time. Allowing one unit of labour for thirty acres of coconuts, LPPL estates on the plains engaged about 200 labourers every year between 1930

¹ BSIP Annual Report for 1937 (1938).

² BSIP Annual Report for 1933 (1934).

³ BSIP Annual Report for 1935 (1936).

⁴ BSIP Annual Report for 1934 (1935).

Table 3.4

Number of Melanesians in wage employment, 1927-32

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total employed</u>
1927	6,115
1928	6,016
1929	5,171
1930	5,363
1931	4,301
1932	3,927

Source: BSIP Annual Report for 1932 (1933:8).

and 1939. Much of this labour was recruited from Malaita, although some was obtained locally. Copra production on LPPL's Guadalcanal estates, however, declined following damage by Amblypelta and Brontispa, although the area under coconut remained relatively stable (see Table 3.5). This situation continued until the Japanese invasion in 1942. Thus although the Guadalcanal Plains, and the Solomons generally, were heavily dependent on copra for their cash earnings, the stringent economic conditions of the 1930s help to explain why other crops such as ground nuts, rice and maize were not produced commercially after experiments at Lunga proved that they could be grown.

Table 3.5

Copra production on LPPL estates in North Guadalcanal,
1931-40

<u>Year</u>	<u>Productive acreage</u>	<u>Total tonnage</u>	<u>Average yield (cwt per acre)</u>
1931	5,884	1,522.00	5.17
1932	5,788	1,524.62	5.27
1933	5,788	1,357.04	4.68
1934	5,788	1,224.75	4.23
1935	5,794	1,136.96	3.92
1936	5,765	1,088.37	3.78
1937	5,803	966.55	3.33
1938	5,803	1,094.98	3.77
1939	4,243	689.15	3.25
1940	4,243	652.88	3.08

Source: Lever Brothers, Sydney.

Japanese invasion, transit
camp and Army farm

The most obvious and immediate result of the Japanese invasion in 1942 was the disruption of economic activities throughout the Solomons. Plantation labourers were returned to their homes and copra production ceased for five years. Coconut plantations were abandoned and weeds grew unabated. This was disastrous particularly where Amblypelta and Brontispa damage was greatest, at Ilu and Tetere estates. As in other parts of the Solomons, the herds of cattle on the coconut plantations of northern Guadalcanal were either killed for meat or ran wild.

During August 1942 most Melanesians of the Guadalcanal Plains moved to the east and southeast. The western half of the plains was to become the scene of some of the fiercest battles in the Pacific campaign. When Japanese troops were eventually evacuated from western Guadalcanal in February 1943, much damage had been done to coconut plantations. Signs of destruction are still clearly visible on coconut trees between the Lunga and Tenaru rivers.

With Guadalcanal securely under Allied control, it was decided to construct a huge transit camp on the western half of the plains for use by military personnel on their way to and from the front line in the northwest. It would provide anchorages for light craft; moorings, fuel and repair facilities for small boats; operating bases for all types of aeroplanes; air transport facilities; aviation repair, fuel and supply facilities; a staging area for two divisions of troops; and hospitalisation for the combat areas (Commander, South Pacific Force 1945:2).

To build these facilities, seventeen United States construction battalions were assigned to Guadalcanal between late 1942 and early 1944 (United States Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineers 1947:251). The first priority was the construction of airfields. By October 1943 Koli and Carney fields, the fighter strips near Henderson field, and Kukum were in service. Huge tank farms were constructed simultaneously at Kukum and Koli Point to provide fuel storage facilities (see Plate 3.1). Dock and pier facilities were constructed at Point Cruz, Kukum, Lunga and Tetere Beach.

Hospitals were erected at Honiara, near Ilu, Gaimali, and near Koli field. Anti-malaria squads were responsible for clearing logs, roots and overhanging trees from stream

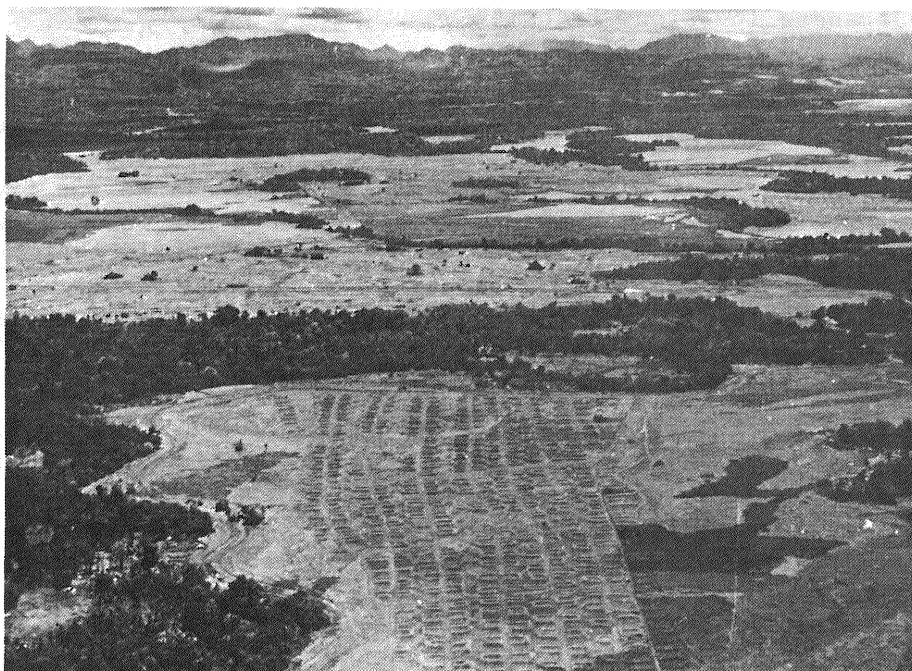


Photo: Ted Marriott, BSIP Government Photographer

Plate 3.1. Remains of Koli Point 'tank farm' and Carney airfield

banks and ponds. At the peak of development, Guadalcanal had at least 135 miles of wide, all-weather roads with numerous bridges linking the camps, airfields, fuel depots and administration quarters. In addition, four major vehicle bridges were constructed across the Lunga, Tenaru, Nalimbiu and Metepono rivers (see Fig. 3.3).

For reasons of both necessity and convenience, United States construction units utilised local material and labour in their construction work. River gravel, sandy-clay and decayed coral were invaluable in airfield and road construction. Two sawmills were set up and operated between June 1943 and January 1944 at Ilu and Tenaru; together they produced more than one million board feet of timber for bridge, camp and pier construction (United States Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineers 1947:251). Many offices and warehouses were built entirely of local materials.

Melanesians were employed in stevedoring, handling material at cargo and ration depots, building native-type structures for warehouses and offices, clearing and oiling

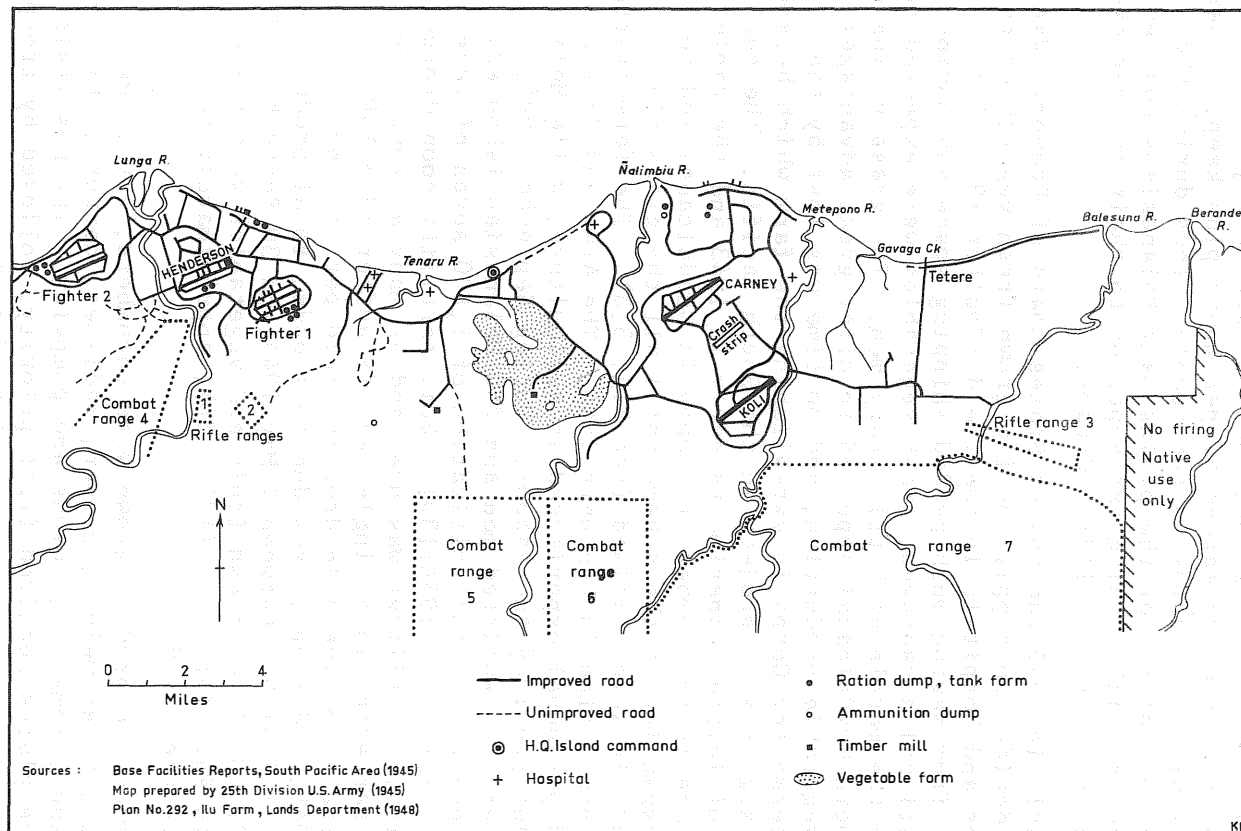


Fig. 3.3. Base facilities in North Guadalcanal during World War II

streams for malaria control, and labouring on airfields. It was for such duties as these that the British-controlled Solomon Islands Labour Corps was formed. Many Tadhimboko became general assistants and laundry workers for American military men, earning more than \$24 per month, while those in the Labour Corps earned \$2 per month plus keep. Others sold fruits and curios to the troops. Thus during the Allied occupation of the plains many Melanesians enjoyed a level of cash earning far superior to their pre-war experience, or their wildest dreams.

Early in 1942 the United States Board of Economic Warfare decided to supply locally grown fresh vegetables to troops and hospitals in the field (Coulter 1946:411). Apart from saving much-needed shipping space and obvious nutritional advantages, fresh vegetables were expected to raise the morale of battle-weary men. The grass plains of northern Guadalcanal appeared to offer great advantages for vegetable production, and no time was lost by the Quartermaster Corps in establishing the farm which became the largest such project in the South Pacific. The success of initial experiments early in 1943 and the rapid increase in the number of troops in Guadalcanal led to the expansion of the scheme until all the grass plains around Ilu were utilised (see Fig. 3.3). The farm started mass production in February 1944. The Army and Navy provided personnel experienced in agriculture, while Melanesians provided the labour. During September 1944, 3 officers, 75 enlisted men and 250 Melanesian labourers were engaged in the cultivation of 1,800 acres of vegetables (Stauffer 1956:130). Soil fertility soon dropped, as little fertiliser was used and as many as four crops were harvested in a single year (Stauffer 1956:130). Despite a considerable drop in yield per acre by the end of 1945, and crop losses due to floods, total production was still high. Between 1 May 1944 and 30 September 1946, 11,000,000 lb of fresh fruit and vegetables were raised at Ilu Farm (Stauffer (1956:130), approximately ten tons of produce per day.

Among the produce grown were cucumbers, corn, egg-plants, water-melons, pepper, radishes, carrots, Chinese cabbages, tomatoes, onions and pumpkins. The hospitals on the plains received first priority, followed by troops on Guadalcanal and in the Western Solomons.

This high degree of productivity demanded heavy capitalisation as well as the provision of a reliable supply of water during the dry mid-year months. Water was pumped

from the Ñalimbiu and conveyed by pipes to various parts of the farm. The financial cost of the enterprise far outweighed the returns. However, it was not a commercial undertaking: the aim was to provide fresh vegetables to boost troop morale. Its success was due to a combination of factors, including expert supervision, modern mechanical equipment, a sizeable tract of fertile land, and a large number of labourers.

After February 1945, as the number of troops throughout the Solomons steadily decreased, the acreage cultivated on Guadalcanal fell. By June 1945 only 425 acres near the present-day Ilu Farm were still under cultivation (Stauffer 1956:132).

Marching Rule and development of the plains

Solomon Islanders had a dramatic and intensive experience of European material goods and ideas during the Allied occupation from 1942 to 1945. American troops were generous with their money and goods, and the Tadhimboko today describe the Americans they met during the war as 'very kind people' (see Plate 3.2). These experiences

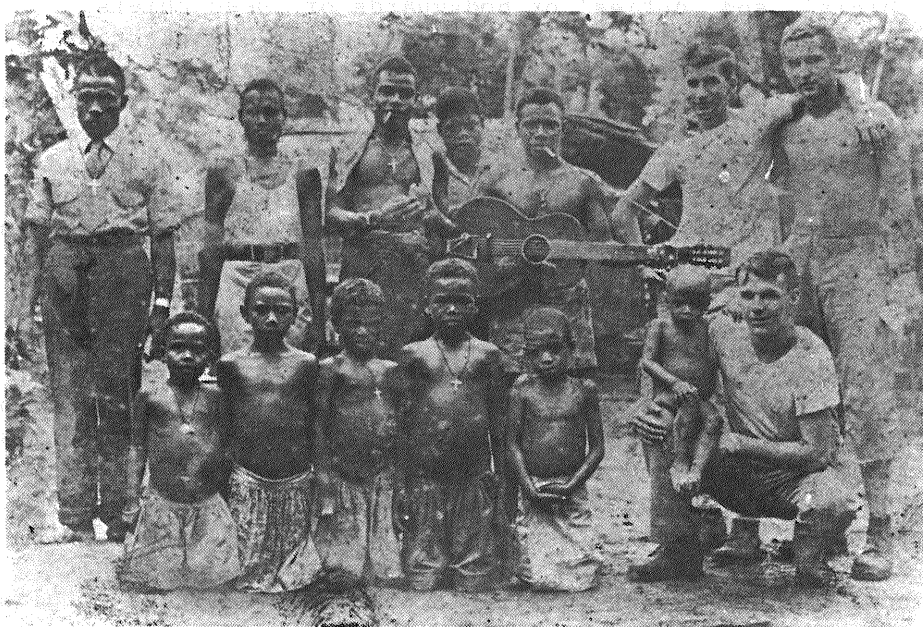


Photo: Bainivalu, Gorabau village

Plate 3.2. '...the Americans are kind people': a group of Tadhimboko with United States military men in World War II

were in marked contrast to their master-servant relationship with Europeans during the pre-war period. Some American military men may have fanned the flames of discontent among Solomon Islanders, but discontent and resentment were already there: Melanesian experience during the war emphasised and brought into sharp focus their unsatisfactory pre-war conditions. Naturally there was a desire to improve their lot.

The Marching Rule movement had its origins probably in 1945 among Malaitans employed in the Labour Corps and Melanesians living in close contact with American troops. Initially it attempted to reorganise basic social and political organs along lines familiar to Melanesians; later a 'cargo cult' ideology emerged among its adherents, who refused to co-operate with, or participate in, any European enterprise. It was most popular during 1946-49 when it had supporters in Malaita, Central and Eastern Districts, and Santa Isabel. The movement showed a remarkable capacity for organisation, which was along military lines. On Malaita, for example, a governing body of nine chiefs, each autonomous in his own area, met frequently to discuss matters of policy. Below these 'head chiefs' were 'full chiefs', 'leader chiefs', 'farmer chiefs', and 'duties' or bodyguards of 'head chiefs'. Marching Rule villages were picketed day and night by 'duties'. 'Farmer chiefs' supervised work on communal gardens. The movement had quasi-nationalist and political motivations: it aimed to re-examine traditional customs, and create strong leadership and discipline for its adherents by fostering anti-European sentiments. At the same time there was a strong desire for material progress associated with better schools, hospitals and imported goods.

Marching Rule was the expression of the Solomon Islander's attempt to improve, in his own way and within the limits of his own experience, his conditions of living. Melanesians had become used to earning high money incomes during the war and when it ended they demanded wages at the war-time rate of \$24 per month (Belshaw 1947:187-93). European planters were not able or willing to meet this demand, in view of the dilapidated condition of their copra estates. The result was a drastic shortage of plantation labour. Hence planters were slow in resuming copra production until Marching Rule had weakened sufficiently to allow Melanesians in need of cash to offer their services without fear of intimidation.

In the process of reorganisation inherent in the Marching Rule, large villages were formed along the lines of military camps. Interior villagers moved down to the coast. Villages were well planned and neatly laid out. Houses formed a regular pattern of three to five rows. Because of their larger size, Marching Rule villages could marshal a greater labour force than pre-war villages. This labour force was organised on a collective basis, rather than according to the old system of gardening based on the nuclear family. Members of the new village worked together on communal Marching Rule farms where the people were organised into 'labour battalions'. Huge areas were cleared and food gardens cultivated. In some cases communal gardens covered eight to ten acres. It was hoped that eventually everybody would be fed from these farms. No doubt the leaders of the movement, Jacob Vouza in particular, had seen the success of the United States Army farm at Ilu, and attempted to emulate it in their own agricultural organisation. However, they were handicapped by limited financial and technical resources, and food crops only were cultivated.

As the movement developed, it set up its own courts and appointed its own judges in opposition to those created by the Local Government Authority. By the end of 1947 complaints of false imprisonment and highhandedness by Marching Rule leaders and threats of intimidation persuaded the Government that its policy of tolerance and guidance was no longer appropriate. Leaders of the movement were arrested, tried and imprisoned. This did much to discredit the organisation and support for it weakened considerably. When the movement fell into disrepute many communal gardens rapidly deteriorated, and today there is little visible sign of old Marching Rule gardens. Only the memory of them lingers on, in a subdued fashion.

Resumption of economic activities

Because of the unsettled internal situation immediately after the war and the labour shortage, as well as the non-payment of war damage compensation to planters¹ and the

¹ War damage compensation paid to the Solomons was retained by the Government which thought that the amount was small and in the long run would be better spent if kept as a special fund to finance specific public projects such as the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board.

poor state of the plantations themselves, planters were slow to resume copra production. LPPL did not resume control and operation of its Guadalcanal estates until 1951-52; and J.C.C. Williamson commenced copra production on Berande at about the same time.

During the past twenty years there has been very little fresh planting of coconuts: all the bearing palms range in age from fifty to sixty years. This is a major cause of declining yield. Destruction by coconut pests and the war has reduced the area of bearing palms. Today Berande's 800 acres of coconuts produce about 240 tons of copra annually. This gives a yield of six cwt per acre per annum which is about the same as pre-war. Premature nutfall is still prevalent and the potential yield is probably much higher. At Kukum, Lunga and Tenaru, yields declined between 1931 and 1940 due largely to early nutfall, and at Tenaru it was so serious that the plantation was closed in 1939. After the war these three estates were seriously overgrown with weeds and a number of blocks were heavily infested with Amblyopelta (Brown 1957:6). The control of Amblyopelta, although not complete, has been partially successful. The infested areas have been cleared and the joint yield of the three estates has risen considerably above the pre-war level to stabilise at more than five cwt per acre per annum (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6

Copra yields per acre at LPPL estates on the Guadalcanal
Plains at selected dates

Year	Cwt per acre per annum	
	Lunga*	Ruavatu
1935	4.05	7.33
1936	3.73	7.54
1937	3.35	6.27
1953	5.50	1.50
1954	7.00	1.40
1955	6.60	3.00
1961	5.65	8.09
1962	5.75	6.68
1963	5.64	6.74

* Includes Kukum, Lunga and Tenaru estates.

Sources: Lever Brothers, Sydney, for 1935-37 figures; Brown (1957:3-8) for 1953-55 figures; field survey for 1961-63 figures.

An alternative opportunity for Melanesians to earn money during 1950-53 was scrap-metal collection for South Pacific Traders and K.H.D. Hay Pty Ltd, for whom the plains people operated as contractors. It was difficult and at times dangerous work but wages were higher than pre-war rates: individual labourers earned \$14 to \$20 per month, without rations. The entire labour operation was organised and supervised by the Tadhimboko themselves; the expatriate firms were involved only in the payment and export of the 'produce'. From the Melanesian point of view, this was a satisfactory and even popular working arrangement.

After 1953 the people had to look for other avenues of earning cash. Locally, plantation rehabilitation was beginning to gather momentum. Honiara was growing and provided a market for garden produce. However, the latter source of cash was not at first available to local producers, chiefly because labour rations were still imported from overseas and Government initially took little interest in Melanesian agriculture on the plains.

Government agriculture, 1945-55

When the United States Army left Guadalcanal in 1946, Ilu Farm was turned over to the British civil administration. For the next three years Ilu was the headquarters of the Department of Agriculture.¹ Six of the seven expatriate staff in the Department of Agriculture during 1946 were stationed at Ilu.² Between 1945 and 1948 Ilu functioned under great difficulty, and this may have contributed to the lack, at that time, of a clearly formulated policy on its future role. There were always staff shortages, both expatriate and locally trained. For example, there was no mechanic at Ilu during most of 1946.³ Overseas shipping difficulties delayed essential equipment. From August to October 1945 the United States Army planted about 300 acres of rice at Ilu. The crop grew well and there was hope for a heavy yield. But early in 1946 about

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1949-50', p.4, typescript.

² BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1946', p.1.

³ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1946', p.1.

half the area cultivated was attacked by locust; the spraying equipment had not arrived and much of the crop was lost.¹ During 1946, 623 acres of rice were sown at Ilu. This crop matured well. However, essential harvesting equipment failed to arrive on time and a large part of the crop was lost because of inability to harvest; when equipment did arrive heavy rainfall delayed harvesting.

Ilu supplied rice seeds to interested Melanesian growers; 3,745 lb were distributed in 1946, mainly in Malaita.² Lack of staff and the shortage of internal shipping prevented close supervision of and advice to local planters and much of this rice was never harvested; that which was harvested and offered for hulling in 1946 (13,482 lb) produced only 6,867 lb of rice - and out-turn of about 50 per cent - because much of it had not been properly cleaned.

Ilu also supplied some livestock, particularly pigs, to interested villagers between 1945 and 1948. In 1946, for example, 48 pigs were sold.³ However, the demand for breeding stock was far greater than the supply. Although the pig-breeding section of Ilu was relatively successful during this time, the whole farm operation was geared towards rice production which, the Government hoped, would make the Solomons self-sufficient in rice at an early date.

During 1948 it was proposed to make Ilu Farm the country's chief agricultural demonstration and experimental unit. An application for financial assistance from Commonwealth Development and Welfare funds of \$62,500 was submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the end of that year and approval for an initial period of three years was granted in April 1949. Although Ilu Farm was established mainly for demonstration and experimental purposes, it was also intended to produce cash crops and livestock. The two major objectives were: (i) the improvement of native agricultural practice; and (ii) the development of the Guadalcanal grass plains by mechanised cultivation in order to demonstrate (a) the

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1946', p.2.

² BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1946', p.3.

³ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1946', p.4.

feasibility of the early production of foodstuffs including rice, roots, ground nuts, vegetables, poultry and meat, (b) the economic practicability of farming the grass plains, and (c) the encouragement of Melanesian settlement on the plains, and the co-operative use of machinery and implements.¹ Thus it was hoped that Ilu would operate as a model mixed-farm supplying to interested persons the planting materials and breeding stock already successfully tested under local conditions.

It was originally expected that, in order for Ilu to fulfil these objectives, 1,555 acres of Melanesian land would be required. This acreage comprised the bulk of the land cultivated by the United States Army in 1943-45. The negotiations between Government and the Melanesian owners were long and involved; they were not finalised until the original Ilu scheme itself was discontinued in 1955. At first Government wanted to purchase the land in fee simple for \$1 to \$2 per acre, but complete alienation was unacceptable to the owners particularly after they realised the true extent of alienation at Tenavatu and Muvia; the latter, they contended, had never been relinquished. However, they were prepared to lease the area to Government. When Government reviewed the long-term future of Ilu in 1953, no step had been taken to lease the area. When the scheme was abandoned in 1955, Government indicated that a much smaller area - 163 acres - would be needed for agricultural experiments and demonstrations. The lease of such an area by the Government was acceptable to the Tadhimboko owners.

During the first eighteen months of the scheme, work on building stockyards and fences proceeded well, but cropping results were poor. The original projection was for the cultivation of up to 300 acres per annum including cover and green manure crops. In 1949 only 173 acres were cropped, and in 1950 only 50 acres.² The initial cropping programme, therefore, had to be abandoned. On the livestock side, the original scheme provided for the import of 50 head of cattle in the first year and 200 in the third year,³ but these targets were never achieved.

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1949-50', p.3.

² BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1949-50', p.4.

³ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1949-50', p.5.

The reasons for the failure of Ilu to measure up to expectations are many and varied. Staff shortages were always critical: the post of assistant manager was filled for only eleven months during 1949-54, and there was no mechanic from October 1951 until the end of 1954.¹ Until 1954 much of the machinery used at Ilu was salvaged from the United States Army and spare parts and new equipment did not arrive when required. Much-needed rice seeds also did not arrive in time for planting. The fifty head of cattle ordered from Fiji in 1949 were not delivered until August 1951, although buildings and stockyards had been constructed. Added to these difficulties was the fact that by 1951 equipment and stock costs far exceeded 1948 estimates.

Despite the approval of two further supplementary grants to purchase more stock and equipment, it was clear by 1952 that the Ilu scheme was becoming uneconomic. Reliable sources show that income from the sale of farm produce between January 1949 and March 1952 was sufficient to offset only about 14 per cent of total expenditure during that period. It was also estimated that total income from the scheme from 1949 to 1956 would offset only about 20 per cent of total expenditure during that time. Thus the Ilu scheme became a dismal economic failure. As well as staff shortages and lack of equipment, less obvious factors involved in its failure were lack of precise knowledge about the physical attributes and potential of the land, the relative unattractiveness to Europeans of the Solomons after 1945 (in terms of isolation, high living costs, and political instability), and the apparently overambitious nature of the original scheme.

The United States Army had demonstrated that a wide variety of vegetable produce could be grown successfully in the area; and this was possible during the war. Army agriculture was intensive and continuous, but soil fertility rapidly deteriorated and its success was a poor indicator of what could be achieved during peace-time. However, the Department of Agriculture adopted the view that since the United States Army had demonstrated the practicability of farming the grassland soils, there was no need to examine their potential and limitations in the light of its own agricultural programme. The havoc

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1949-50', and Annual Reports for 1951-54 (1952-55).

created by plant pests on various crops showed itself between 1945 and 1948, as did the unexpected spells of wet weather at harvest time. Such basic factors as soil limitations, pest hazards, and changes in weather were not sufficiently understood when the Ilu scheme was being planned. The basic information was simply not available. The pre-war Department of Agriculture was small, and its staff preoccupied with the problem of early nutfall. The ideas embodied in the Ilu scheme represented a bold, but ill-considered, departure from pre-war agricultural practices.

Under such circumstances it was perhaps too much to expect even the successful establishment of Ilu as a viable commercial enterprise and demonstration farm during the three-year period initially estimated, let alone the improvement of Melanesian agriculture on the adjacent plains. It was planned to encourage the co-operative use of implements and machinery, but far from inspiring the confidence needed to secure such co-operation, Government undermined the goodwill of the Tadhimboko by its handling of the land alienation question. Plans were made to distribute livestock and new crop strains to the plains people, and beyond, and there was certainly a demand for such assistance. However, no steps were taken to educate Melanesian farmers in the new forms of husbandry.

The early period at Ilu did little but demonstrate the possibilities of mechanised crop production in the plains environment. Later the emphasis in production shifted to the growing of root crops and vegetables for Honiara market¹ and the Ilu enterprise had an important demonstration effect on Melanesian farmers. But there was little attempt to make the scheme function in relation to the physical and social environment, and little attempt - or even realisation of a need - to generate a viable Melanesian commercial economy to replace the diminishing scrap-metal business.

At the time Ilu was planned and organised, Kukum agricultural station was also established to perform similar functions but in a different ecological setting, for Kukum had steeper slopes and less fertile soils than Ilu. Kukum was also expected to become the main quarantine station of

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports for 1951-53 (1952-54).

the Solomons. As events proved, there was little livestock to quarantine. The efforts of the Department of Agriculture were diffused over two farms performing similar functions and, with staff shortages, concentration on a single project might have been more worthwhile.

All these factors led to the decision to lease Ilu Farm to private enterprise. In 1955 A.R. Dethridge acquired a ninety-nine-year lease on Ilu, but he found that it was in a poor state, and was unable to obtain the necessary capital for a successful operation. Hence he was forced to withdraw from Ilu and in 1956 the lease was transferred to K.H.D. Hay Pty Ltd which has operated the property ever since.

Chapter 4

Population and settlement

The size of the present population

Today the Guadalcanal Plains have an estimated population of about 2,800, or approximately 17 per cent of the total population of Guadalcanal. Approximately 71 per cent of the Guadalcanal Plains population are permanently resident in the villages of the plains.¹ This proportion is about equally shared between Tadhimboko East and West. The remainder can be conveniently called non-village population - labourers and their families permanently resident in plantations and other work-places, children in boarding schools, and patients in the one leper hospital in the area.

The population of the plains has undoubtedly increased since the census of the Solomons in 1931, a clear reversal of the decline which observers during the first two decades of this century predicted would lead ultimately to the disappearance of the Melanesian people (Rivers 1922). However, the extent of this increase is not clear. The figures in Table 4.1 suggest an average increase of about

¹ For the purposes of this study, a villager who resides permanently in a village but works either full-time or part-time at a nearby plantation is regarded as a village resident. Only a few Melanesians of the plains go daily from their villages to work on plantations and at other European enterprises. These include three men employed by the Solomon Islands Timber Co. at Tenavatu, one each from Suagi and Gorabau and four from Tau working at Berande plantation, and ten men from Reko who were employed for a time as 'brushers' at Ruavatu plantation. It is only when the whole family moves to a plantation or other place of work within the plains that it ceases to be regarded as village population.

Table 4.1

Tadhimboko village population at five dates between 1931 and 1966

Village	1931			Nov.-Dec. 1953 Total	Feb. 1955			Sept. 1957			1966		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Tadhimboko West													
Gaimali	19	27	46		25	23	48				18	28	46
Gilutae											13	14	27
Sopapera											10	8	18
Abuabili											9	10	19
Makile	16	20	36		40	36	76				24	29	53
Ravu											20	11	31
Nalimera											9	11	20
Susui											17	11	28
Oba											4	5	9
Selaghoghoru											4	7	11
Nalivovo											6	4	10
Sape											6	3	9
Taraia											7	4	11
Komuporo					24	24	48				11	7	18
Komunivele											12	9	21
Papagu	27	28	55		22	21	43				37	27	64
Kalitonia	13	14	27								12	7	19
Koli	15	21	36		19	21	40				26	36	62
Tumurora	25	28	53		26	30	56				16	23	39
Volonavua	39	16	55										
Bebe					12	12	24				5	8	13
Marui					20	15	35						
Komuvaolu											21	19	40
Kokomu											26	30	56
Tatau/Komidi											6	4	10
Parisisi											6	6	12
Tenahulu											38	40	78
Tetere	26	38	64										
Gorabau				52	35	34	69				28	39	67
Suagi	38	47	85	124	66	50	116	74	62	136	69	78	147
Roroni				118	54	50	104				62	60	122
Binu	20	20	40										
Komunikau											23	18	41
Total	238	259	497	294	343	316	659	74	62	136	545	556	1,101

Tadhimboko East

Talaura I	18	21	39	73	43	32	75				10	11	21
Talaura II											18	21	39
Vugalonga								51	51	102	13	11	24
Nalikoba											3	3	6
Bebe								28	28	56	30	36	66
Vura					21	32	53	20	28	48	25	20	45
Tumutabuto				51				28	26	54			
Tau					28	18	46	26	22	48	30	19	49
Kaio	3	11	14		52	34	86	30	26	56	23	29	52
Babala	12	21	33	186							11	6	17
Legalau					21	17	38	17	18	35	18	13	31
Tadhimboko													
Tumubosa	27	26	53	86	51	39	90	67	52	119	31	40	71
Uni											17	11	28
Sirootala											13	4	17
Sakevolo								35	27	62	10	13	23
Taivu	13	15	28	75	47	39	86				11	13	24
Tenagau											6	9	15
Mataga											15	11	26
Tiviale	18	24	42	17	13	10	23	29	28	57	7	12	19
Tina	11	13	24										
Korave											1	1	2
Sadeleni											14	10	24
Aroaro											14	3	17
Karekoka					8	6	14				21	24	45
Bokoagau	22	28	50	54	21	25	46				38	39	77
Nalivovo											8	3	11
Tabunimane	22	21	43								19	21	40
Komumataga											21	11	32
Borakoko											6	9	15
Reko	33	26	59					48	32	80	29	30	59
Tutumu											5	6	11
Begotathi					29	31	60	26	24	50	10	11	21
Salevana				44							6	7	13
Kakalao				34	13	14	27	14	18	32	9	19	28
Teatupa	24	19	43	48	26	19	45	33	22	55	17	12	29
Komukama				65	33	35	68	41	38	79	36	37	73
Dadae											5	10	15
Komuvaolu											14	16	30
Tavugianuru				38	16	17	33	12	14	26			
Tenakago				26	18	8	26	16	9	25			
Veragono											16	18	34
Tathimane				63	31	28	59	26	32	58			
Tuavarava	17	11	28	(Vura)									
Komurarata	17	7	24	(Tau)									
Total	237	243	480	860	471	404	875	547	495	1,042	580	569	1,149
Grand total	475	502	977	1,154	814	720	1,534	621	557	1,178	1,125	1,125	2,250

Sources: Census of the BSIP (1931) for 1931 figures; yaws pilot survey (1953) for 1953 figures; headcount, Guadalcanal Council (1955) for 1955 figures; yaws eradication campaign (1956-58) for 1957 figures; and field survey for 1966 figures.

3.5 per cent per annum between 1931 and 1966 in the village population of Tadhimboko West alone. In view of the probable incompleteness of the 1931 census,¹ this figure seems far too high. An average rate of increase of 1 to 2 per cent is more likely. It is highly probable, too, that the post-war rate of increase has been much higher than that of the pre-war years when epidemics of measles and dysentery were frequent and endemic diseases widespread.²

It is probable that Tadhimboko West almost doubled its village population in the decade after 1955, mainly through natural increase and a net inward migration. Migration into the area has been most important since the mid-1950s, particularly of Malaitans. Moreover, residents in a large village in the interior of Tadhimboko East migrated down to the plains in Tadhimboko West in 1958. Yet perhaps the major single cause of population increase since the mid-1950s is the general improvement in health and medical facilities throughout the Solomons: yaws has been eradicated;³ access to the Central Hospital at Honiara has improved greatly;⁴ Tetera Leprosarium provides out-patient treatment to many people; and recently the Guadalcanal Council began a rural health clinic at Binu to serve both coastal and bush villages on the plains.

In Tadhimboko East the village population has increased only slightly since the mid-1950s because there it is more difficult to secure proper medical care and there is a net outward migration.

Although the population of the plains has increased since the 1950s, the rate of increase varies between villages. Also, some villages have experienced a marked decline. Table 4.2 shows the extent of population change between 1955 and 1966 in some Tadhimboko West villages. The greatest relative increases have occurred at Koli and

¹ See Appendix A.

² BSIP Annual Report for 1931 (1932:5).

³ See Appendix A.

⁴ In Roroni, for example, 2 of the children born between 1957 and 1961 were born at Honiara Central Hospital and 15 were born at home; between 1961 and 1966 the numbers were 8 and 12 respectively.

Papagu, to which some pre-war residents and their dependants who resided elsewhere in 1955 have returned. A net inward migration from the coastal villages of Tadhimboko East and natural increase are largely responsible for the increase at Suagi. At Roroni both natural increase and inward migration from other parts of Tadhimboko West have been influential. Makile, Bebe and Tumurora have experienced the greatest relative decreases, through outward migration to other parts of Tadhimboko West. The present residents of Maluka, Tutuva, Ravu and Ñalimera lived at Makile in 1955. Bebe's and Tumurora's losses comprise the new village of Komuvaolu, established after 1959. A similar pattern of population reshuffle has occurred in Tadhimboko East since 1955. For example, some residents of Teatupa accompanied the Tenahulu villagers in their migration from Tathimane to the present site in 1959. During 1962 the Protestant section of Talaura II moved further east and established the village of Vugalonga.

Table 4.2

Population change in selected Tadhimboko West
villages between 1955 and 1966

Village	1955	1966	Change	Percentage change
Makile	76	53	-23	-30.26
Gaimali	48	46	- 2	- 4.16
Papagu	43	64	+21	+48.83
Koli	40	62	+22	+55.00
Bebe	24	13	-11	-45.83
Tumurora	56	39	-17	-30.35
Gorabau	69	67	- 2	- 2.89
Suagi	116	147	+31	+26.72
Roroni	104	122	+18	+17.30
Total	576	613	+37	+ 6.42
Average	64	68	+ 4	+ 0.71

Sources: Headcount, Guadalcanal Council (1955) for 1955 figures; field survey for 1966 figures.

Age-sex structure and the potential for increase

Fig. 4.1 illustrates the age-sex structure of the village population of Tadhimboko West. Males predominate over females in the age groups 25-29 years and above. The excess of females over males is most pronounced in the age groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 years, largely because males

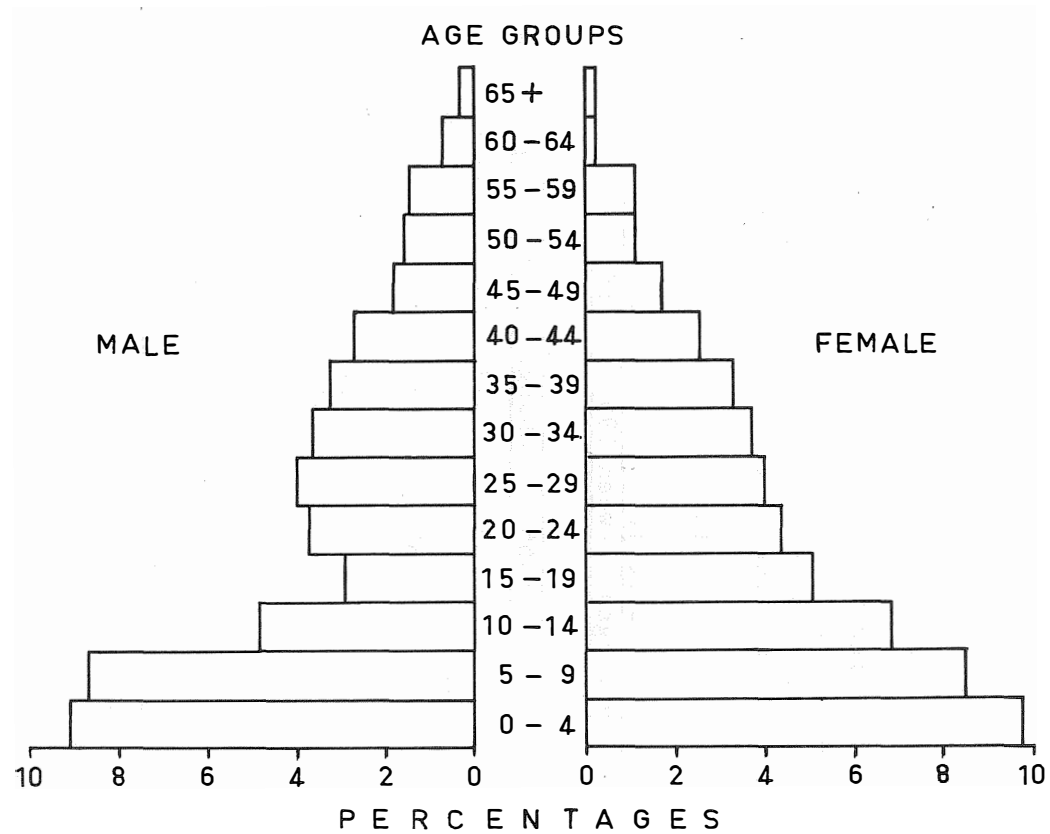


Fig. 4.1. Age-sex structure of Tadhimboko West population, 1966

aged 10-14 years and some of those aged 15-19 are attending boarding schools,¹ while the age group 20-24 years and those 15-19 years out of school are employed outside Tadhimboko West, mostly in Honiara, Santa Isabel and the Russell Islands.

The population of Tadhimboko West is a youthful one, as Table 4.3 shows. These figures ensure a rapid rate of

Table 4.3

Percentage of population aged 0-14 years in
Tadhimboko West villages, 1966

<u>Village</u>	<u>Total population</u>	<u>Percentage aged 0-14 years</u>
Roroni	122	47.54
Komunikau	41	48.78
Gorabau	67	37.31
Suagi	147	47.62
Tenahulu	78	48.72
Kokomu*	68	51.47
Tumurora	39	46.15
Bebe	13	23.07
Komuvaolu	40	45.00
Tatau	10	30.00
Koli	62	54.83
Papagu	64	78.12
Kalitonia	19	47.36
Komuporo	18	44.44
Komunivele	21	57.14
Ñalimbiu**	79	64.55
Gaimali	46	41.30
Makile	53	47.17
Gilutae	27	44.44
Malaitans***	87	41.38
Total	1,101	Average 47.72

* Includes Parisisi's 12 persons.

** Includes Tadhimboko living on both sides of the Ñalimbiu River.

*** Includes Malaitan migrants at Susui, Ravu, Abuabili, Taraia and Oba.

¹ Such as Kulu in Tadhimboko East, Tenahulu and Najilagu in Tadhimboko West, and St Joseph's College at Tenaru; others go further afield to Visale, Maravovo and Pawa. At present, a lengthy formal education is still largely the prerogative of men; comparatively few young girls from Tadhimboko proceed beyond the village-school level which would entail travel beyond the region.

natural increase in the future, provided there is no large-scale outward migration, which appears unlikely. Little is known about fertility and mortality rates in the Solomons, but it is reasonable to assume that, as in other developing Pacific countries, mortality is falling while fertility is at a high level. Within the next decade 5.4 per cent of the total population (all females) will pass out of their reproductive span, while about 15 per cent of the present population take their place. The certainty of future increases is reinforced by the improvements in health and living conditions accompanying the present campaign to eradicate malaria.

Population distribution and population density

Almost 80 per cent of the total plains population live on, or within one mile of, the coast. The remainder live by, or close to, water-courses traversing the plains (see Fig. 4.2). That this distribution pattern is a long-established one can be seen in a comparison with the apparent population distribution in 1931 (see Figs. 4.3 and 4.4). The close association of the population with sea and stream is common throughout the Pacific Islands, for sea and stream supplement a largely vegetable diet. However, the lack of reefs in Tadhimboko, and the consequent scarcity of sea foods, contribute to the insignificant role of the sea here, in comparison with areas such as Visale, to the west of Honiara. Tadhimboko men and women are very rarely seen making their way to the sea with spears, nets, hooks and lines, although they do fish by the river banks. In the past, distant and extended fishing expeditions were undertaken, but they are rare today.

A probable factor in this population distribution is the significant element in the contemporary population of the plains which is composed of people whose ancestors came as warriors from Nggela and Savo. They fought, defeated and pushed back the original inhabitants, and tended to settle close to the coast. Today, however, this element is thoroughly fused through intermarriage with people from the interior and other parts of Guadalcanal.

There is also a close correlation between population distribution and forest land. Villages are established either on forest land or at the junction of forest and grass because people rely heavily on the soil and other

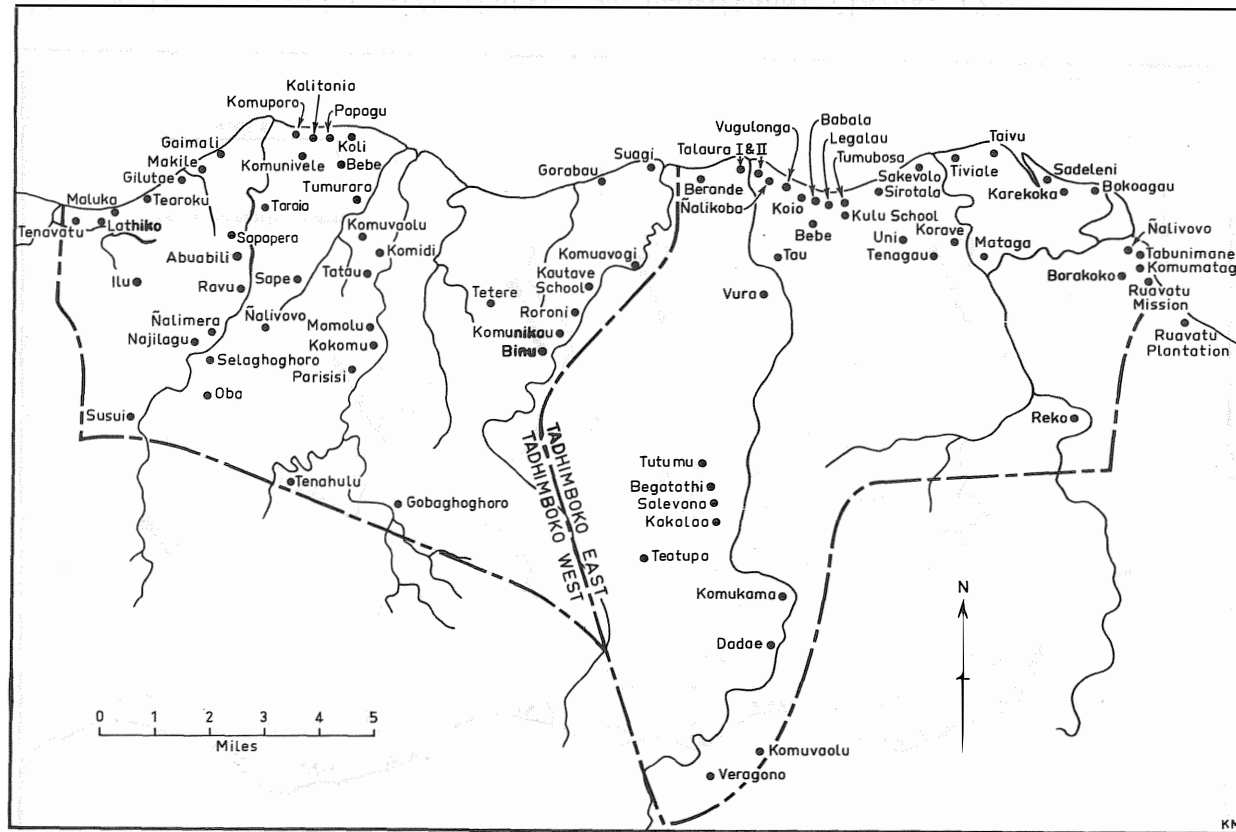


Fig. 4.2. Settlements on Guadalcanal Plains, 1966

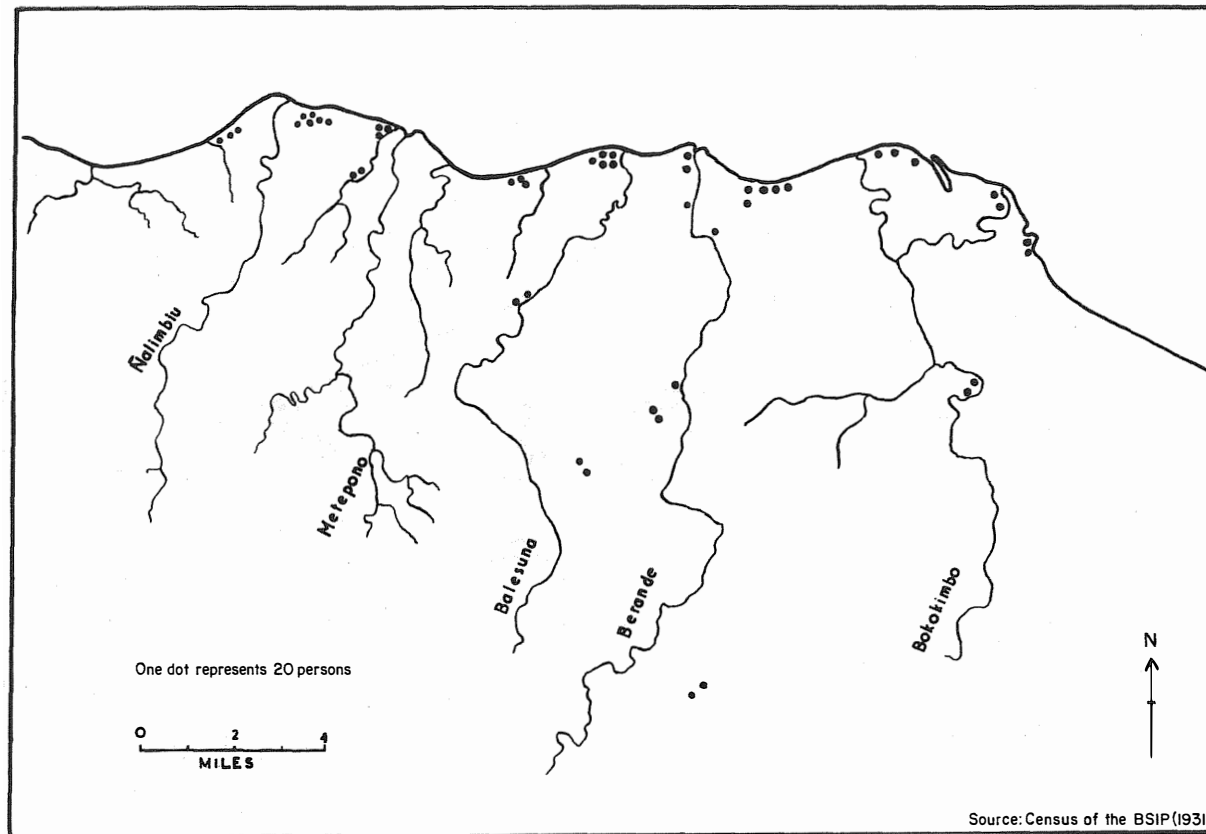


Fig. 4.3. Population distribution on Guadalcanal Plains, 1931

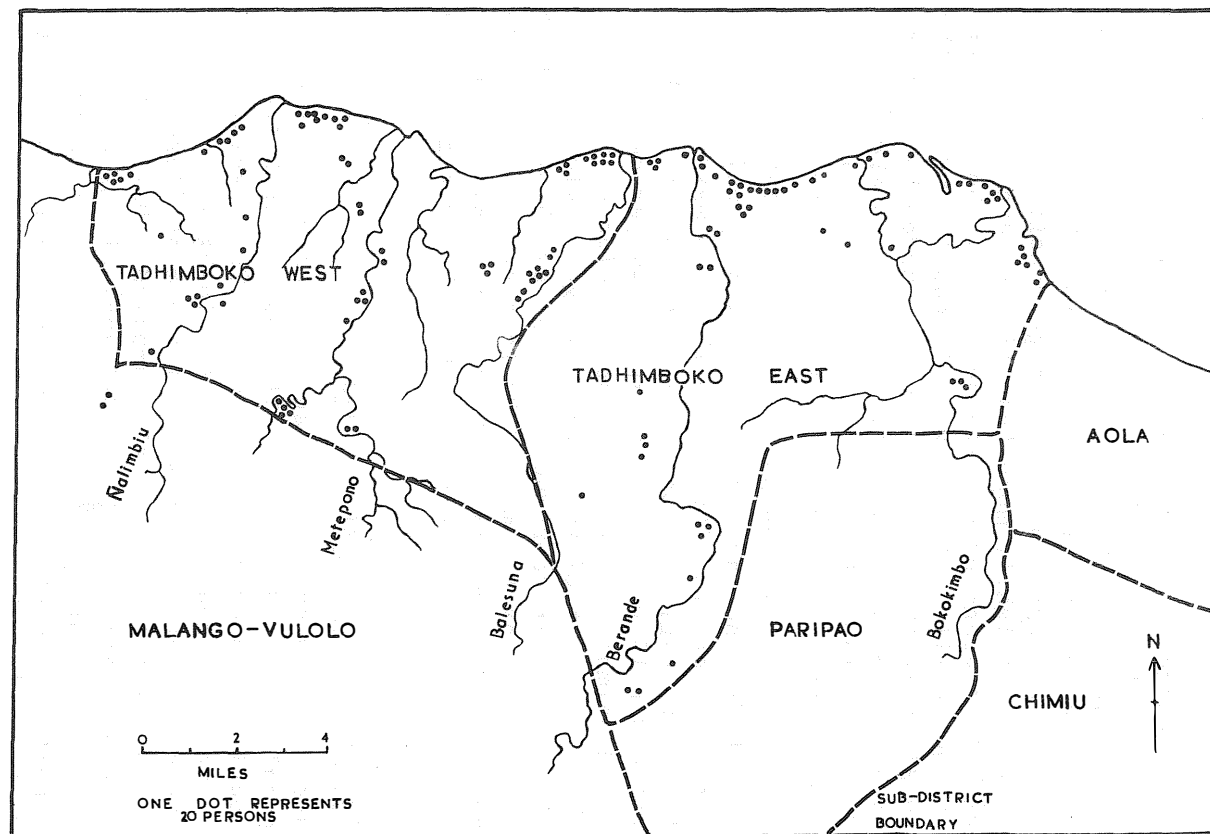


Fig. 4.4. Population distribution on Guadalcanal Plains, 1966

resources of the forest - its bush timber, thatch material, and edible wild vegetables and fruit. The grassland is avoided as a place of residence.

On the basis of the present estimated population of the Guadalcanal Plains, the area has an average population density of 24 persons per square mile,¹ with considerable variation throughout the plains. In Tadhimboko West, land alienation has left only about twenty-three square miles still under native tenure so it has an average density of 47 persons per square mile. The position at Suagi and Gorabau tends to approach this average density: 214 persons subsist on slightly more than five square miles of land, with an average population density of about 42 persons per square mile. This figure is doubled west of the Nalimbiu River in the triangular area bounded by Gilutae, Nalimera and Gaimali, where only about 2.5 square miles of land are available to 214 persons and there is an average population density of 85 persons per square mile.

The pressure of village population on available land will undoubtedly increase, particularly as population increases and there is little likelihood of mass outward migration. At Suagi and Gorabau 42 per cent of people are still under 15 years of age, as are 44 per cent at Gilutae and Gaimali. Moreover, the anticipated replacement of 5.4 per cent of the total village population (all women still in their reproductive span) by 15 per cent of the present total by the mid-1970s is certain to increase local population densities on the plains by as much as three to four times the overall Tadhimboko average during the same period.

Migration to the southeast in 1942

Japanese forces captured Tulagi and occupied northern Guadalcanal in May 1942. The following August United States marines landed at Tenaru Beach. The ensuing six months - until February 1943 when remaining Japanese forces were evacuated - saw some of the most fiercely contested battles in the Pacific campaign. During this period the population of the Guadalcanal Plains experienced a most violent upheaval; nothing similar in scale and intensity had ever occurred before. As the heaviest fighting took place between the Poha and Nalimbiu rivers, the people moved for refuge to the hills and bush of the

¹ This is about twice the average for the whole Solomons and three times that for Guadalcanal.

southeast, particularly around Kakalao, Teatupa and Kereura (see Fig. 4.5).

When Guadalcanal was finally under Allied control and construction of a huge transit camp began, vast stretches of land south of the plains were declared preparatory combat range areas (see Fig. 3.3). The Tadhimboko were told to move further to the southeast and they retreated to Komule which was considered reasonably safe from enemy molestation. Tadhimboko who joined the Labour Corps during 1943-45 came from that area. Life started afresh, but there was always an atmosphere of vigilance and anxiety.

The return west and to the coast

When Allied military personnel left in 1946, the Tadhimboko moved once more. Many people, particularly those whose old homes lay west of the Metepono, quickly returned to the coast to salvage whatever equipment they could from the remains of the military establishment. However, there was no pressing need for most to return to the ruins of pre-war villages which offered nothing for subsistence. Unlike the swift movement of people to the southeast in 1942, the return migration was slow, and there were a number of temporary stops. For instance, the pre-war occupants of Binu (now in Roroni) left Komule for Kakalao early in 1946. During the first half of 1947 they moved down to Tutumu where they spent the rest of that year.¹ Most of 1948 was spent at Paonadi, while Komuvatha was first started about the middle of 1949. The move to Roroni was not completed until early 1951.

Many pre-war residents of Koli, Papagu and Gaimali accompanied the Binu people in their westward migration. Some of them did not return to their old villages but chose to make Roroni their new home. Others returned to their old villages during 1958 and 1959.

Thus it was not until about 1950-51 that the population distribution of Tadhimboko West, and the plains generally, resembled that of the pre-war period. Although most pre-war village sites were reoccupied, some new ones were chosen: Roroni replaced Binu, Gorabau superseded Tetere, and Tumurora was resited some distance from its

¹ It was from that village that Jacob Vouza directed the Marching Rule on Guadalcanal.

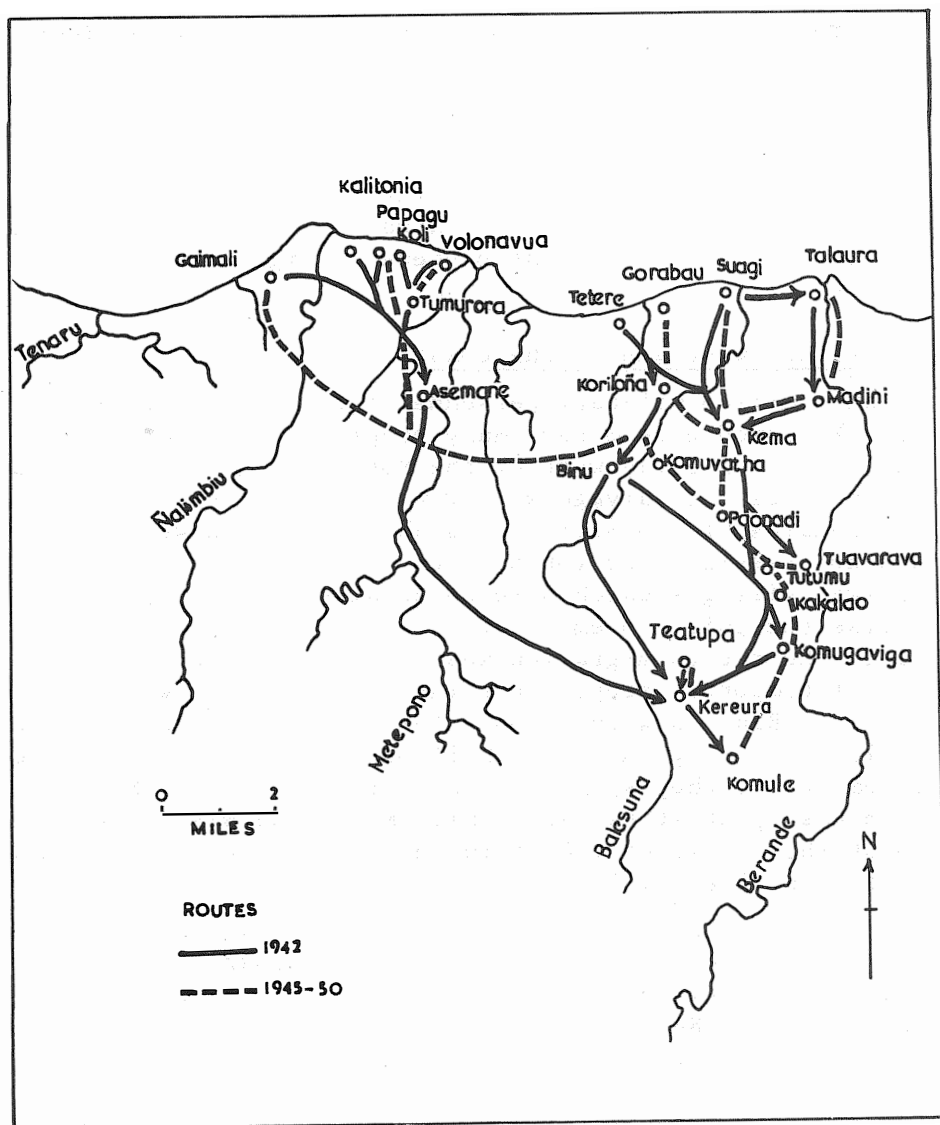


Fig. 4.5. Population migration on Guadalcanal Plains, 1952 and 1945-50

pre-war location. New hamlets such as Komunikau also sprang up during this westward migration.

Post-1950 population movement

Since 1950 two trends have been apparent in the distribution of the village population of Tadhimboko West, both involving the movement of people away from established villages: new villages have been started, and more individual settlements have sprung up. New villages were established when either residents of an old village dispersed to form a number of new settlements or a number of residents in one or more villages moved to a new site.

The clearest example of the break-up of a whole village is Volonavua, a pre-war village to which former residents returned after 1946. Both before and after the war, a number of people from Volonavua had been fatally attacked by crocodiles which infested the creeks south and east of the village, whose name itself means 'place of crocodiles'. Volonavua residents thus felt uneasy and insecure about the site, and the hurricane which struck northern Guadalcanal in January 1952 was the final blow. With no strand vegetation to protect the village from gale-force winds, houses and other buildings were completely destroyed and at least ninety people were left homeless. A group moved to Tumurora, while the remainder built temporary houses at Marui, north of Tumurora. Some of those who moved to Tumurora established the village of Bebe - about half-way between Koli and Tumurora - in 1953-54. The Bebe people found themselves some distance from their traditional gardening land south of Volonavua and along the left bank of the Metepono River; there was little available gardening land north of Bebe, and grass dominated the areas west and south. Associated with this apparent land shortage were social factors. A few Bebe residents voiced new and rival claims to land in the immediate vicinity of the village in opposition to some of their number. Relations became strained and five closely related Bebe households found themselves forced to move out. Komuvaolu was chosen as their new home because, according to their leader, that was their 'true' ancestral land. They were joined by a small group from Volonavua who had remained at Tumurora, while three households built houses at Tatau.

Marui proved to be more permanent than originally intended. It existed until about 1960 when the local big-man decided to move the village to his mamata land at

Kokomu. Marui residents, particularly those closely associated with the big-man, were also in conflict with some Tumurora residents, especially over the use of coconut groves in the area.

Gilutae is a post-1959 village whose four households had previously lived in three different villages. The local big-man - also the land-owner - resided at Komuporo before 1959. He had been informed by some Makile residents that a particular family in that village was advancing a rival claim to the ownership of Gilutae. The big-man's reaction was swift and decisive: he requested two household heads closely related to his wife and then living at Gaimali to help him establish the new village. At the same time he arranged for the marriage of a young man from Bebe in Tadhimboko East to a Gaimali woman. The new couple were obliged to reside at Gilutae.

Tenahulu is unique insofar as it involved the mass migration of a whole village. The Tenahulu occupied Tathimane on the left bank of the Berande River until 1959. Following an argument over the use of pig-feeding land in which the local big-man was opposed by the land-owning family resident in another village, the village was shifted down to the plains where the big-man claimed land-ownership rights.

Small isolated settlements in Tadhimboko West were established by individual families after 1954. Some of them have had their population augmented since then by the arrival of other households. Oba, Selaghoghoru, Ñalivovo, Sape, Ñalimera, Ravu and Parisisi lie within the block of land known as Muvia. Since 1948, when the Government acquired title to this land, the Tadhimboko had disputed the Crown's ownership rights, and were anxious to strengthen their claims to ownership by concrete evidence of use. Thus, one by one these places were occupied - Ravu in 1954, Ñalimera, Selaghoghoru and Oba in 1955, Parisisi in 1956, Sape and Ñalivovo in 1959. It is interesting that all the settlements and associated gardens utilised the forest land: the grassland was left untouched. Tadhimboko acts of occupation and use proceeded without interruption by Government. Government policy regarding the dispute over Muvia did not crystallise until 1965, and although it possessed a legal title to the land, it did not force the dispute into a court of law where it would have had a clear advantage.

Thus the decade after 1950 saw the establishment of new villages and individual settlements throughout Tad-

himboko West. Some dissatisfaction over the site of Volonavua had existed before the 1952 hurricane destroyed the village. The people then divided into two groups: one established a temporary settlement which proved more permanent than originally intended, while the other moved into an established village. Some of the latter group started a new village. Keen competition for resources inevitably strained relations. Dispersal of population and the consequent establishment of new villages followed. Individual settlements grew up mainly as a result of Tadhimboko anxiety to strengthen their claims to the ownership of disputed land. The individuals responsible have planted coconuts and in some places the new coconut groves are producing copra. These individual settlements are likely to remain a permanent component of the rural settlement scene.

Village size and morphology

Nucleated villages and dispersed hamlets are basic elements in the forms of settlement on the plains. They are generally small but vary widely in size. Korave, on the left bank of the Taivu River in Tadhimboko East, is a single-family settlement consisting of a man and his wife, while Suagi in Tadhimboko West, with 147 persons, is the largest village on the plains. Of the fifty-eight villages on the Guadalcanal Plains, only Suagi and Roroni have more than 120 persons each. The rest have less than 80 persons each.

The villages of Tadhimboko West have a total of 178 households,¹ ranging from 1 in individual settlements like Sape to 23 in Suagi, with a mean of 6. This low mean indicates the predominance of small hamlets in the settlement pattern of Tadhimboko West and the plains generally. The number of persons per household ranges from 1 to 13, with a mean of 6.1. The most common components are the nuclear family and the parents of one or both spouses. Only local big-men frequently support a household whose members are also drawn from elsewhere.

In most villages the houses are surrounded by trees and shrubs, either planted or nurtured, which give the village a wooded appearance. In Roroni kapok trees,

¹ A household is defined as a group of people who normally have their meals prepared from a common hearth.

betel palms and mango trees are very common. In the coastal villages such as Gorabau, coconut palms predominate.

Houses are usually arranged in two distinct rows, although this pattern is not immediately apparent everywhere. Normally the raised and floored sleeping-houses, either with or without a verandah, form one row. The kitchens comprise the second row, and are always built on ground level with no windows and high door sills. In a large village like Roroni, rows of kitchens and sleeping-houses comprise more than a single set (see Fig. 4.6). This distinctive pattern of village layout, apparently copied from the camp arrangement of Allied troops during 1943-45, was adopted during the Marching Rule period and has survived to this day.

Although the use of traditional materials in house construction is universal, non-traditional materials, particularly salvaged roofing iron and masonite boards, have their place also (see Plate 4.1). Their use is most striking in Tumorora, where the large Melanesian Mission church is built entirely of salvaged timber, masonite boards and old corrugated iron. Four other sleeping-houses in that village are constructed of the same materials. However, this air of 'modernity' in a sector of village life where traditional structures still predominate is not surprising for Tumorora is in the heart of the old scrap-metal collecting area. The Government and private enterprise utilised the best of what was left of the United States Army camp between Point Cruz and the Balesuna River, leaving, in most cases, only the concrete foundations. Today few Tadhimboko build their houses on these platforms. More common is the purchase of locally sawn timber to use as floors in raised sleeping-houses built largely of bush timber and sago thatch. Very few villagers own houses built entirely of non-traditional materials, and still fewer devote a sizeable proportion of their individual savings to modern housing. Yet the people of Suagi, Gorabau, Koli and Papagu are proud owners of churches built wholly of new imported material (see Plate 4.2). The villagers of Gaimali and Makile have been accumulating funds since about 1956 for the construction of a new church.

The choice of village site

The main factors involved in the choice of sites are the desire to make the best possible use of available

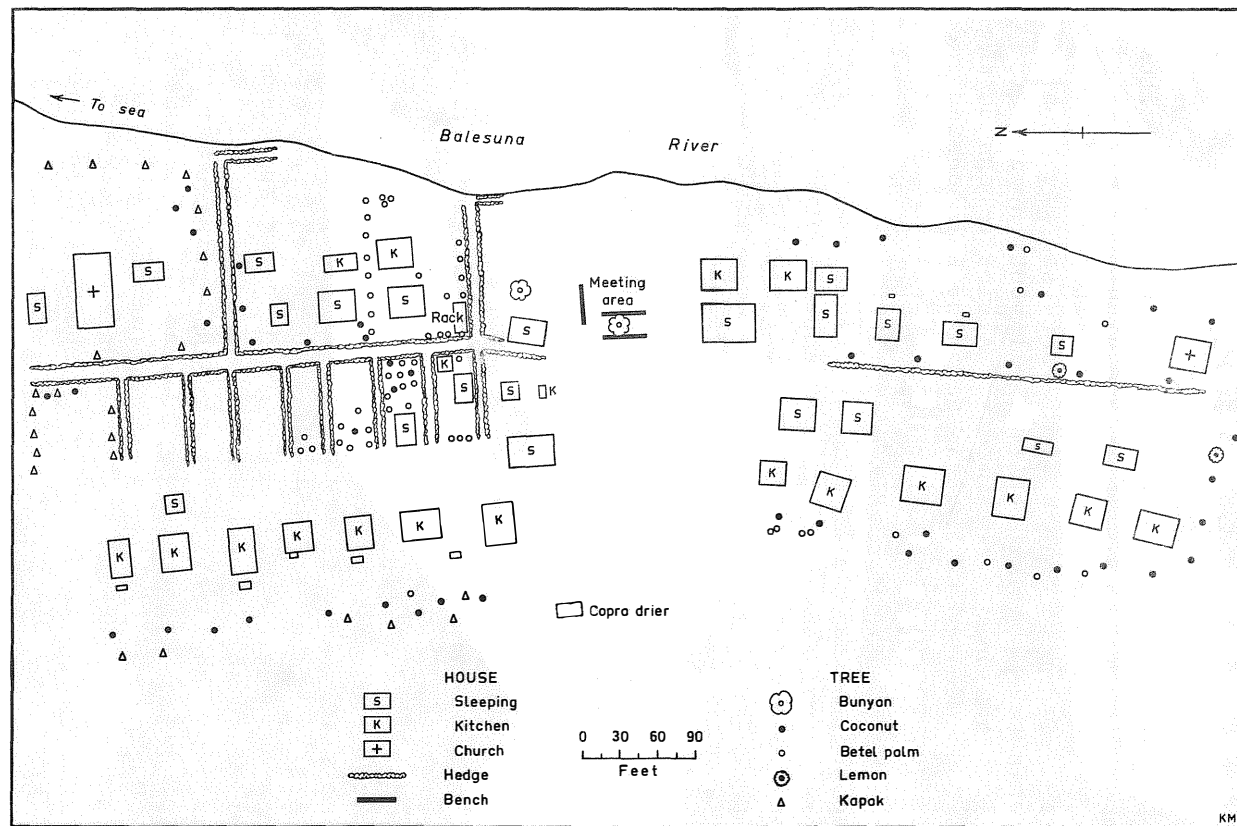


Fig. 4.6. Roroni village layout, 1966

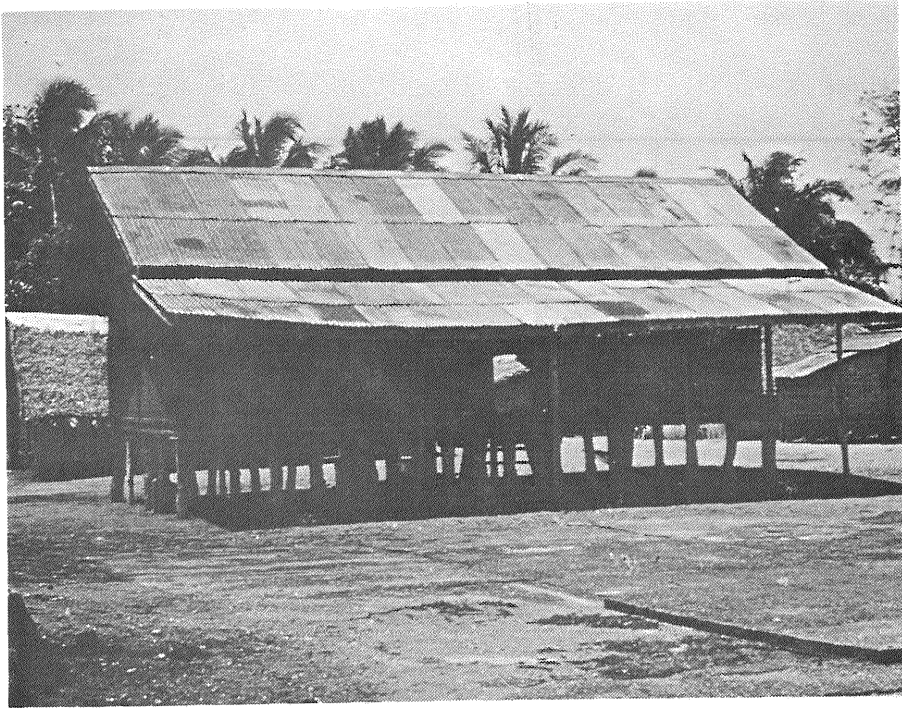


Plate 4.1. A raised sleeping-house built entirely of salvaged material

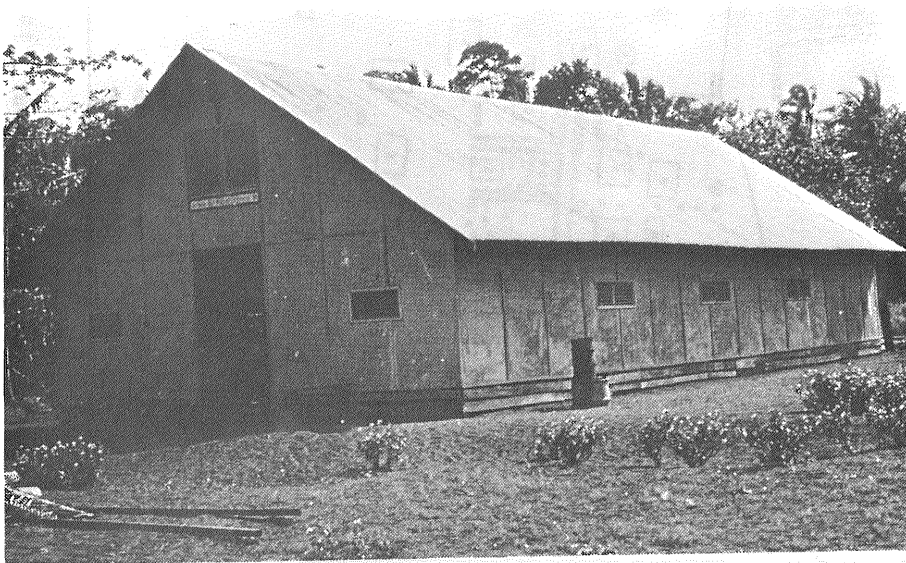


Plate 4.2. The Melanesian Mission church at Gorabau is built almost entirely of imported material

resources in the light of contemporary knowledge and technology, and the desire to live on, or as close as possible to, the ancestral land. In many instances both factors are involved and it is not always possible to determine which is the more important.

Until 1951 Roroni residents lived at Komuvatha, now a deserted village site at the eastern edge of the secondary forest opposite the present village. The present site of Roroni was pig-feeding land then, while gardens were cultivated north and south of it. The people realised that flash floods on the Balesuna delayed their movement between the garden and the village. At the same time they appreciated the advantages of vacating the larger area of secondary forest around Komuvatha and letting it regenerate as garden land. Experience had also shown that the east bank of the Balesuna opposite the old village was one of the first places to come under water whenever the Balesuna overflowed its banks. The present site of Roroni was less susceptible to flooding: water usually spilled over the banks above and below Roroni, as in the November 1966 floods. Thus Roroni exemplifies a choice in which considerations of the best use of resources, ease of movement, and relative safety in times of flood were important.

Gorabau replaced Tetera in 1946. The local big-man - a non-landowner - chose the site when the people returned to the coast after the war. He declared that water was plentiful (although this was not really so) and could be easily obtained from a nearby creek east of the village; and that gardening land and coconut groves would be much closer to the village than before the war. The choice of Gorabau shows the interaction between the influence of a big-man and the location of resources.

The reasons for the establishment of Gilutae have been outlined.¹ The site itself was the best available from the point of view of settlement. It was the only area on that particular block of land which was covered with light bush and not yet planted with coconut. The remainder was under grass and therefore too exposed for settlement. Wells dug into the sand and reinforced by forty-four-gallon drums yielded water for domestic use. Apart from these physical considerations, a very powerful social factor was

¹ See p.74.

involved in the move to Gilutae: tradition had it that his ancestors lived on the very spot the big-man and land-owner had decided to occupy, and that these ancestors propitiated the clan spirit by the big Callophyllum still standing in the village today. Thus the move to Gilutae was an attempt to stave off a counter-claim to the land there, while the actual site was chosen because of its physical advantages and traditional associations.

Factors of residence

The inhabitants of a village can usually be classified into two broad groups on the basis of their length of residence and their main reasons for residence. Roroni's nineteen households will be used to illustrate these divisions. In the first category fall four households of long-established residents and their children. These are the people who have lived most of their lives near Roroni: they have 'their roots' in the locality. Their close relatives established Binu before the war. Although some past members of this group claimed ownership rights to the land at Binu, none claims similar rights to the land on which Roroni stands. However, they are generally considered senior residents of the village.

The second and by far the larger group is associated with the big-man, Jacob Vouza. Vouza and his followers lived in other parts of Tadhimboko West before the war. Some members of this group (eleven households), who have had a long association with him, are called here primary associates. When the war ended in 1945 they continued to live with Vouza, who had risen to prominence by then. He became their spokesman to the world outside Tadhimboko and interpreted that wider and more complicated world to them. With the exception of a woman and her four children, the big-man and his primary associates do not possess ownership rights to the land at Roroni. The other followers of the big-man (three households) derive their rights of residence indirectly from him through the primary associates, and hence are referred to here as secondary associates. The men are migrants married to Tadhimboko women who have land outside Roroni. The last household does not fall into either of these groups: it is in Roroni because the husband works with the Agriculture Department as coconut assistant for the Guadalcanal Plains.

The composition of Roroni's residents mirrors the whole Tadhimboko region. There is a core of long-established residents who may not have ownership rights over the land

on which the village stands, but who claim such rights over nearby areas. Every village has a recognised big-man. In Roroni he is the major reason for the residence there of a large number of 'strangers'. His authority has allowed diverse followers to enter the village community and he has extended to them rights and responsibilities of residence which are indistinguishable from those of long-established occupants.

Some recent changes in residence

Many Tadhimboko today live in villages they did not occupy before, or even after, the war. There are four main reasons why they have moved: (i) some have moved in order to strengthen their claims to land vis-a-vis the Government or some other local residents; (ii) some have judged old places of residence to have few resources of value; (iii) some value co-residence with the local big-man and the associated prestige; and (iv) the traditional system of property inheritance has caused some people to move after they have inherited certain coconut groves. An analysis of some recent changes in residence will illustrate these points.

Between January 1966 and March 1967, 11 families in Tadhimboko West changed their places of residence, 7 following disputes over land. Disputes over ownership rights to certain blocks of land in the Metepono-Nalimbiu area had been simmering since Government acquired the lease on Muvia West in 1964. Disagreement about how the lease money was distributed culminated in a court case in June 1966 in which two individuals were directly involved: Qelo of Tatau and Vuce of Kokomu. Qelo is a single man who lived with his parents at Tatau which is part of Vuce's land. Also living at Tatau were two families who had traditional links with Qelo's father, Deladelamasi. When Qelo lost the case to Vuce, Deladelamasi decided to move the settlement to his own clan land at Komidi, eighty to ninety yards north of Tatau. Traditional obligations and reciprocity ensured that the other two families at Tatau moved with him. Three families at Komuvaolu and one at Kokomu sympathised with Qelo and his father. The Kokomu family moved first to Komuvaolu and from there accompanied the three Komuvaolu families to Komidi. By this time the idea of amalgamating at Komidi all the villages on the left bank of the Metepono was receiving much publicity,

especially from the new occupants of Komidi. In fact, this idea was made to appear as the main cause of the move to Komidi, perhaps to justify their action and attract those who had not followed them there. Further, Komidi residents suggested that the idea of village amalgamation originated with the Melanesian Mission priest stationed at Tumubosa. It was said that he chose Komidi himself because it was central. The large concrete platform there would make an admirable foundation for the new church, and amalgamation itself would encourage 'better living'. Thus the initial cause of the move was superseded by the new idea of village amalgamation.

The following cases also illustrate the wide range of reasons which made people move their place of residence.

Until early June 1966 Mara and his family resided at Komunikau, between Roroni and Binu. His gardens were on land south of the village and were constantly attacked by straying pigs. Mara's wife had told the owners of the strayed pigs about the damage the pigs had done, but was told that wild pigs were responsible for the destruction. Mara then dug a deep trench in front of the main gate to his yam garden. One morning strayed pigs were found in the pit. When the owners were informed of this, they retorted that neither Mara nor his wife owned land in Roroni. Not long after that Mara moved his family to Tenahulu whose big-man, Balawa, is his father's younger brother.

Sote was a Malaita man who had married Meraia, a local woman. The couple lived in Gorabau. One of Meraia's daughters from an earlier marriage was married to a Suagi man; she had been ill for some time in 1965 and her three children did not receive proper care. Early in 1966 Sote and Meraia moved to Suagi to look after their three grandchildren and their mother. In February 1967 Sote took ill and died. Meraia is unlikely to return to Gorabau to reside permanently.

Sevusevudredre, one of Meraia's sons by her first husband, married Loco's sister from Gorabau. The couple lived in Tumurora after their marriage in 1961. Towards the end of 1966 Sevusevudredre's wife was involved in a minor social scandal. Official inquiry by the district headman revealed

that nothing more than the offer and acceptance of cigarettes and betel nut were involved. But much misdirected talk had been generated before the inquiry took place and Sevusevudredre had lost face in the public eye. It seems that in order to save what remained of his reputation and escape the derogatory comments of some people in Tumorora and Komuvaolu, Sevusevudredre moved his family to Gorabau before the inquiry in January 1967. By that time the Guadalcanal Council was employing local labourers on the construction of a small wooden bridge across Nini Creek to link the Tetere Beach road to Gorabau and Suagi. Sevusevudredre joined the bridge-construction party and said that this was the main reason for his move to Gorabau. At the same time he indicated his intention to challenge the traditional rights of the owners of the land between Roroni and Gorabau. Sevusevudredre considers that residence in Gorabau will help his claim to ownership of land in the area.

The owner of Veuru, between Ravu and Abuabili, had previously given a Malaitan family full usufructuary rights to the land. Some coconuts had been planted by the migrant for the landlord. Meanwhile, a rumour had been circulated that the migrant intended to charge the landlord for his labour in the planting of the coconuts. When the landlord heard the rumour, he ordered the Malaitan to leave Veuru as soon as his existing crops were harvested. This migrant has now taken up a block of government land at Susui.

The most recent changes in place of residence have mostly been motivated by social reasons, particularly disputes over land-ownership and usage rights. In some cases, however, the most critical issue is pushed into the background, as some of the above examples show.

Chapter 5

Some elements of the social system

The basic social groups

The traditional social structure of the Guadalcanal Plains people is based conceptually on a segmentary matrilineal system. Each person is born into one of the following named kema:¹ Kema ni Gaubata, Kema ni Thongo, Kema ni Thimbo, Kema ni Lathi and Kema ni Nekama. The members of a kema are united by their belief in a common ancestral origin. Each kema is identified with a named, all-powerful ancestral spirit which kema elders once propitiated. Kema ni Gaubata venerated Sili; Kema ni Thongo propitiated Kulanikama; Kema ni Thimbo, Luva; Kema ni Lathi, Saka; and Kema ni Nekama worshipped Tagativi. Each kema possesses a bird totem which its members are prohibited from harming.² There is also the expectation of mutual assistance by members of the same kema. For example, a Kema ni Gaubata man travelling in an area where he has no very close relatives will seek out a resident kema member for shelter. The organisation of a feast and, in the past, the propitiation of the ancestral spirit by an elder demanded assistance from all members of the kema. At the same time, such ceremonial occasions, although initiated and sponsored by a particular kema, received material and moral support from members of other kema because of inter-marriage and the network of social obligations. However, the functional elements of the kema have altered since contact. The adoption of Christianity and the discourage-

¹ A kema is the maximal matrilineal kinship group although kinship cannot be proved genealogically.

² The main totems are as follows: Kema ni Gaubata, eagle; Kema ni Thongo, snipe; Kema ni Thimbo, wood pigeon; Kema ni Lathi, wagtail; and Kema ni Nekama, an unidentified small yellowish bird found in the bush.

ment of lavish feasting have struck at the very foundation of the kema as a pivot of the social system. They have reduced it to a unit of social organisation removed from its raison d'etre. Kema members no longer act in common, but are linked together loosely by a belief in a common ancestral past.

Although one is born into a kema, one's affiliation can change through the operation of certain socially accepted procedures. A Kema ni Thimbo child reared from infancy by a Kema ni Gaubata family after the death of his parents, will assume a Kema ni Gaubata identity. The custom known as seka also occasioned the change of kema affiliation of many people in the past; some vestiges of it remain today. But this custom is a curious mixture and word seka itself possesses two meanings: banishment and adoption. The meaning intended depends on the circumstances of the case. Banishment was usually inflicted upon individuals who consistently disturbed the peace of the community, through adultery, for instance. Often the new kin of the banished person paid traditional valuables to his old kin for the latest addition to their rank. Because of this element of transaction in native wealth, the word seka is often incorrectly translated to mean a slave. However, the new member's status was no different from that of his new associates; only the method of entry into the group differed. Herein lies a major source of difficulty in determining the kema affiliation and origin of many individuals. A banished woman, for example, became a dependant of the receiving side. Her own acts gave her a permanent social stigma. Her descendants, in the eyes of their associates, originated from a disreputable woman.

The second meaning of the word seka involved the replacement of a deceased person. When an important person died, his relatives gave vast quantities of shell money and food to buy someone to fill his place. The person so bought did not assume the status, but sometimes acquired the name, of the deceased. The Tadhimboko say that this procedure was practised so that the relatives of the deceased would forget their sorrow. Thus the custom known as seka involved a change in kema membership, but the basic cause of the change is not always easy to establish, especially when an infamous reputation and banishment are involved.

As in other parts of Guadalcanal (except the Marau saltwater people who adhere to a patrilineal social

organisation), the kema of Tadhimboko, and the Guadalcanal Plains generally, traditionally follow the matrilineal principle of kinship affiliation. They are firmly exogamous. Each kema is composed of a number of mamata. The matrilineal mamata is a unilineal group whose members trace their descent back to a common ancestress, through the female line. Thus membership of the mamata is based on blood ties. It consists of brothers and sisters and the sisters' children. Because of the rule of exogamous marriage, the brothers' wives and their children and sisters' husbands belong to different kema and mamata. However, the rule of exogamous marriage is fast breaking down, especially at the kema level, and kema incest may be preferred to illegitimacy (Hogbin 1964:5). Contact with Western concepts of society and marriage, as expressed by the missionary and trader, has clearly weakened the rule of kema exogamy. In fact, there have been and still are isolated cases of marriage within the mamata (see Table 6.3, which also shows the mamata land on which gardens are located).

Each mamata is identified with a specific power of the kema spirit. For example, a mamata of Kema ni Gaubata is identified with Sili malagai, Sili the warrior. Apart from the kema spirit, the mamata also worships an extra named spirit, or sometimes two, which gives it extra identity. Members of the mamata have close kinship ties, and unlike the kema which is loosely organised, the mamata is a compact social unit. Yet because all the mamata of a particular kema are united by their belief in a common ancestral spirit, their members consider that a mamata is but a small part of the larger kema. In this way all the mamata are regarded as tributaries of the kema; they see themselves as having a common origin.¹

The greatest significance of the mamata, however, is its association with the land, for it is the basic land-owning unit on the plains. Thus an area will contain several blocks of Kema ni Gaubata or Kema ni Thongo land

¹ Hogbin (1934:237) stated that in Longgu, east of the plains, 'the native conception is not that the clan is divided into tributaries, but that several tributaries together form a clan'. This idea applies also to the Tadhimboko region where the phrase ulu-ni-beti (head-water) is used to denote the belief that the mamata unite to form a single 'stream', the kema.

claimed by different mamata of the two kema. Claims to land are normally based on the contention that one's ancestors were the first occupants of a particular block of land.

The institution of big-man

Although the mamata is the basic land-owning group, it is not a territorial unit. Neither is the kema. Both past and present villages were organised by local big-men who gathered around them not only members of their own or their wives' mamata but also their supporters.

Traditionally an ambitious man had first to prove his ability as a warrior. He was then called a malagai. Acquisition of this title demanded the performance of outstanding service to the people. The malagai had to help the people in his community by killing their enemies and protecting them from the molestation of others. The malagai earned shell money for his killings, and as he amassed wealth his importance increased. The rank of malagai was inheritable by a malagai's son provided he possessed his father's qualities of military strength and leadership. The continued performance of outstanding feats and the provision of lavish feasts for the people elevated the malagai to maneka pari (the big-man proper) - the highest rank known to the people of the plains. He was the richest and strongest person in his locality, and possessed the greatest number of wives. The latter were responsible for maintaining his gardens and looking after his pigs. He possessed the biggest and most elaborately decorated house in the village. Yet all this wealth was important only when given away. Births, marriages, deaths and the construction of new houses and canoes were celebrated with feasts. While the maneka pari could call on his followers to work for him, he was also obliged to assist his supporters when required. His position in the society therefore was based in part on the great store of credit which people owed him. In the manipulation of this fund of credit he assumed a dominant role. He surpassed everyone else's hospitality. Although highly respected by his own people, the maneka pari was continually exposed to the risks of rivalry and jealousy from other people. To ensure his safety he had to have access to particular charms and magic.

Although obligatory relationships with the big-man varied widely in the circumstances and time of their origin, they linked residents, individually and collec-

tively, to a single person. The people were conscious of their obligation to him and treated him with respect (Hogbin 1964:64). Thus the maneka pari was the acknowledged arbiter in any dispute. His decision was final and had to be respected. His influence, wealth and strength meant that he alone could afford effective protection or sanctuary to any person in need.

The contemporary local big-man

Today local big-men still play an important role in the life of the community, but their means of achieving recognition have altered considerably. The examples of Jacob Vouza of Roroni and Samuel Saki of Koli will illustrate this changed situation.

Jacob Vouza, a member of Kema ni Thongo, joined the Solomons' Police Constabulary in 1916 when he was seventeen years old and retired in 1941 after twenty-five years of service. He reached the rank of sergeant-major (see Plate 5.1). Although Vouza had spent much of his early manhood away from his home village (Koli), his excellent service record and long association with the Government stood him in good stead when he returned to Koli in 1941. Not only was he highly regarded by the Tadhimboko; his police service in many parts of the Solomons made him a well-known and widely respected person. He possessed an outstanding personality and great qualities of leadership, although the latter tended to the authoritarianism of police regulation. He was a man of tremendous drive. During his service he acquired, apparently for his own protection, a number of customary charms for curing illnesses allegedly due to sorcery.

When World War II broke out he retreated with his people to Komule from where, along with other Tadhimboko men, he offered his services as a scout to Allied forces. During one of his scouting adventures near Tenaru, the Japanese captured and tortured him and left their victim to die a slow death. However, tremendous physical strength, and perhaps good fortune, saved him. He regained consciousness and slowly made his way towards the American forces at Lunga Point where he received medical attention. Vouza was soon back on scout duty. It is commonly believed in Tadhimboko that Vouza survived torture by the Japanese because he possessed a 'warrior tidio' or spirit.¹

¹ Belief in spirits and sorcery is still widespread in Tadhimboko and the Solomons generally, as it is in other parts of Melanesia.



Plate 5.1. Sergeant-Major Jacob Vouza,
G.M., M.B.E., the most
decorated war hero in the
Solomons

Vouza's war-time exploits undoubtedly rendered him a most successful malagai in the eyes of the Tadhimboko, and military decoration by the Americans was seen as his formal recognition by Europeans. He was the undisputed leader of the Tadhimboko during the American occupation of Guadalcanal from 1943 to 1945. When the Marching Rule reached Guadalcanal, it was inevitable that the people of that island looked to him as their leader. In Melanesian eyes the struggle against the civil administration required a spokesman familiar with the European's world: Vouza was the logical choice. When the leaders of the movement were arrested in 1947, Vouza's status had already reached the level of the maneka pari. He was arrested too, but never punished. He visited Fiji in 1948, and his membership of the Advisory Council in 1950 further

bolstered his position not only in Tadhimboko but throughout the Solomons. He remained a member of the Advisory Council until 1960. He was the first Melanesian president of the Guadalcanal Council, after that body was established in 1953. During that year, too, Vouza was one of two Solomons' representatives at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Vouza, then, has seen the world.¹ He served as a link between the Tadhimboko and the world at large.

During the period of his political pre-eminence, Vouza set up a village retail store business and became a cutter-boat operator, but both enterprises failed. When the Solomons' Constitution was changed in 1960 and a Legislative Council instituted, Vouza was dropped from the national body. Then, when a younger man was elected president of the Guadalcanal Council in 1961, Vouza's interest in public affairs as a whole waned and soon he lost much of his personal drive and enthusiasm. Many of his people saw his displacement from the presidency of the Guadalcanal Council as the beginning of the end for their leader. It was also seen as disapproval of his tendency towards central and authoritarian control. Vouza had been Tadhimboko district headman since 1945 and still holds that post today. As Guadalcanal Council president, he was also president of the Native Court. In effect, he was looked upon as the law and government in Tadhimboko, and no man could occupy such a position for many years without there growing up a distance between himself and his followers. Inevitably, absolute trust in Vouza declined, and there developed slowly a feeling of dissatisfaction over the way he administered and controlled the affairs of Tadhimboko. At the Guadalcanal Council elections in 1964 a much younger man was elected member for the Tadhimboko West ward in place of Vouza. Today Vouza is occasionally consulted on matters affecting Tadhimboko and as district headman remains the Government's official link with the area. This 'grand old man' is now respected more for his past achievements than for his present position.

Samuel Saki of Koli, a member of Kema ni Gaubata, was in his early twenties when the war reached the Solomons in 1942. He did not participate regularly in scouting

¹ At the invitation of the First United States Marine Division, Vouza attended their reunion in the United States in August 1968.

activities, but was employed by the American forces when Tadhimboko West was converted into a huge military base. After the war Saki did not return to his birth-place, Gaimali, but moved to his own mamata land at Koli. When scrap-metal collection started, he became a contractor to both K.H.D. Hay Pty Ltd and South Pacific Traders. He also operated a tradestore at Koli but this thrived only as long as the metal collection lasted. In this brief period Saki saved sufficient capital to buy a launch and train two men from his mamata to operate it. Saki's business has grown in strength since 1953. Now he has a cattle fence enclosing 200 acres.¹ Members of his own mamata have assisted him greatly with their labour, which was paid at a much lower rate than they would have received in Honiara and other places. However, his kin realised, as did Saki, that his assistance in times of difficulty would always be forthcoming. Today he is recognised as the most successful Melanesian businessman in Guadalcanal, if not in the entire Solomons. He has not been a member of the Guadalcanal Council, although at present he is president of the Tadhimboko Native Court.

Members of Saki's mamata acknowledge him as their leader, and other members of Kema ni Gaubata in the Koli Point area also tend to look upon him as their leader and spokesman, particularly when matters pertaining to Kema ni Gaubata land are discussed. This may be because of Saki's position in the Native Court and also the kema's desire to safeguard its land rights.

Here, then, are two contrasting examples of how local big-men have developed in strength and status during the post-war years. Vouza's reputation at the outbreak of war was already well known and the war gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his outstanding ability as a malagai; he was duly recognised as such. During the Marching Rule movement Vouza was the acknowledged big-man of the Guadalcanal Plains, if not of the whole island. By contrast, Saki was an insignificant follower of Vouza during the war. When the Marching Rule ended, Saki took a leading part in the scrap-metal collecting business. His acute business sense and skilful manipulation of kinship ties have been largely responsible for his success as an entrepreneur. Vouza has participated in

¹ See p. 211.

both national and local politics and this may have influenced the failure of his business enterprise, as he was unable to give close personal supervision. While Vouza's political power and authority have waned since 1960, Saki's status as an entrepreneur has grown. This has led to his recognition by kin and other followers as a big-man. For Saki the future holds bright prospects; for Vouza there is some satisfaction in playing a minor administrative role and in reflecting on his past glories.

The life cycle: marriages, births and deaths

The traditional process of marriage was fairly complex, involving many feasts and exchanges of wealth. A marriage was basically a mamata affair. However, ties of kinship, marriage, co-residence and reciprocal obligations ensured the assistance of others outside the mamata. This assistance included contributions to bride-price, gifts of food - pigs in particular - and help in preparing feasts. Although the mamata and the local community co-operated in such activities, the choice of partner was largely left to the individuals concerned.

In the past, land was often used as bride-price or to supplement bride-price. The groom's mamata would surrender to the bride's mamata the ownership of a part of their mamata land. However, shell money was more commonly used; it was imported from Langa Langa on Malaita in exchange for pigs, yams, canoes and other valuables. Before World War II, the usual price for a virgin bride was thirty strings of shell money.¹ It was considerably less for a widow remarrying. If the couple quarrelled seriously, due to consistent adultery by one partner, for example, the offended spouse could complain to the maneka pari. Should the maneka pari decide to send the woman back to her people, part of the bride-price was returned, the amount depending on how long they had been married and the number of their children. Normally the children remained with their father's people. Minor quarrels, however, were settled by the offender paying small gifts of shell money to the injured spouse.

¹ Shell valuables obtained from Langa Langa by the Tadhimboko normally consisted of ten strings, each one fathom long. These were then rearranged into groups of two to six strings. Bride-price payments entailed different combinations of strings of shell valuables.

When a baby was born he was kept in the house for six days while the father, assisted by his mamata and friends, prepared a feast. On the sixth day the baby was brought outside and the mother bathed. The hut in which the birth took place was a special one constructed for the purpose behind the ordinary house. If the child was that of a maneka pari, he was made tabu for a certain period: he remained in the house and anyone who saw him paid valuables to the maneka pari for the privilege. The lifting of the tabu by the maneka pari brought great feasting in which the whole community participated.

Death, like marriage and birth, was basically a mamata affair in which relatives and the community as a whole gave their assistance. The body was not buried until all the close relatives had seen it, and if a maneka pari died his body lay in state for at least three days. The body was either buried in the house or weighted and cast into the sea to prevent ill-disposed persons from interfering with it. The mortuary feast was provided by the deceased's mamata. During mourning by the maneka pari's followers, they neither cleaned their hair nor washed until someone had killed a stranger and brought a part of his body into the village. After that only the maneka pari's immediate family remained in mourning until a seka was bought, should this be desired, to fill the deceased's place in the community. The widow was free to return to her people after she had paid five strings of shell money and a pig to her deceased husband's people.

The feast

The preparation and consumption of food in a feast illustrate clearly the functional organisation of Tadhimboko society, and that of the plains generally. Every man is a potential feast-giver, but only the big-man provides the biggest feast since this is appropriate to his reputation and wealth. Apart from those associated with the life cycle, feasts were normally given after a large number of people had completed a joint task such as building a house or planting a yam garden. The feast held at Tenahulu on 6 July 1966 is described to illustrate how a function of this nature brought together large numbers of people from various parts of the plains.

This feast was organised by the big-man of Tenahulu to celebrate the completion of his house and to repay gifts of food presented to him by others at feasts he had

attended. This was the first feast given by him since he took up residence at Tenahulu. Early in 1965 the big-man discussed his intention to give a feast with his three sons who lived with him at Tenahulu. Kinship ties alone ensured their support, while co-residence meant that other households in the village would support the function (see Table 5.1). As well, the village and its gardens were on the big-man's mamata land, and he had led their migration from Tathimane to Tenahulu.

Table 5.1

Contributions of pigs by Tenahulu residents
for feast, 6 July 1966

Resident's name	<u>Kema</u>	Relationship	No. of pigs contributed
Balawa	<u>Gaubata</u>	Big-man	30
Sayali	<u>Thongo</u>	Big-man's son	10
Takayava	<u>Thongo</u>	Big-man's son	10
Naituku	<u>Thongo</u>	Big-man's son	10
Navokoso	<u>Gaubata</u>	Big-man's younger brother	15
Vakaruru	<u>Gaubata</u>	None	15
Bua	<u>Gaubata</u>	Vakaruru's son	6
Yavalata	<u>Thongo</u>	None	10
Drauna	<u>Thongo</u>	None	10
Livai	<u>Thongo</u>	None	9
Waiyavi	<u>Gaubata</u>	Yavalata's son	15
Talanigadi	<u>Gaubata</u>	None	10
Gukisuva	<u>Gaubata</u>	None	15
Vosaki	<u>Gaubata</u>	None	9
Naiwasewase	<u>Gaubata</u>	None	2
Nailatiniba	<u>Thimbo</u>	None	2
Tavaiqica	<u>Thimbo</u>	None	20
Sivo	<u>Nekama</u>	None	20
Total			218

About the middle of 1965 it was agreed that all yam gardens cultivated during the 1965-66 yam season would be devoted to the feast. From then on, various aspects of the preparation of the feast loomed large in the activities of the Tenahulu. A number of young men worked in Honiara and Santa Isabel late in 1965 and during the first three months of 1966 to earn money to purchase pigs

from villagers in the interior of Tadhimboko East and Vulolo. Others manipulated customary obligations in order to contribute to the store of food.

During April and May 1966 the yam crop was harvested and stored in small huts built for the purpose in the gardens or brought home for safe keeping. More than 100 baskets of yams were sold by the Tenahulu in Honiara market at the end of May, and most proceeds were spent on the feast. By this time, too, the men had already commenced making popo, the wooden food bowls for which the plains people are famous. Three weeks before the feast some men and women from Tenahulu visited the coastal villages of Gaimali, Papagu, Koli and Tumurora to arrange for some coconuts for the feast. Although the Tenahulu had offered to pay for the coconuts in cash, the coastal people would not accept any cash payments for they maintained that the feast was not a money-making enterprise and that the food prepared was for the people in the entire district to eat.

For the two weeks before 6 July 1966 there was intensive activity in Tenahulu. The yam crop was carried into the village and placed in small baskets especially made for the purpose. The pigs were brought together near the village and arrangements to bring those from other areas were finalised. A week before the feast, members of the big-man's mamata, and those related to him and other Tenahulu villagers through marriage, arrived from bush and coastal villages with gifts of yams and pigs. They had particularly come to help prepare ghola (baked grated cassava) and the delicacy se (mashed purple yam with coconut cream) which was an essential component of traditional feasts in this area.

Guests from villages on the coast and interior of Tadhimboko East, Paripao and Vulolo started arriving in Tenahulu the day before the feast. Most Tadhimboko West villagers and guests from Honiara did not come until the feast-day. At about noon on the appointed day the Tenahulu, supervised by the big-man, started arranging the food into heaps in a large, open space in the middle of the village. Baskets of ghola, yams, and bowls of se decorated with betel nut and pepper vine were brought in (see Plate 5.2). The pigs were strangled but not bled and the carcasses were not cleaned. According to custom, the recipients decide what to do with them. They were placed over the fire to burn slightly.



Plate 5.2. Food distribution at Tenahulu's traditional feast

The distribution of food followed a clear pattern. The first allocation consisted of heaps presented to the local big-men to whom the Tenahulu big-man owed special obligations. Table 5.2 shows that the largest numbers of pigs in any individual pile went to Saki of Koli and Veresi of Komukama, men to whom the Tenahulu big-man owed special debts, both in the preparation of the present feast and in previous gifts of food. On this occasion Veresi helped by supplying pigs and some yams while Saki provided large quantities of ripe coconuts. Both Saki and the Tenahulu big-man are also members of Kema ni Gaubata. The second allocation of food went to all the villages and settlements represented in the feast, including guests from Honiara. These heaps were much smaller and none contained a whole pig. Of 218 pigs amassed for the feast, $25\frac{1}{2}$ were presented to the local big-men, $157\frac{1}{2}$ were shared among the villages represented, while 35 were not killed on the day of the feast but slaughtered at a later date and consumed by the feast-givers themselves.

Although big-men figure prominently in the presentation of food in a feast, very little of a big-man's share is actually consumed by himself and his household. Vouza's share, for example, was divided among the people of Roroni along with the allocation for that village. Saki's share of six pigs did not reach Koli for he had instructed members of his mamatā, who attended the feast

on his behalf, to distribute the pigs to three individuals who helped him provide for a previous feast.

Table 5.2

Pigs presented to local big-men at
Tenahulu feast, 6 July 1966

Name	<u>Kema</u>	Village	No. of pigs received
Saki	<u>Gaubata</u>	Koli	6
Vouza	<u>Thongo</u>	Roroni	3
Bai	<u>Thimbo</u>	Gorabau	1½
Veresi	<u>Thongo</u>	Komukama	6
Vuce	<u>Gaubata</u>	Kokomu	3
Draunikau	<u>Thongo</u>	Komuvaolu	2
Veiqati	<u>Thongo</u>	Veragono	2
Nabaro	<u>Thongo</u>	Sopapera	2
Total			25½

On the day of the feast more than 200 guests were present in Tenahulu. About half of these returned to their villages the same day, while those from distant villages returned the following day. Very little of the food distributed, pig meat in particular, could have been consumed on the spot. Instead, guests took their share to their own homes and ate it there after further cooking.

The most important measurement recognised by the plains people in evaluating the size and success of a feast is the number of pigs provided for guests. The number of pigs collected for the Tenahulu feast indicates that it was a big feast by Tadhimboko standards. It is clear that a large amount of money was involved in its preparation: all the pigs consumed, if sold for cash at about 25¢ per lb live weight, or \$16 to \$20 per animal, would have fetched about \$3,400 to \$4,360 - enough to buy a new truck or tractor. However, the primary purpose of the feast was not to make money, but rather to meet customary obligations and bolster the reputation of the big-man and his followers.

Chapter 6

Manipulation of land

The customary land law¹

The present system of land tenure in Tadhimboko functions within the contemporary social framework and social relationships based largely on the kema and the mamata. However, it is the mamata which is vital in terms of land ownership: the mamata 'owns' the land as a group, on the basis that its elders were its first occupants. This situation is complicated by the existence of the big-man, who can allocate land-usage rights to his supporters and followers, even if the land involved does not belong to his mamata.

Nearly all land-owning mamata claim rights over more than one block of land. Actual authority over the mamata's land is customarily vested in an individual: the bere taoni pari ni mamata, the guardian of the mamata's land. The bere taoni pari is usually the senior male member of the mamata. Tradition requires that the bere taoni pari consult other adult members of his mamata when matters of land tenure and usage affecting their land are considered. But because of kinship and marriage ties and the desire to maintain good social relations, participants in these informal talks sometimes include members of different mamata of the same or different kema.² Authority over the mamata's land passes to the eldest brother until all that generation is exhausted; it then passes to the eldest sister's son. However, guardianship will pass to a female if no males are alive or the children are too

¹ Although the customary land law is an essential part of the social system, it is dealt with separately here because of its vital role in the pattern of resource use.

² Inter-mamata discussions apparently took place when land was alienated early this century.

young. The eldest sister's son's authority over the mamata's land may not be recognised if his father was not a man of means and was therefore unable to enhance, in socially acceptable ways, his son's position of seniority. Thus authority over mamata land may be decided and cemented by social prestige and power. Where the mamata claims several widely scattered blocks of land, a number of bere taoni pari are nominated from among the adult male members. This practice often helps explain, or lead to, changes in residence.

By virtue of membership in a land-owning mamata, individuals acquire rights of ownership and usage over the group's lands. They may clear virgin forest (beriau) in their own land without asking the mamata head. They alone are considered as owners of the land. Non-members of the mamata must apply for the permission of the mamata head to clear and cultivate land, and may be extended usage rights only. Within the context of the subsistence economy, requests for usage rights are usually granted and their extension to, and use by, non-members of the owning unit visibly create and express numerous socially sanctioned ties and obligations. Men who marry into the land-owning mamata have a special advantage in relation to the use of their wives' mamata land. As their children are members of the owning mamata, the mamata head is obliged to extend usage rights to the fathers. With the knowledge and approval of the mamata head, men married into the mamata can extend usage rights to their brothers and sisters' husbands. However, such a privilege is not granted as of right.

Sons and daughters of a male member of the owning mamata have land ownership rights elsewhere through their mother. However, the father can allocate part of his mamata's land to his son and give him full usage rights over it. The same usage rights can be extended to the daughter's husband. Unless relationships with it are severely strained, individuals lacking previous social links with the owning mamata can be granted usage rights. Such gestures are said to be made in the name of social solidarity, in the belief that all residents in the village are 'one people'.

The local big-man is influential in granting land-use rights within his own community. If he is a member of the land-owning unit, this gives him added power, and indeed he is obliged, to allocate usage rights to his followers. Yet if the big-man is not a member of the

land-owning mamata, his influence, prestige and power alone enable him to extend usage rights to his followers.

There are certain customary means of acquiring land on an individual, family or mamata basis, relics of which exist today as the basis of continuing claims to land. Land is paid in lieu of, or to supplement, bride-price. Because the organisation of marriage is basically a mamata affair in which members co-operate, land transferred in this way becomes the property of the bride's mamata. In Tadhimboko, blocks of land transferred as part of bride-price are usually small and few exceed ten acres in area.

Individuals associated with the local big-man can acquire usage and ownership rights over part of the mamata land, but only very sparingly, and only if the recipient has consistently assisted the big-man in feasts and other functions. Such rights then approximate individual ownership to some extent. The individual's son and his daughter's husband can acquire usage rights over the land, but its subsequent inheritance through the matrilineal mamata brings it back to collective ownership.

The provision of a mortuary feast also occasions the transfer of interests in, and rights to, the mamata's land, but more often only usage rights and economic trees are transferred in compensation. This happens if the deceased's relatives cannot satisfactorily meet their customary obligation to bury their dead in a socially acceptable manner. Although this particular social custom is the basis of ownership of specific blocks of land in Tadhimboko today, the practice has long been discontinued.

Permanent improvements such as nurtured or planted fruit trees, bamboo and sago groves for house building, areca nut for the betel mixture, and coconut trees for domestic use, are the property of the cultivator. These improvements provide either shelter or sustenance and fit into the context of the Tadhimboko subsistence economy. Of course, the owner of a particular improvement can extend the privilege of use of the products of his labour to his own children and their spouses. At the owner's death the improvement is inherited by the sister's son, but this change of ownership does not prohibit the owner's offspring using it with the approval of the new owner.

The inheritance and transfer of abandoned garden sites and regenerating forest (karuba), which may be considered temporary 'improvements', also have an important place in the system of interests in, and rights to, land. The

karuba, despite its dense tree cover, is never considered to return to virgin forest to which no prior usage rights exist: although it may be abandoned for ten to fifteen years, the initial clearer has exclusive rights of usage over his abandoned block. Such rights are closely though unobtrusively guarded. Rights to the karuba may pass through the mamata from man to sister's son or outside the mamata to son and daughter's husband and this, because of exogamous marriage, may well involve its transfer to a different kema. The karuba may also pass between two unrelated villagers when it is allocated by the local big-man to members of his community in accordance with the network of reciprocity of which he is himself the central and dominant figure. The transfer of the karuba involves much negotiation and re-emphasises the numerous links within a community. But in the use and transfer of rights to the karuba, the realities of land usage and land ownership show little correlation. This inconsistency between the recognised 'law' and the operative reality indicates the essential flexibility of Tadhimboko land allocation.

The distribution of mamata holdings

Nearly every land-owning mamata claims ownership rights over more than one block of land and these blocks are non-contiguous. This is most clearly demonstrated by mamata holdings west of the Ñalimbiu (see Fig. 6.1), where fifteen mamata (the sixteenth is now extinct) claim ownership of thirty separate holdings. The holdings of a particular mamata can be far apart, as the following examples show. Two holdings of Mamata T1 are separated by a 200-yard-wide strip of land owned by Mamata L2 (southeast of Gilutae), while lands of Mamata L1 by the west bank of the Ñalimbiu and the holding adjacent to Tenavatu in the extreme west are separated by nine blocks of different mamata land covering a distance of more than 3.5 miles. Indeed, only two mamata in this locality, Mamata G6 and T1, own land extending uninterrupted for long distances. This pattern is seen also in the area around Roroni on both sides of the Balesuna River (see Fig. 6.1). There, too, is a large block of land owned by Mamata G3 whose other land lies four miles away, on both sides of the Ñalimbiu. The mamata holdings around Roroni are generally contiguous and much larger, with total areas ranging from 400 to 3,000 acres. West

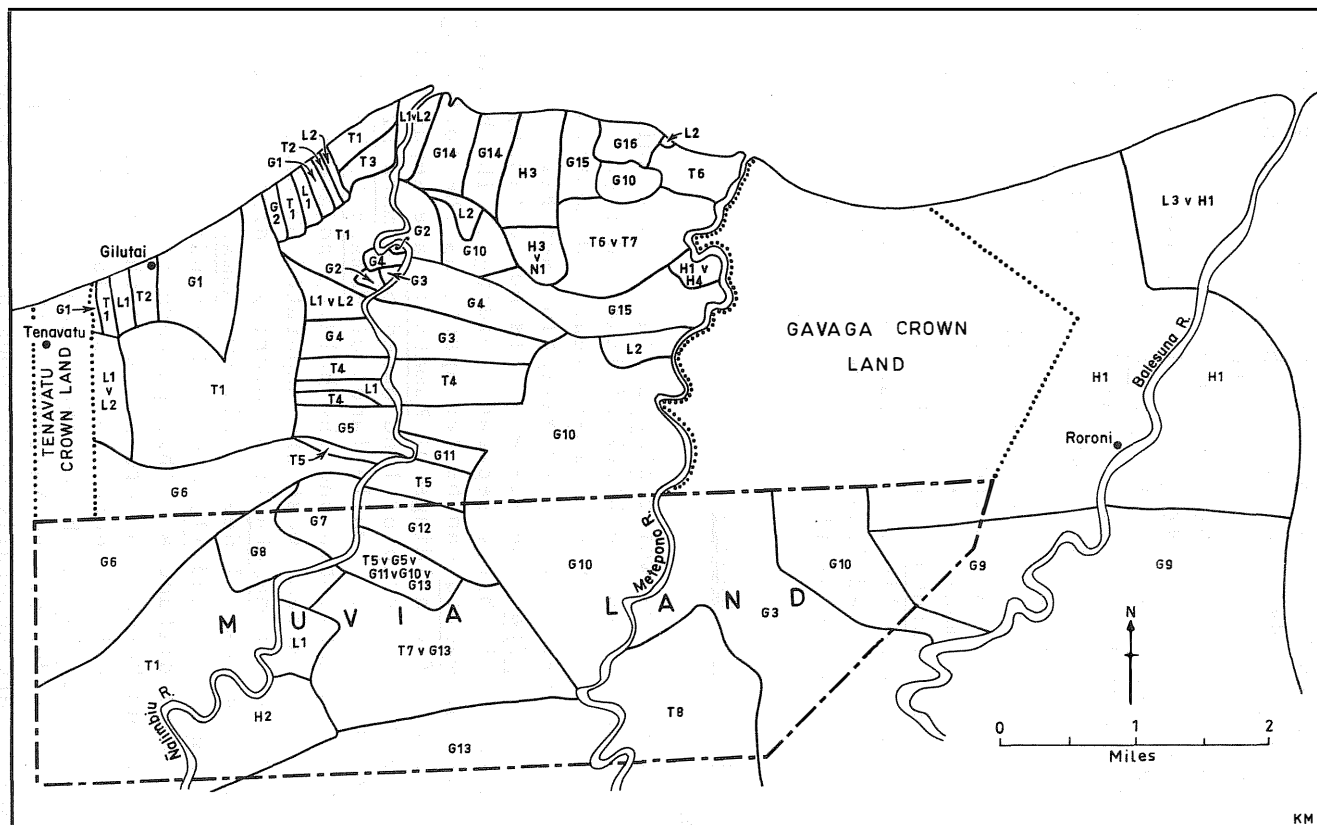


Fig. 6.1. Mamata holdings in Tadhimboko, 1966

of the Ñalimbiu, however, mamata holdings are small, the range in area being from 10 to 1,000 acres.

The pattern of distribution of mamata holdings illustrates such factors as the dispersed settlements of early mamata elders and land transfers between mamata. The size of a particular mamata holding was probably determined by the lack of claim on the land when the elders arrived and their mobility over the land. The increase in the number of holdings and the size of land owned by a particular mamata may be due to the extinction of the original owners. If a mamata became extinct, the mamata (of the same kema) normally associated with it in traditional affairs acquired ownership rights over the vacant land.

Mamata holdings, physical conditions and mamata population

Unlike the physical features of Tadhimboko, ecological conditions vary from locality to locality, and to some degree affect all mamata holdings. The distribution of soil types and present plant-cover illustrate this variation between holdings, both intra-mamata and inter-mamata. The grassland had traditionally been the best hunting ground and not all mamata are favoured in this regard. The whole coastline of Tadhimboko has soil ranging from sand to sandy alluvium, and is presently coconut land. Its high rate of water permeability, and therefore its extreme liability to dry conditions, make this soil type the least favourable for gardening. Of the 15 living mamata owning land west of the Ñalimbiu, 7 own blocks partly or wholly of this soil type. From the point of view of good gardening land, the remaining 8 mamata are favoured by the presence of recent alluvium with a vegetation of secondary and regenerating forest. Naturally mamata holdings with thick deposits of recent alluvium about the Ñalimbiu River and are therefore most susceptible to flood damage. Bank erosion can be serious and the river may actually change its course.

Away from the frequently wind-swept coast and its black sand and the recent alluvial deposits of the west bank of the Ñalimbiu, older alluvium predominates. Most of this land is covered with natural grass, especially Themeda australis and Imperata cylindrica, broken by 'ribbons' and 'islands' of secondary forest. Mamata T1 and G6 have most of this type of land.

The pattern of distribution of soils and vegetation in relation to mamata holdings in Roroni is similar to that found west of the Nalimbiu.

The number of holdings and the total area of land claimed by the mamata in Tadhimboko vary greatly, as Table 6.1 shows for three mamata from different kema. There is also much variation in the population of the land-owning mamata. In the examples cited, the mamata which are legal owners of large areas of land have smaller populations than the mamata which claim a small area of land: each member of Mamata T4 owns, on the average, 10.6 acres of customary land, while members of Mamata H1 each have ownership rights to 109.2 acres. Mamata G10 falls between these extremes.

Table 6.1

The land and population of
three mamata in Tadhimboko, 1966

<u>Mamata</u>	Land owned		<u>Mamata</u> population				Acreage per person
	No. of blocks	Total acreage	Men	Women	Children	Total	
<u>Kema ni Thimbo (T4)</u>	3	530	12	11	27	50	10.6
<u>Kema ni Thongo (H1)</u>	2	3,822	9	11	15	35	109.2
<u>Kema ni Gaubata (G10)</u>	4	1,290	4	5	25	34	37.9

Although the mamata has territorial rights, it is not a territorial unit. Its members are scattered throughout the region. The places of residence of members of the three mamata in Table 6.1 are shown in Table 6.2. It is clear from these examples that mamata members do not always reside on their land. Exogamous marriage, the matrilineal system of social affiliation, the virilocal nature of residence, and the network of social obligations in which the local big-man is the central figure, all tend to encourage the wide dispersal of members of a mamata. Thus

land-ownership rights of mamata members most commonly apply to areas outside their places of residence.

Table 6.2

Places of residence of members of
three mamata in Tadhimboko

Village	<u>Kema ni</u>		<u>Kema ni</u>		<u>Kema ni</u>	
	<u>Thimbo</u>	<u>(T4)</u>	<u>Thongo</u>	<u>(H1)</u>	<u>Gaubata</u>	<u>(G10)</u>
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Suagi	18	36.00	7	20.00	9	26.47
Roroni	0	0	4	11.43	8	23.52
Gorabau	7	14.00	2	5.71	5	14.72
Kokomu	1	2.00	0	0	1	2.94
Tatau	0	0	0	0	1	2.94
Tenahulu	0	0	2	5.71	0	0
Parisisi	0	0	7	20.00	0	0
Papagu	0	0	0	0	7	20.59
Tumurora	0	0	5	14.29	0	0
Komuporo	8	16.00	0	0	0	0
Ñalivovo	0	0	7	20.00	0	0
Gaimali	0	0	0	0	3	8.82
Gilutae	2	4.00	0	0	0	0
Abuabili	9	18.00	0	0	0	0
Vura	5	10.00	0	0	0	0
Aola	0	0	1	2.86	0	0
Total	50	100	35	100	34	100

Usage rights and distribution
of holdings

An examination of the distribution of land-usage rights in relation to the distribution of mamata holdings will show more accurately the correlation, or lack of it, between the realities of agricultural work and the law of land ownership. Table 6.3 shows the kema membership of villagers and their wives in two parts of Tadhimboko - Roroni and the land west of the Ñalimbiu River - and the mamata holdings on which their gardens are located. In Roroni not one individual cultivates his own mamata land, and only one (Tubu) cultivates land owned by his wife's mamata. The majority of individual gardeners are members of Kema ni Gaubata cultivating Thongo land opposite the village; they also maintain gardens on Kema ni Gaubata land but of a different mamata, south of the village. The majority of Kema ni Gaubata men in Roroni have their

Table 6.3

Kema and mamata of villagers, their wives and lands on which
their gardens are located, 1966

Village	Name	Kema ni Gaubata	Kema ni Thongo	Kema ni Thimbo	Kema ni Lathi	Kema ni Nekama	Others	Mamata land on which garden located
<u>Gilutae</u> T1 and G2*	Qalo			T4				T1, G5
	Kawanivere			T4				
	Vuki	G2**						G2
	Qalirere			T2				
	Waqa			T8				T1, G5
	Nabici	G23						
	Nayacalau				L2			T1
	Bulatale	G4						
<u>Makile</u> T2	Tukai						Malaitan	G2
	Mate			T2				
	Bale			T2				T2, G3
	Waqanitoga	G22						
	Waka	G6						G2, G3
	Navuakaca		H7					
	Ravuso	G23						G4
	Loaloa			T2				
	Delai			T8				G2, G3, Llv. L2
	Tuicama	G25						
	Caucau			T8				G4
	Babokola	G24						
	Natuituba		H8					G4
	Bebeloa	G26						
	Tale				L1			L1, T4
	Seniloli			T8				
<u>Gaimali</u> L1	Ulu ***	G8						G8
	Jaqali				L1			G4
	Marama	G10						
	Ulunikuita	G5						T1, T3
	Losalini			T10				
	Pamauto	G5						T1
	Toga		H6					
	Mucu	G19						G4
	Lolou			T8				
	Tavukitu	G19						G4
	Covulaca				L1			
	Sogare	G20						T1
	Mila	G4						
	Kama	G1						G1, G4
	Tute			T8				
	Mataika		H4					G4
	Kulabau	G21						
	Tukana			T3				
	Deceased wife	G5						

<u>Sopapera</u> G4	Nabaro		H4		G4
	Sese	G4			
	Tora	G4			G4
	Rokolewasau			T8	
	Colata		H4		G4
<u>Abuabili</u> G5	Cakacaka			T9	
	Masilaca ***	G4			G4
	Vesi	G5			G5
	Maopa			T4	
	Manusoni				Malaitan
	Vatea				Malaitan
	Sikita				Malaitan
	Vosarua				Malaitan
<u>Ravu</u> G7	Kotoiwasa ***				Malaitan
	Meki ***	G5			G5
	Cakau	G17			M1
	Dauvosa		H2		G7
	Ravula				
	Tonasila				Malaitan
	Wasaca				Malaitan
	Tupou				Malaitan
	Cakobau				Malaitan
	Tulia				Malaitan
<u>Nalimera</u> G8	Ratu	G15			G8, T1
	Coniga			T2	
	Bavadra	G15			G8, L1
	Vukikoro	G27			
	Ravugona	G15			G8
<u>Taraia</u> G3	Musudroka	G6			
	Dominiko				Malaitan
	Mokoisa				Malaitan
	Turagarere				Malaitan
	Moro				Malaitan
	Qali				Malaitan
	Sucudua				Malaitan
	Bese				Malaitan
	Tausere				Malaitan
<u>Lathiko</u> L1 v L2	Ceketa				Malaitan
	Draudau				Malaitan
	Nalewa				Malaitan
	Qiolevu	G28			G1
<u>Maluka</u> T1	Gavidi ***				Malaitan
	Volau			T1	L1 v L2
	Matanimeke	G18			T1
	Moto			T1	G1
<u>Tearoku</u> T2	Vute		H5		
	Turukawa				Malaitan
	Bole				Rennell

Table 6.3 cont.

Kema and mamata of villagers, their wives and lands on which their gardens are located, 1966

Village	Name	Kema ni <u>Gaubata</u>	Kema ni <u>Thongo</u>	Kema ni <u>Thimbo</u>	Kema ni <u>Lathi</u>	Kema ni <u>Nekama</u>	Others	Mamata land on which garden located
<u>Roroni</u> H1	Jacob Vouza		H2					H1
	Irene						Malaitan	
	Matia						Malaitan	H1
	Vakaoca		H9					
	Rasolea						Malaitan	H1
	Naikoro						Malaitan	
	Naitokatoka						Malaitan	H1
	Vuikuka	G5						
	Nasarava	G1						H1, G9
	Bolarua						Malaitan	
	Vanua		H2					H1, G9
	Lovo	G29						
	Volavola		H10					G9
	Qica		H9					
	Vuiyasawa		H10					H1
	Mulo	G10						
	Tubu		H11					H1, G9
	Ucalevu		H1					
	Marama						Santa	H1, G9
	Makutu	G1					Isabel	
	Gucake	G30						H1
	Ranadi	G29						
	Vakaoti	G29						H1
	Maba			T9				
	Tukasara	G31						H1, G9
	Daudara		H10					
	Bogiwalu	G14						H1
	Tema				L4			
	Vatanimoto	G5						H1
	Elava		H11					
	Tuqota	G31						H1, G9
	Bakalevu		H2					
	Dara ***	G7						H1
	Takalai ***	G32						H1
	Vuliwale ***		H10					G9
	Tawayaga ***		H10					G9
	Beranaveta						Malaitan	H1
	Kalokalo		H12					

* The mamata owning the land on which the village is located.

** G, H, T, N, and L represent the five kema while the number denotes the particular mamata of the individual concerned.

*** Single man.

mamata land in the interior of Tadhimboko East while a few (Nasarava, Vatanimoto and Dara) have ownership rights west of the Ñalimbiu. Volavola and Vuliwale are brothers who cultivate their father's mamata land. Fig. 6.2 shows the distribution of these land rights.

The position is markedly different west of the Ñalimbiu (see Fig. 6.3) where eleven individuals cultivate their own mamata land, and one of these also has a garden on land belonging to his own kema. Nine others have gardens only on land of their own kema. Five people have gardens only on land of a different kema, although four others maintain gardens only on land of their own kema. The occurrence of some individuals in more than one group results from their cultivation of gardens in holdings of mamata and kema other than their own. There is only one man gardening on his wife's mamata land, this is Nabaro of Sopapera who is a member of Kema ni Thongo which has no land in this area. Only one man cultivates land owned by his father's mamata; this is Jaqali, whose father is Ramoli, the head of Mamata G4.

Thus in the two localities examined, Roroni shows no connection between the realities of land use and ownership while west of the Ñalimbiu there is some correlation. A few people in both areas acquire usage rights on their wives' or father's lands, but the great majority cultivate gardens on land of a different mamata or kema. This indicates that karuba belonging to certain kema are being utilised by members of other kema.

Rights associated with improvements

Improvements made to land are arbitrarily divided here into short-term improvements, of which food gardens are the most important, and long-term improvements, of which coconut trees are the most important.

When a cultivated garden is abandoned and karuba develops, the planter's exclusive right to that particular block remains. In Roroni today only one individual (Tukasara) cultivates his own karuba. He is a member of Kema ni Gaubata; one of his gardens which is the most distant from Roroni is on Kema ni Thongo land. Roroni is rather unusual in the matter of karuba inheritance.

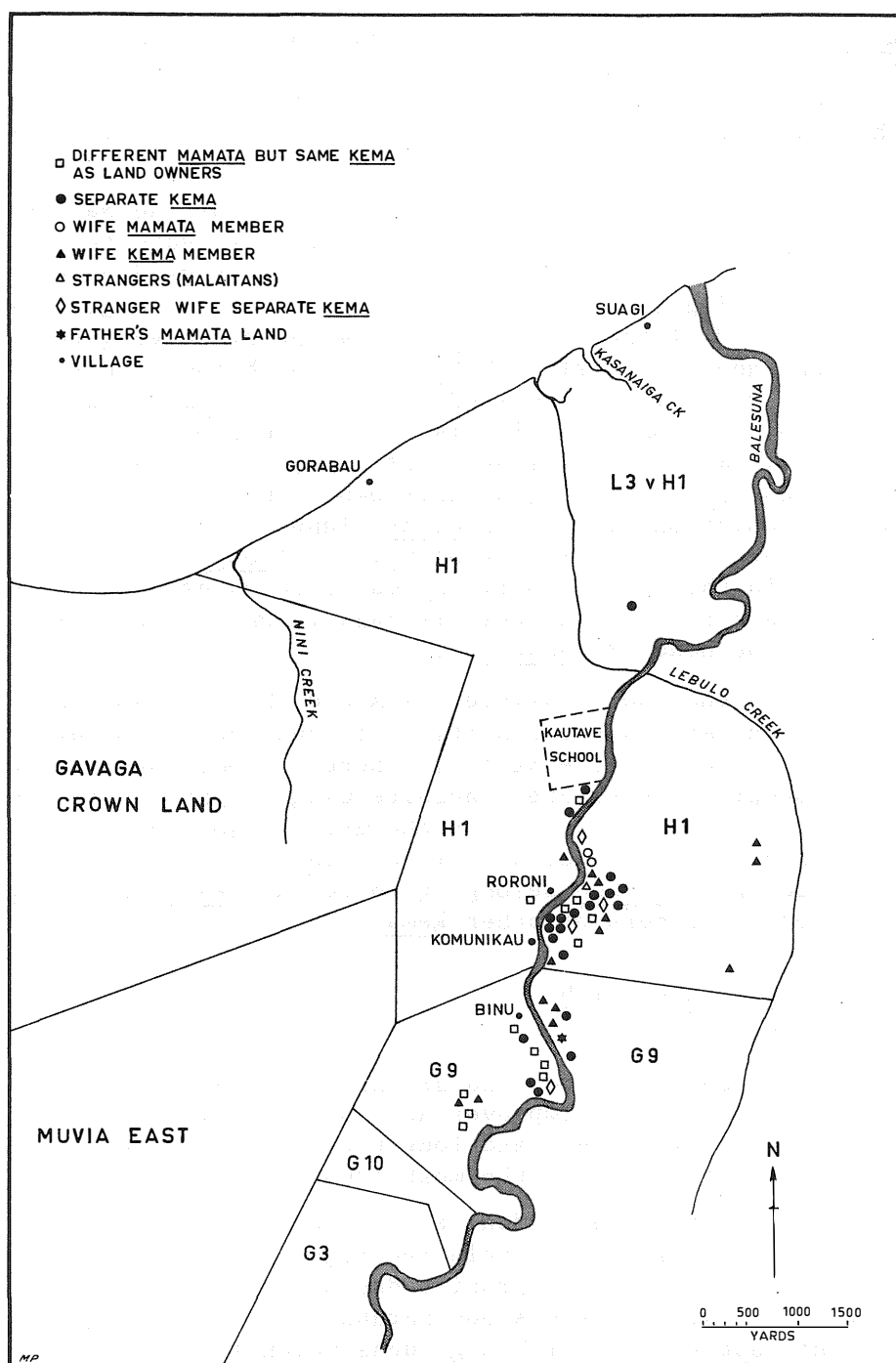


Fig. 6.2. Land holdings and block-user rights at Roroni

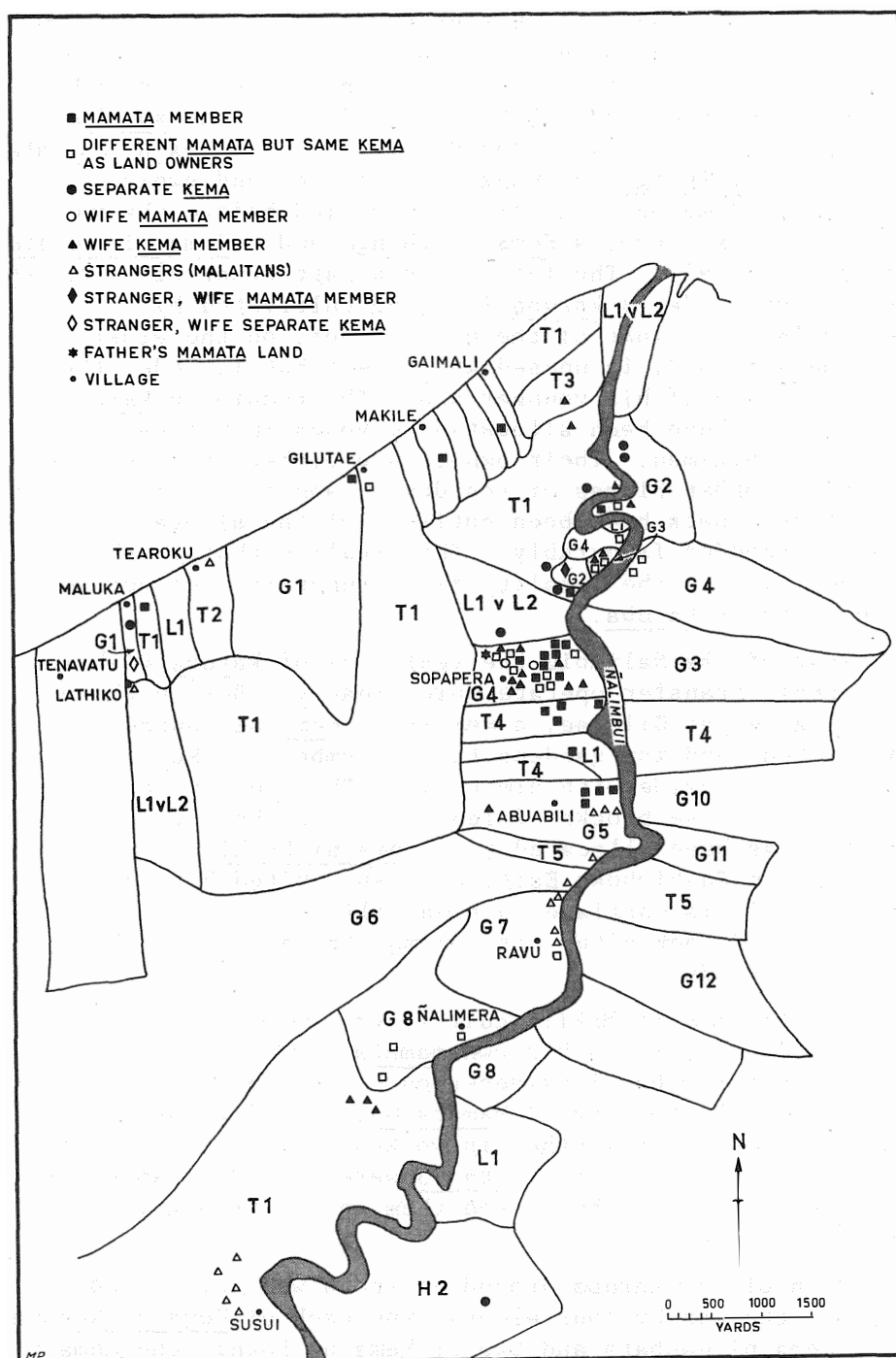


Fig. 6.3. Land holdings and block-user rights at Nalimbiu

Those men who reside in Roroni today, with the exception of Tukasara, Tuqota and Vuiyasawa, lived before the war in other villages to the west and in the southern and interior part of Tadhimboko East. Some of the karuba opposite the village belonged to elders of Kema ni Gaubata and Kema ni Thongo (although not of the land-owning mamata). Some of these elders had died before the war while the last two, a Kema ni Thongo and a Kema ni Gaubata, died about 1954. The latter was a part-owner of block G9. The former elder's karuba is being cultivated by his sister's son. That of the other elder, on the elder's own mamata land, is unused at present but is under the watchful eye of his younger son. The remaining karuba now in use have been allocated by Vouza in his capacity as local big-man. Their owners are either dead or have moved to other places of residence, and in the latter case the true owners have been notified of the allocation and have responded favourably. They realise that as they no longer live in the locality they cannot make effective use of their karuba.

West of the Nalimbiu the realities of karuba rights and their transfer operate more clearly. Before the war the big-man at Gilutae, a member of Kema ni Gaubata, allocated land for gardens to two members of Kema ni Thimbo who reside with him today. The two men still cultivate those blocks of land. One of the big-man's karuba has been allocated to a Kema ni Lathi man who was at Vura in Tadhimboko East, but was invited by the big-man, after his marriage to a Gaimali woman, to live in Gilutae and look after his own mamata land on which Gaimali stands.

The big-man at Makile cultivates two gardens outside the village, both on his own mamata land and on karuba inherited from his long-deceased uncle. He has two other karuba on the holding of Mamata G3; one of these he is cultivating and the other is worked by his son. These two karuba on land of Mamata G3 were worked by an elder of Kema ni Thimbo who passed them on to the big-man before he died.

Much of the karuba around Sopapera was cultivated before the war by four elders, one each of Kema ni Nekama and Kema ni Gaubata and two of Kema ni Lathi: one Kema ni Lathi and the Kema ni Gaubata elder (the latter is the sole survivor of the four) in their capacity as owners of the adjacent blocks.

When villagers returned to Gaimali after the war, the Kema ni Gaubata elder did not allocate the karuba in the same way as Vouza did at Roroni. Instead, the people took the initiative and asked him if they could cultivate particular blocks. The need for social solidarity, ties through marriage, and the desire to maintain good relations constantly reminded the gardener that he should not interfere with the probable line of a neighbour's gardening advance.

Thus rights to the karuba and their inheritance are a definite and significant part of the pattern of land manipulation among the Tadhimboko. Certainly the unsystematic distribution of individual land rights in relation to land-holdings by the mamata, and the lack of accord between rights and the inheritance of the karuba, on the one hand, and the traditional procedure of inheritance on the other, are the result of a complex set of factors, both human and physical. In Tadhimboko the overwhelming lack of correspondence between land ownership and the realities of use is an adjustment to the obvious maldistribution of soil resources on a mamata basis. The network of social links and the broader feeling of possessing a common identity ensure that this incongruity will persist.

Permanent improvements, especially coconut groves, have taken a different turn in the way they have been transferred and inherited. Before European contact coconut groves, like gardens, provided the objects of subsistence, exchange and ceremonial. Today they have acquired a cash value. Roroni is not a copra-producing village since all except Vouza's coconut groves are not yet bearing. In Gorabau the coconut groves producing copra today were planted by mamata elders prior to the war; the following examples show the variation in the pattern of inheritance and transfer of coconuts in this part of Tadhimboko.

Kayaga, a member of Kema ni Gaubata, today looks after three separate coconut groves containing more than 700 coconut trees. The first block lies east of Gorabau with more than 250 trees. These were planted by his uncle, Soro. At Soro's death the coconut trees were transferred to Vati, Kayaga's mother, from whom Kayaga himself inherited the grove. The second grove lies on the west bank of Metepono River, also with over 200 trees. These were planted by Kayaga's father, Vokia of Kema ni

Thimbo. The grove has been allocated to Kayaga by the three brothers who own that land and belong to the same kema as Vocia. No member of Vocia's mamata survives today. The third and smallest grove, on the west bank of Lebulo Creek near Suagi, was planted by Kura, a Kema ni Lathi elder. Kayaga maintains that he provided for Kura in his old age and was responsible for the mortuary feast when Kura died. These services give him the right to control Kura's coconuts and this right has never been openly challenged by members of Kura's mamata who live in Suagi.

Moi, also of Kema ni Gaubata, has about 860 pre-war coconuts in eleven small groves, each one containing from 50 to 100 trees. All blocks are to the east of the village, and five were planted by his father (also of Kema ni Gaubata although of a different mamata) who transferred them to him. Two groves were planted by his father's younger brother. These, too, Moi inherited through his father. Four groves were planted by elders of his father's mamata; his father inherited them and transferred them to him. An adult member of his father's mamata lives at Suagi and has clearly expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation.

Vulaca, a member of Kema ni Thongo, today produces copra from three large coconut groves containing more than 2,000 trees. The first block, situated west of the Metepono, was planted by Tutuvi, his mamata elder. Tutuvi transferred the coconut block to Sovalawa of Kema ni Gaubata who, before the war, transferred it to his son, Bai; the latter asserted that this was done because none of Tutuvi's mamata was living in the village (Tetere) at the time. When Vulaca came to live in Gorabau after the war (previously he was at Volonavua with his mother), Bai transferred the coconuts to him. The remaining two blocks, both located east of Gorabau, have had the same history, with Vulaca inheriting from his mamata through Sovalawa and his son, Bai.

The following examples from Gaimali and Makile show the situation west of the Nalimbiu.

At Gaimali, Jaqali, of Mamata Ll, is bere taoni over more than 250 mamata coconuts growing in three separate areas. The first grove, just outside and south of Gaimali, was planted by Duibale,

an elder of Mamata L2 who planted coconuts on his own mamata land. Ramoli, Jaqali's father and a Kema ni Gaubata, looked after Duibale in his old age and provided the mortuary feast at his death. Duibale was the last member of his mamata living at Gaimale at that time. The coconut grove was inherited by Ramoli who has transferred it to his son, Jaqali. The remaining two blocks, one south of Gilutae and the other west of Gaimali (the former on Mamata G2 land and the latter on Mamata L2 land and adjacent to that planted by Duibale), were planted by Ramoli who has transferred them to Jaqali and therefore to a different kema and mamata.

Bale, the big-man of Makile, has about 600 bearing mamata coconuts. The first grove, on the southern side of the village, was planted by Sokia, his mamata elder. Sokia transferred it to Mua, his sister's son. Mua then transferred the grove to his younger brother, Tovu, from whom Bale inherited the grove. The two brothers' mother and Bale's mother were siblings. The second block is on Mamata G2 land by the west bank of the Ñalimbiu. This, too, was planted by Sokia and his younger brother, Vata. Rokoau, a Kema ni Thimbo man but of a different mamata, inherited the grove from Sokia and Vata. Rokoau then returned it to the mamata when he transferred it to Mua who passed it on to Bale's now deceased younger brother, Vuso, from whom the big-man received the grove. The third largest grove is at Tearoku, west of Gilutae. This was also planted by Sokia and Vata who were succeeded first by Mua and later by Rokoau. Tovu then inherited it and was followed by the present holder.

These examples illustrate some of the recurring practices associated with alterations in the law governing the inheritance and transfer of permanent improvements to land, particularly the most valuable improvement of coconut trees. With the reappraisal of the value of the coconut, due mainly to external trade and its position in the Solomons' cash economy, the traditional pattern of matrilineal inheritance has been modified although it still applies broadly. Even in the past some irregularities occurred and coconuts passed outside the owning mamata, as when transactions were arranged between the owning elder and his chosen successor. If no member of the

mamata was alive or lived in the locality, then they were transferred outside the mamata of the owner. Mortuary feasts, a traditionally sanctioned means of 'alienating' improvements, also played an important role. Parents have also come to assume a direct responsibility for the future welfare of their children. This tendency will undoubtedly increase in the future and the inheritance of coconut groves will increasingly become patrilineal rather than matrilineal in nature.

The rights of Malaitan migrants

Malaita accounts for more than one-third of the 142,000 people in the Solomons today, and until recently supplied most plantation labour. Opportunities to make money in Malaita are relatively few so it is not surprising that Malaitans have found their way into Tadhimboko as employees in non-Melanesian establishments or actually drawing their means of livelihood from the land of the Tadhimboko.

There are two classes of Malaitan migrants: those men who have married into the community or are closely associated with the big-man, and those who were recently brought to settle in Tadhimboko by the local mamata head. The former have become part of the village society and participate in its work. There are three of these men (all from Kwarae) in Roroni. All have worked for long periods on coconut plantations in Guadalcanal, particularly R.C. Syme's estate at Domo, J.C.C. Williamson's Berande estate, and LPPL's Ruavatu plantation. Matia was the first arrival: he had worked at Ruavatu before the Japanese invasion and during the war was closely associated with Vouza as a scout for the United States Marines. In 1945 Vouza bought Matia's wife, Vakaoca, a member of Kema ni Thongo, from Reko in Tadhimboko East. Matia's association with Vouza still persists and from it springs his rights to use land in Roroni, land over which Vouza is a general guardian and which belongs to Kema ni Thongo, of which both Vouza and Vakaoca are members.

The second Malaitan in Roroni was Rasolea. Before settling in the village in 1958, Rasolea had worked at Doma for nearly ten years. His wife is also Malaitan, the only daughter of Ramanuca, a Malaitan South Seas Evangelical Mission (SSEM) catechist who has worked in north Guadalcanal since 1937. During the war Ramanuca was friendly with Vouza who had by then changed from the Melanesian Mission to SSEM, of which he has remained

a staunch supporter to this day. After Rasolea left Doma, Vouza allocated Rasolea a house-site and land for gardening.

The other Malaitan in Roroni is Naitokatoka. He worked at Berande until he married a Kema ni Gaubata woman in 1960. While employed at Berande he frequently visited Matia and it was through Matia that Naitokatoka's wife was bought. His marriage to a local girl automatically ensured his acquisition of rights to gardening land in the village.

Another Malaitan who has acquired a special and secure position in the Tadhimboko system of land-usage rights is Tukai of Gilutae. Tukai married a daughter of the village big-man and head of Mamata G2. The big-man gave Tukai not only the control of his karuba on his holding west of the Nalimbiu but also rights to a few mamata coconuts on that land.

Thus the Malaitans who have married into Tadhimboko or are closely associated with the local big-man have obtained land-usage rights which differ little, if at all, from those enjoyed by local men who do not belong to the land-owning unit; only their methods of acquiring these rights differ. They are permanent residents of the village and participate fully in the community's activities and consciously, if not conscientiously, enter into its network of reciprocal obligations.

Two examples of Malaitan migrants who were brought to Tadhimboko by local mamata heads will be examined. The first are the Malaitans living at Susui. They learnt about the land there through their leader's son, who works in Honiara and knew the owner of Mamata T5 holding. He asked the owning unit, Mamata T1, if the Malaitans could be granted full cultivation rights on this block of land. The owners agreed and in 1963 the men arrived to clear the land, build houses and plant sweet potato. A few coconuts were also planted but these were the property of the land-owners. Wives and children arrived from Malaita in April 1964, but in that year the Government completed arrangements to lease from the Melanesian owners the land known as Muvia West, of which Susui is a part. Thus the Malaitans at Susui are outside the scope of Tadhimboko customary tenure. They have become non-rent-paying tenants-at-will of the Government. Because of the Government's desire to attract investment in a mechanised rice development project at Susui, the

Malaitans have been ordered not to plant any permanent cash crops. The coconuts already planted will not be compensated for. By arrangement with the Department of Agriculture, they clean the irrigation canal on a contractual basis for \$45 per clearing.¹ However, if the Government succeeds in attracting overseas capital to the area, the Malaitans will have to vacate Susui.

The second group of Malaitans, at Abuabili and Ravu, consists of five families and a single man. All of them were brought over by local mamata heads in mid-1964. The mamata heads, who also live on the land, have given them full usage rights. Today they plant sweet potato for sale in Honiara market and part of the proceeds goes to the mamata heads. At the same time these Malaitans plant the mamata heads' coconuts on these lands although this is not regular work. The Malaitans realise that they are charged twice for the usage rights extended to them - once in terms of their labour and once in cash - but they are there at the pleasure of the mamata heads and should they bargain for an improvement, the consequences may not be all to their advantage. Instead they could secure usage rights to land in Tadhimboko where conditions of occupation may not be as onerous as at Abuabili and Ravu, or they could find wage employment elsewhere.

The Malaitan migrants who reside outside the village community then, with the exception of those at Susui, are the responsibility of the local big-man with whom they are associated and from whom they have received land-usage rights. Whenever they participate in the work of the community, it is through the mamata head and is limited to his own circle of friends and relatives. Thus they are still strangers in a not-so-strange land.

Some factors in mamata land disputes and their settlement

Land disputes in Tadhimboko involve rival inter-mamata claims for the ownership of particular blocks, the precise location of mamata boundaries, and the ownership and use of permanent improvements to the land. A few disputes have been settled by the Native Court; the great majority have not and rival claims are still part of the social climate of the area (see Table 6.4).

¹ Department of Agriculture, Honiara, unpublished data, 1966.

Table 6.4

A summary of details of disputed land in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Disputants	Respective <u>kema</u> and <u>mamata</u>	Nature of dispute	Name and description of land	Decision of Native Court
Koroi v Moce	G3 v G9	Boundary	Boli-Soso, southeast of Tetere plantation	Court decided against Koroi and ruled that Soso belonged to (G10) Vuce
Kama v Tukana	G1 v T3	Ownership	Taloea, large triangular block of G1 land west of Gilutae	Court decided against Tukana who appealed for re-hearing by the District Officer who upheld its decision
Vuce v Qelo	G10 v G10	Ownership	Sape to Metepono River	Court decided against Qelo
Tinai v Gonelevu	H1 v L3	Ownership	Kautavē to the sea	Not yet heard by Native Court
Tale v Yacalevu	L1 v L2	Ownership (blows have been exchanged)	Mouth of Nalimbiu near Tenavatu, and Sopapera	Not yet heard
Dakai v Sevusevudre	H1 v H4	Ownership	West bank of Metepono	Not yet heard
Naikasau v Naqara	H3 v N1	Ownership	South of Koli	Not yet heard
Butadroka v Bai	T7 v T6	Ownership	Tumurora	Not yet heard
Balawa v Butadroka	G13 v T7	Ownership	Northwest of Tenahulu	Not yet heard
Balawa v Vesi v Vore v Vuce v Tiko	G13 v G5 v G11 v G10 v T5	Ownership	Nalivovo	Not yet heard

Land consciousness among Melanesians has increased greatly since their first contact with European culture and its cash-dominated economic system. In the traditional economy land provided the means of subsistence, it was the object of group cohesion, and on it were propitiated the ancestral spirits. The land helped to tie a group of people together and had deep emotive connotations. The new economy also gave the land a cash value, and it attained a new position in the people's assessment of the physical resources of their territory. Land may be sold or used to earn cash and it was only after alienation was complete that the owners came fully to realise the implications of their acts.

Many mamata in Tadhimboko trace their origins back to areas outside the district: Nggela, Savo, Visale, East Guadalcanal and the interior of the island itself. The original mamata which reached Tadhimboko did not arrive at the same time, and because ownership of mamata land is based on first occupation and the identification of places of elder residence and worship, this difference in time of arrival created many opportunities for argument and counter-claims to land. The people's decreasing knowledge of oral traditions further confused the situation.

The variation in the time of arrival of the mamata in Tadhimboko meant that the mamata which arrived after much, if not all, of the land had been claimed, were forced to establish dependent relationships with, and receive usage rights from, other land-owning mamata of their own or separate kema. However, the passage of time, continued occupation and use of land given by the owner, and past assistance by the junior partner in certain social functions, have tended to blur the initial dependent relationship. The rise in fortune of the junior mamata, too, may have given it a relatively strong position vis-a-vis the senior mamata, and encouraged it to express a rival claim to the land with which it had been in continuous association. In cases where evidence to show the previously dependent relationship between two mamata had been obscure for a long time, and was unknown by both parties, the establishment of independent land-owning mamata was assured. Such a development may explain the multiplicity of mamata and their holdings.

Both within and outside Tadhimboko much customary land was alienated between 1896 and 1916. The need for social respectability and stability, hinging on marriage links

and reciprocal obligations, placed a responsibility on elders to express their sympathy and generosity towards those whose mamata land had been sold. This was done by giving them usage rights over certain blocks of land. Today ownership rights are being claimed over land where only usage rights previously existed.

The extinction of the owning mamata is an important factor in land disputes today. Customary land law holds that in the event of extinction the mamata (of the same kema) normally associated with the owners in traditional matters should inherit the land. However, knowledge of the past associations of mamata is disappearing fast and is not known in some cases; hence the rival claims of ownership.

Rival claims also exist over improvements, especially coconut groves. The most frequent cause of disagreement is the way in which coconuts grown by mamata elders are transferred by the holders through the patrilineal line. The extinction of owning mamata has also contributed to disputes over improvements.

World War II added to the general uncertainty in many cases. Some sacred sites and notable landmarks used by the mamata to identify the land it claimed have now disappeared, so there are arguments about who the rightful owners are and where mamata land boundaries (vovota) should run.

The Native Administration Regulation 1953 gave local councils considerable power to legislate on land matters, but very few councils have exercised this power. The Guadalcanal Council passed a resolution on moveable property (Allan 1957:226), but not on land. This omission may reflect the Council's feeling that since customary land laws differ from sub-district to sub-district, land tenure matters are local affairs which cannot be legislated upon: they are for the individuals concerned in the dispute to settle in the presence of the district headman. This attitude would help to explain the very low number of disputes and rival claims that have reached the Native Court, set up by the Regulation in 1953, for settlement. Moreover, the Native Court was not set up specifically to settle land disputes; indeed, it is a general purpose court available to hear anybody's grievance. It was specially instructed to hear cases of land dispute where the value of the land disputed did not exceed \$200 (BSIP 1961b:408). This value-limit introduced a complication since it was not clear how the value

of the land could be arrived at and by whom (although presumably this would be undertaken by staff of the Lands Department). In practice, this value-limit seems to have been disregarded.

Thus disputes over the ownership of land abound in Tadhimboko, but they are not being resolved. The machinery for their settlement exists, but it is not used to any great extent. This may reflect a lack of confidence in the capacity of the Native Court to handle land matters fairly. Consequently people prefer to advance their claims within a closed circle of friends and relatives than to expose their position in an open court and possibly become the victim of its decision.

Tadhimboko opposition to Government land rights

The area of land disputed by the Government and the Tadhimboko consists of two plots (LR 394 and 302, see Fig. 3.1), known as the Muvia and Ñalimbiu land, which have a total area of 11,000 acres. Government considered that it had a clear title to the land,¹ having purchased it from the SIDC. From the legal standpoint Government's title was good; but the Tadhimboko view was that 'there was no waste land here'.² They became increasingly conscious of land after the war, particularly during negotiations over the Ilu Farm land between 1948 and 1955. They were shown not only the land Government needed for the Ilu scheme but also the extent of the Muvia and Ñalimbiu blocks. Their attitude towards the Government claim hardened and they refused to transfer the Ilu land in fee simple (although they were prepared to accept a lease on it by Government). They would not recognise Government's ownership of Muvia and Ñalimbiu, and a deadlock ensued.

Government policy regarding settlement of the Muvia dispute was ambivalent until 1965: it was not prepared to take the issue into a court of law but it would not unequivocally relinquish its title. Government possessed

¹ Proceedings of Advisory Council (April 1960:16).

² Proceedings of Advisory Council (April 1956:9).

little detailed knowledge about Tadhimboko tenurial practices.¹ It was also in the process of formulating the Protectorate's Land and Titles Ordinance which it was hoped would provide machinery for the settlement of Muvia.² While this uncertainty of policy persisted, the Tadhimboko went ahead and established settlements on the disputed land. They realised that their claims to ownership would be strengthened by actual use of the land involved. However, their utilisation of Muvia was restricted to the forest areas; the grassland was untouched.

When the Land and Titles Ordinance (BSIP 1961b:chapter 56) was enacted in 1959, Government had not altered its position in relation to the Muvia dispute. It accepted the recommendation of Allan (1957:298-9) that a Solomon Islands Land Trust Board be created as a body corporate, and this was set up in 1961³

to provide for the development of land that is owned by no-one. This land is called vacant land under the new law and it is very important to understand what vacant land is. Vacant land is not native customary land. It is any land which is neither native customary land, nor public land nor land in which someone has been granted an estate. It is land without any kind of owner. The new law says that if the land which is not registered and which has not been used by any one for occupation or cultivation during the 25 years before 1958 then it is not native customary land.⁴

¹ Despite the investigation by C.H. Allan, it was inevitable that his report (Allan 1957) oversimplified the complex tenurial practices of the Solomons in its attempt at generalisation. During his visit to Roroni, Lands Commissioner Allan was left in no doubt about the people's feeling with regard to Muvia and Nalimbiu.

² Proceedings of Advisory Council (April 1960:16).

³ BSIP Department of Lands and Surveys, Annual Report (1964:1).

⁴ This is an extract from the High Commissioner's speech to the first meeting of the Board held on 22 February 1962. The Board consisted of the High Commissioner as chairman, the Commissioner of Lands, Crown Surveyor, a public servant, a non-public servant, and a panel of Solomon Islanders (two) from each of the six districts into which the Protectorate was divided for the purpose of the Board. Jacob Vouza was one of the two Guadalcanal representatives on the Board (BSIP Land Trust Board, Annual Report 1963:1).

The Solomon Islands Land Trust Board met only once, and it did not carry out any of its functions. Solomon Islanders do not consider that any land is vacant and regarded the new Board with great suspicion.¹ Government was therefore forced to review its position, and reached the conclusion that vacant land could only be discovered after a careful study of all claims to land ownership throughout the Solomons. Thus legislation was enacted in December 1964 to abolish the Solomon Islands Land Trust Board, as well as the definition of vacant land. Native customary land was redefined as any land lawfully owned, used or occupied by a person or community in accordance with current native usage.² This did not necessarily mean that Government recognised the Melanesian claim that vacant land as such did not exist. It did mean, however, that a costly and involved process of investigation into and evaluation of Melanesian land claims would be necessary before any piece of land could be declared vacant or owned by no-one. In the light of the increased land consciousness of Solomon Islanders and customary transfers of interests in land, there is little possibility that any 'vacant' land will be found.

The Guadalcanal Plains, in which Muvia is situated, are one of the most valuable agricultural assets in the Solomons. Their agricultural potential was demonstrated during 1943-45. A soil survey (Ballantyne 1961) has revealed that a wide area is capable of producing padi rice. Government therefore was resolved not to abandon its claim to ownership of Muvia in the face of Melanesian opposition. Yet it was aware of the extent and nature of this opposition, and its likely consequences should it be disregarded. At the same time Government realised that because no proper investigation was conducted prior to the granting of certificates of occupation to Burns Philp and SIDC over Muvia and Nalimbiu in 1908 and 1918, it had a moral obligation at least to investigate the Tadhimboko's claim to the land in question.

During 1964 five meetings were held at Ravu during which Government explained its position and proposals with regard to Muvia and Nalimbiu. The Tadhimboko thought that discussions should be confined at first to land west of the Metepono River, and that the remainder

¹ BSIP Department of Lands and Surveys, Annual Report (1964:4).

² Legislative Council Debates (December 1964:104).

of Muvia should be part of a separate settlement. Government agreed to this, and emphasised that it was particularly concerned to see the plains developed. In this task, outside capital was required, but this would not be forthcoming without secure title to land. Government then suggested that it was prepared to return the disputed land to the Melanesian owners provided they agreed to lease it back to Government on a long-term basis, i.e., for ninety-nine years. This was acceptable to the Melanesian owners. At first Government indicated that it desired to lease all the land included in Muvia, but the Melanesians objected on the ground that they required bush land for gardening. This was agreed to by Government, presumably in order not to jeopardise a successful settlement of the long-standing dispute. It follows, of course, that this concession could be raised by Government as a specific issue to bolster its position at a later date when the remainder of Muvia is discussed. Thus the grassed areas of Muvia west of the Metepono passed into Government control while the bush areas remained under customary tenure.¹ Government then leased Muvia West for ninety-nine years at the rate of 22¢ per acre per annum (see Fig. 6.4).

At the time the dispute over Muvia West was being settled, negotiations were also proceeding for a government lease over land known as Okea (see Fig. 6.4). A ninety-nine-year lease over this land, on the same terms as Muvia, was granted to Government by the owners. Melanesian ownership of this land, which is outside Muvia, has never been in question. Some of the mamata involved in the Muvia dispute are the recognised owners of Okea. Why had they weakened in their resolve to prevent further land alienation by Government? It seems that the Melanesian owners of Muvia and Okea were apprehensive that should a Crown lease over Okea be refused, Government would not return Muvia to the Tadhimboko owners. In fact, this view was expressed by leading Tadhimboko participants in the Muvia discussions. It would seem, too, that the total annual rental of

¹ The Government has transferred the title to Muvia West collectively to the mamata claiming ownership rights to it. Each of the mamata concerned has nominated one of its members to act as co-trustee, on its behalf and collectively with nominees of other mamata. These trustees collect the rent money on behalf of all the land-owners.

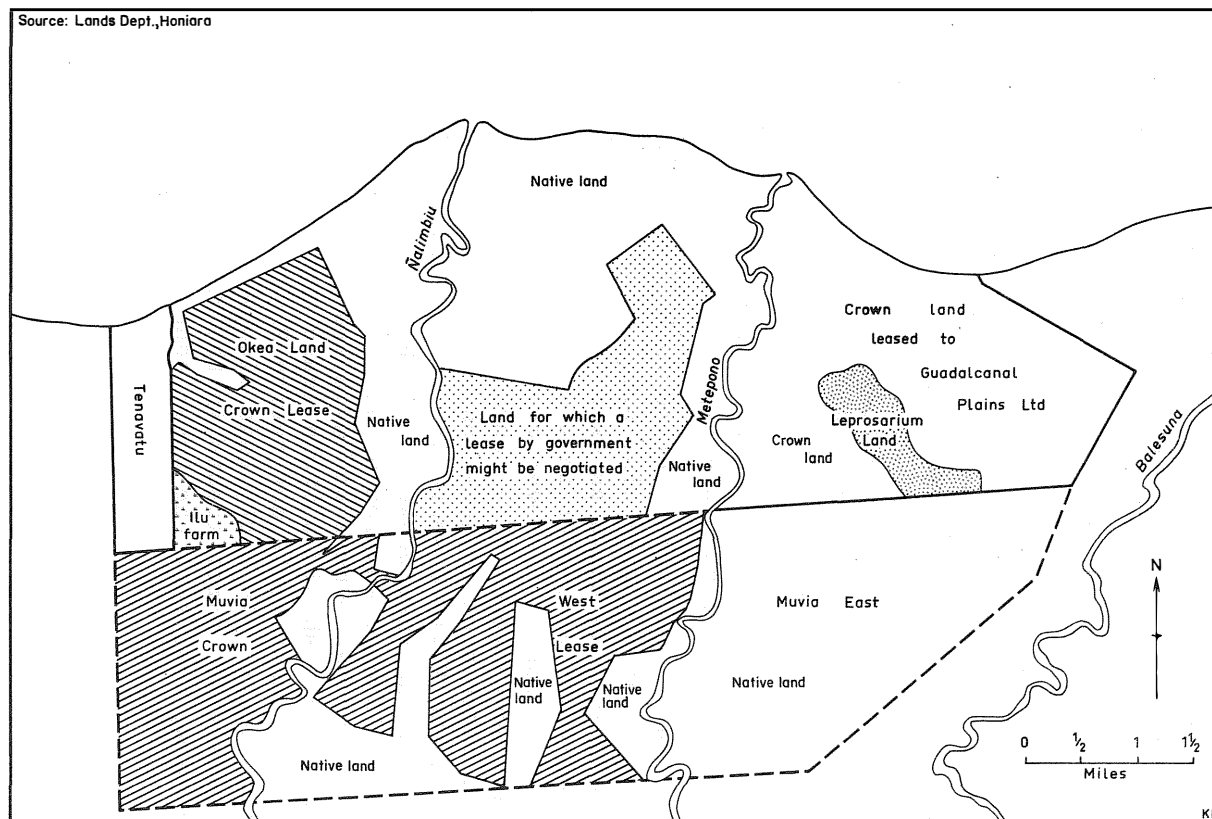


Fig. 6.4. Alienated land in Tadhimboko, 1966

\$1,776 for both Muvia West and Okea, which was payable in advance, proved an attractive incentive. Okea had also been unused since 1945 and in Government's view, would not be immediately required for Melanesian use.

During 1966 meetings were held at Roroni between government representatives and mamata claiming ownership rights over Muvia East. At these meetings the approach adopted in settling the dispute over Muvia West was followed, but Government insisted that it wanted to lease all the land, both grassed and forested, and at the same rental as for Muvia West. To support its argument, it stated that it would be very costly to demarcate the grassland from the bush, as was done at Muvia West; and that bush areas might harbour pests dangerous to rice and other economic crops which might be grown on the plains.¹

It seems certain that Government will succeed in leasing all the land in Muvia East. In fact, by the end of 1966 Vouza - a leading participant in the Muvia dispute - had already visited the Central District administration office to inquire about when the first rent money on Muvia East was likely to be paid. The mamata most concerned in the dispute, and the Tadhimboko generally, have concluded that they cannot effectively oppose the Government's bid to possess rights over Muvia. The experience, however, has left them suspicious of, and bitter about, the Government generally.

¹ However, little sign of pest destruction was observed on Guadalcanal Plains Ltd rice during 1966.

Chapter 7

Village subsistence agriculture¹

Introduction

Village agriculture in Tadhimboko meets subsistence requirements and also provides some cash earnings. It operates within the social framework of the village with its reciprocal rights and responsibilities, its supporting agricultural techniques, the prevailing level of village technology, the competing demands on the villager's time and labour resources, and the limitations and potentialities of the physical environment. As in other systems of subsistence agriculture, these factors interact in a distinctive manner to give Tadhimboko village agriculture its contemporary character.

Choice of garden site

The village gardener in Tadhimboko is limited in his choice of garden by the extent of the cultivable land available, particularly in his immediate locality, his evaluation of soil fertility, its proximity to his place of residence, the labour available, and his usage rights or potential usage rights. In Tadhimboko land-ownership and land-usage rights are generally at variance: while ownership of land is static, the granting and acquiring of usage rights are fairly fluid. Gardening rights persist, or can be obtained by the manipulation of social links if they do not already exist, on land where the prospective gardener does not possess rights of ownership.

¹ 'Village subsistence agriculture' here denotes the kind of agriculture carried on by village dwellers on mamata land which provides their main means of sustenance. Gardening work by wage-earners resident in their places of work is excluded since this is clearly subsidiary to wage employment and is usually undertaken on alienated land.

The extent and location of available land impose a general limit on agricultural activities. Tadhimboko has a total area of about 30,020 acres of which 17,328 have been alienated, leaving 12,692 acres for Melanesians' use. With a village population of 1,100 people, each villager has, in theory, 11.5 acres of available land. This figure will be reduced to 9.9 acres if Government succeeds in alienating a further 1,800 acres between the Ñalimbiu and Metepono rivers. However, in the triangular zone west of the Ñalimbiu which is bounded by Lathiko, Ñalimera and Gaimali there is an average of 5 acres of cultivable land per capita.¹ The equivalent figure for the Ñalimbiu-Metepono land (north of Muvia) is 17 acres per head, reducible to 11 acres should further alienation occur. Because there are large areas of usable land east of the Balesuna for the people of Roronj, Gorabau and Suagi, the land-population ratio there is similar to that of the Ñalimbiu-Metepono area, without allowing for probable future alienation.² The general land-population situation in the villages of Tadhimboko West is far from acute. In terms of present agricultural techniques and level of technology, together with the villagers' preference for forest land, no less than 5,800 acres, or 45.7 per cent of the available cultivable land west of the Balesuna, at present under grass, remain unused. As population increases and the Government acquires more land on the plains, techniques and crops suited to the grassland soils and within the economic grasp and capabilities of the villagers must be introduced if the latter are not to become discouraged by the presence

¹ This includes land under grass but excludes the coconut land now in production.

² The Balesuna-Berande area was soil-surveyed in 1965 to determine its capabilities for large-scale development, particularly for oil palm which is being successfully established by the Commonwealth Development Corporation at Ilu. The alienation of land necessary for such a scheme would reduce the amount of gardening land available in this locality to the level west of the Ñalimbiu River.

of large companies and demoralised by rent money.¹ If villages remain intact, the Tadhimboko will find themselves cultivating land further away from their villages.

Village gardeners attempt to locate their gardens as close as possible to their places of residence: only slightly over 8 per cent of the 227 gardens included in Table 7.1 are more than 3,500 yards away, while more than 50 per cent are less than 1,000 yards away. The proximity of gardens to place of residence is most clearly seen and for obvious reasons, in the dispersed individual settlements west of the Nalimbiu. Here most gardens are less than 500 yards from their owners' homes. The few exceptions are primarily the result of the shortage of usual gardening land near the settlement.

Most gardens of villagers at Gilutae, Makile and Gaimali are more than 2,000 yards from the homes of their owners, and a few beyond 4,000 yards, because the villages were established away from the gardening land along the west bank of the Nalimbiu (see Fig. 7.1), and because of the non-use and now non-availability of grassland close at hand. In fact, gardening work by these people is spilling across to the east bank of the river, and may come into conflict with the gardening operations of the people of Koli Point which are advancing in a general southwesterly direction.

At Roroni (see Fig. 7.2), Suagi and Gorabau most gardens are less than 2,000 yards from the homes of their owners and there is, as yet, no necessity to cultivate more distant areas.

Thus the location of garden sites and their distribution within the region result from a number of variables. Gardeners attempt to site their gardens as close as possible to their homes or access roads, and in areas

¹ Such a development is likely to result from long-term leases (ninety-nine years) which are contemplated for the plains. This situation occurred at Koronubu, northwest Viti Levu, Fiji, where land was leased to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in about 1890. The lease expired on 31 December 1965 and the land reverted to the Fijian owners. Persuading the new occupants of Koronubu to conform to the routine and demands of sugar-cane farming was a difficult job (personal communication: George Mataika, D.O., Lautoka; and Fiji Legislative Council Debates, March 1967:145).

Table 7.1

Distance from garden to residence in selected villages in Tadhimboko West, 1966
(yards)

Village gardens		0-500	501-1,000	1,001-1,500	1,501-2,000	2,001-2,500	2,501-3,000	3,001-3,500	3,501-4,000	4,001-4,500	4,501-5,000	5,001-5,500	Total gardens per village	Average distance per village (yards)
Roroni-Komunikau	No. %	24 52.17	8 17.39	5 10.87	7 15.22	2 4.35							46 100	746
Suagi	No. %	4 8.90	15 33.33	6 13.33	5 11.11		10 22.22	5 11.11					45 100	1,528
Gorabau	No. %	6 12.77	16 34.04	23 48.94	2 4.25								47 100	1,004
Gilutae	No. %	1 11.11					5 55.56				1 11.11	2 22.22	9 100	3,279
Makile	No. %	1 4.50		2 9.00		4 18.00	5 23.50	3 13.50		4 18.00	3 13.50		22 100	3,046
Gaimali	No. %		2 14.30	1 7.20		3 21.40			5 35.70	3 21.40			14 100	2,224
Sopapera	No. %	5 50.00	5 50.00										10 100	508
Abuabili	No. %	7 100.00											7 100	311
Ravu	No. %	6 100.00											6 100	144
Nalimera	No. %	4 44.40		4 44.40			1 11.20						9 100	886
Tearoku	No. %	2 100.00											2 100	
Maluka	No. %	2 65.70										1 33.30	3 100	2,580
Lathiko	No. %	2 100.00											2 100	
Susui	No. %	5 100.00											5 100	320
Total	No. %	69 30.40	45 20.26	41 18.06	14 6.17	9 3.96	21 9.25	8 3.52	5 2.22	7 3.08	4 1.76	3 1.32	227 100	

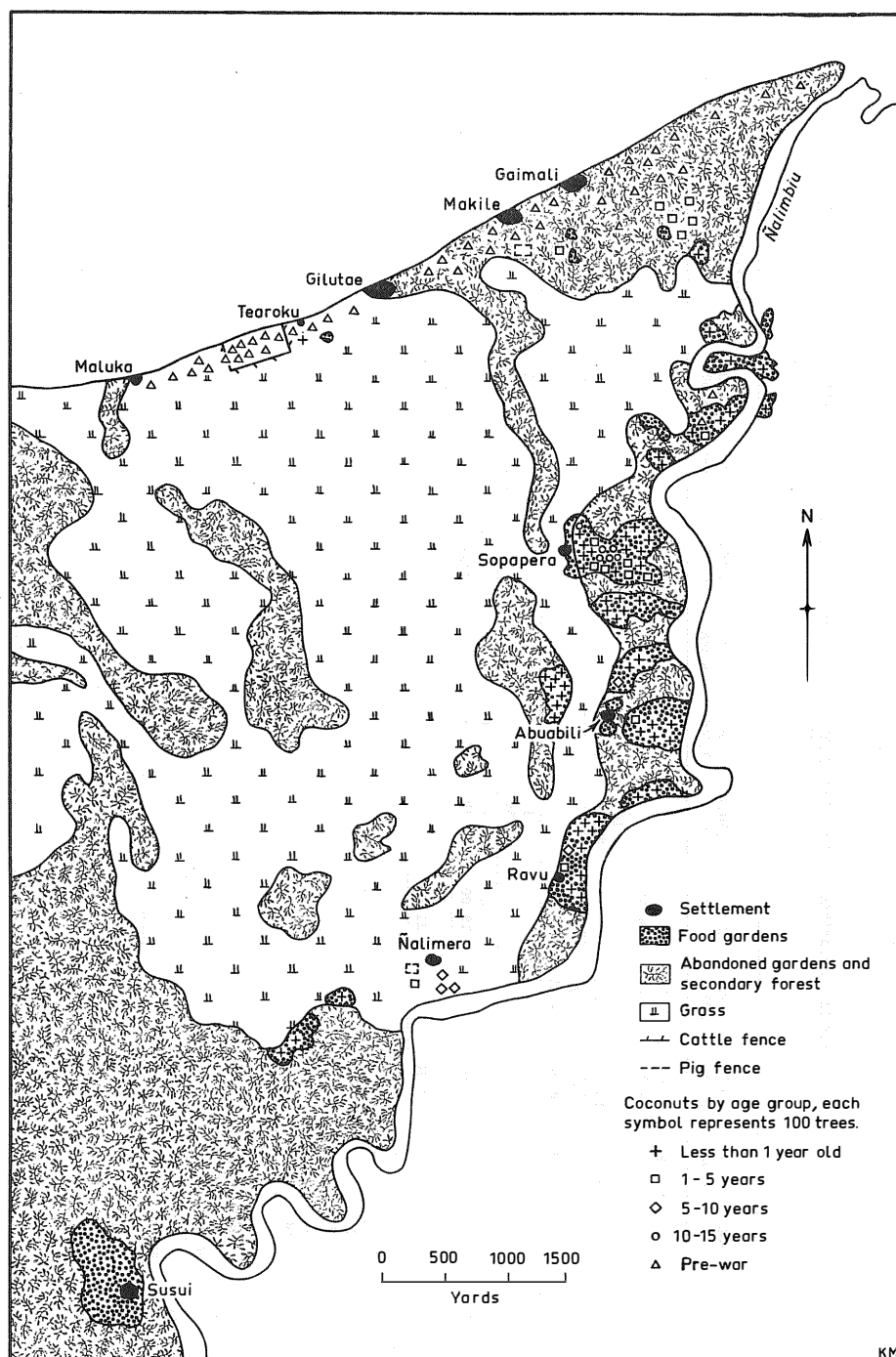


Fig. 7.1. Land use west of the Nalimbiu, May 1966

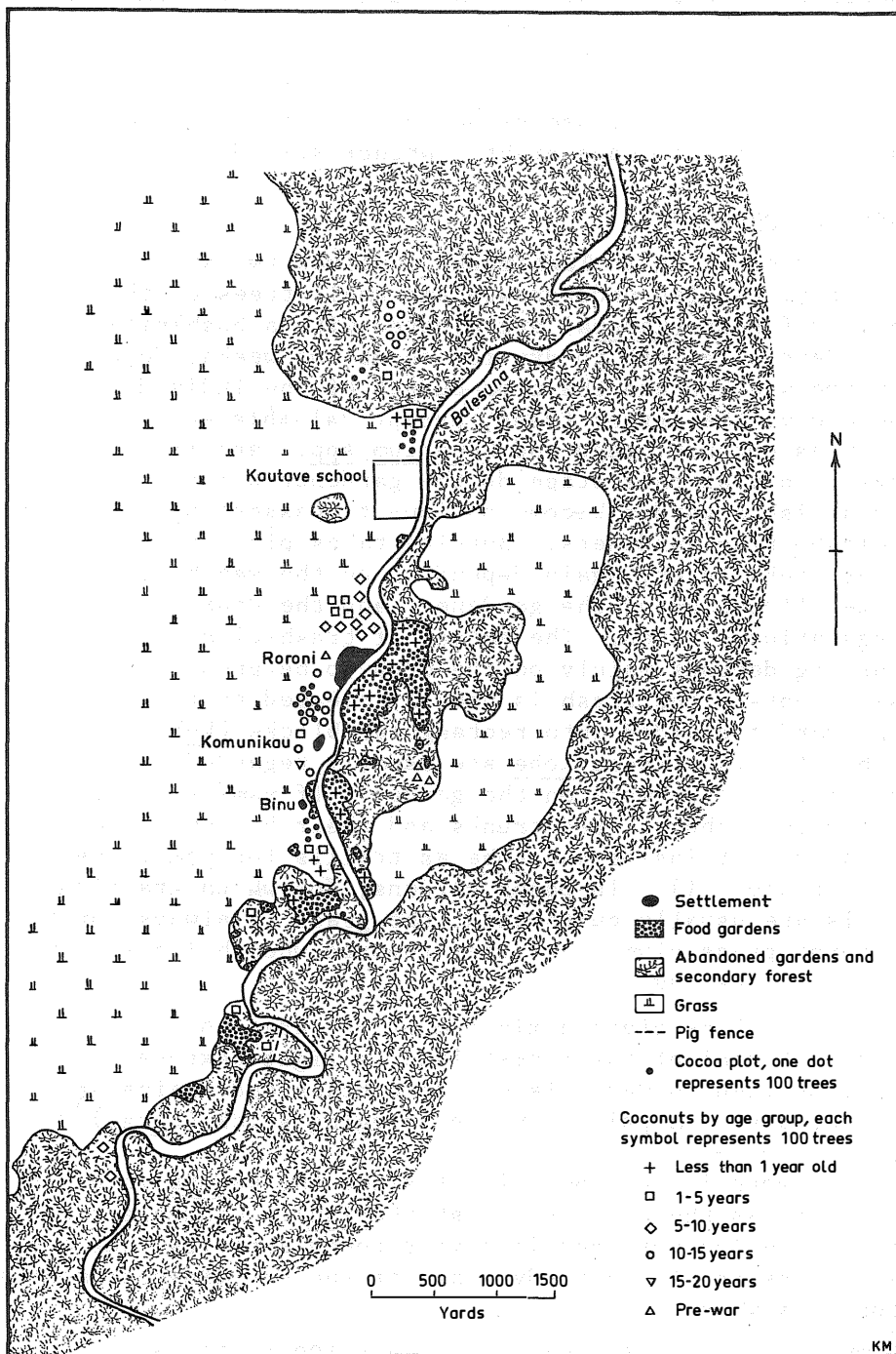


Fig. 7.2. Land use in Roroni, May 1966

where usage rights exist or are easily obtainable. Present agricultural practices require that gardens be located on forest land. Distance from garden to home tends to increase as a result of the non-use or lease of the grassland, the continual use of nearby forest land, and the availability of usage rights further afield.

Land preparation

Land clearing in Tadhimboko involves two stages. Firstly, tangled undergrowth and small trees of the regenerated forest (karuba) are cleared with a bushknife.¹ The debris is left to dry for about two weeks, depending on the weather and the time-budget of the individual. Secondly, the larger trees, except valuable economic ones such as coconut, sago and Canarium spp., are felled by axe. Only at this stage do the gardener's intentions to establish a garden become obvious to passers-by and neighbouring gardeners. Burning takes place three to four weeks later, again depending on the weather, the time allocation of the gardener, and the denseness of the vegetation cleared. The amount of trash-clearing after burning depends mainly on the crop to be grown. With sweet potato the trash is usually cleared thoroughly and the garden divided into rectangular blocks (kobe)² by unburnt logs. These kobe are usually regarded as the units for later work on the garden. If yams are cultivated the unburnt tree trunks and their branches are usually left inside the kobe as trellis for yam vines (see Plate 7.1). In panna gardens, for which grassland soils are usually cultivated, the grass is always burnt. Unburnt grass clumps are then removed when holes for the new crop are dug.

The soil receives a minimum of preparation. The alluvial material of the forest land is light-textured and well-drained in many places, so ditches and drains are unnecessary. A pointed wooden digging stick (tongo)³,

¹ This work is relatively light since the karuba is never as dense as the primary forest (beriau). Land clearing for gardening purposes is a year-round activity, but most villagers try to take advantage of the dry mid-year months for this work.

² The kobe range in area from about 100 to 150 square yards

³ The durable Alstonia spectabilis is the wood most widely used as tongo.

steel fork or spade is used to dig the hole into which the sweet potato vines or gove¹ are planted. The sweet potato matures in three to four months after planting while uvi and panna mature in six months. They are weeded only two or three times before being harvested since their speedy growth effectively inhibits the establishment of weeds. It would seem that the high fertility of the well-drained alluvium is a basic reason for the lack of technical elaboration and thorough soil tilling in Tadhimboko gardening work.

The gardening practices of the Malaitan migrants in Tadhimboko West exhibit an interesting variation on this lack of technical elaboration: whether planting yam or sweet potato, they always prepare mounds. The soils of these mounds are well-crumbled and the hills built up to about ten inches high and eighteen inches through. Mounding is practised by Malaitan migrants throughout Tadhimboko and is not confined to one soil type. This practice is a carry-over from the home-island where garden soils are relatively poor and lose much of their plant nutrient supply after one cropping.

Gardens in Tadhimboko are not normally fenced in. This does not mean that they are always safe from the ravages of wild or stray domestic pigs although the Guadalcanal Council stipulated in 1957 that pigs were to be kept outside villages, away from gardens, and off main roads and tracks.² Thus pigs rather than gardens are fenced in.

Labour

The basic Tadhimboko subsistence farming unit is the nuclear family, consisting of the husband, his wife and their children (see Plate 7.2). Sometimes a parent of one of the spouses joins in. Some households also contain other people such as agnates, mamata members or short-term

¹ Gove are the small pieces into which yams are cut for planting. In pre-contact times yams were planted between July and September when Erythrina are in flower. Today, however, some individuals plant both yams and sweet potatoes, particularly the latter, throughout the year.

² 'Minutes of the meeting of the Guadalcanal Council', 11-15 March 1957, Honiara, unpublished.

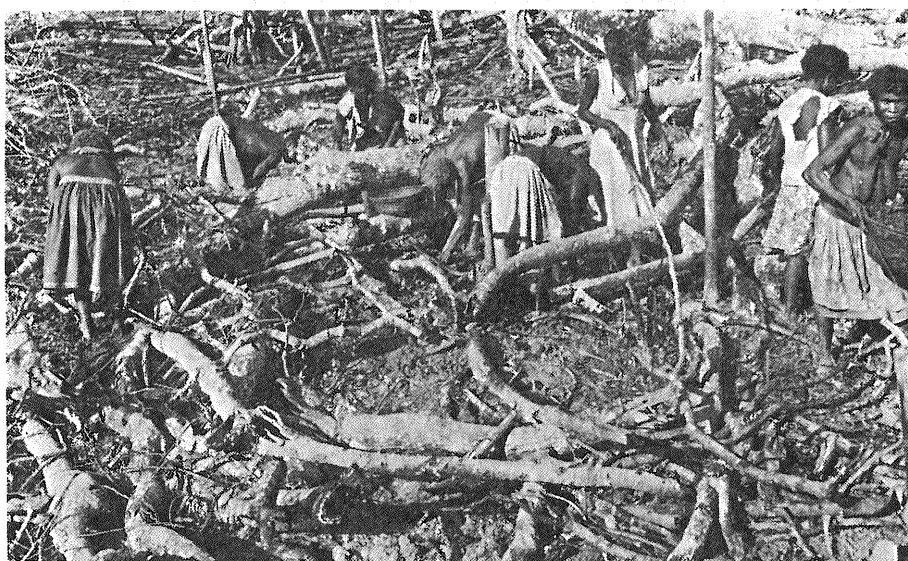


Plate 7.1. Planting yams among a tangle of branches



Plate 7.2. Going to the garden is a family outing

labourers. Thus the labour force¹ readily available to the Tadhimboko household is normally small. Table 7.2 summarises the amount of available labour in 150 of the 178 households in the villages of Tadhimboko West. Of the 862 persons included in this selection, 518, or more than 64 per cent, make up the labour force as defined here. Of the 17 settlements included in Table 7.2, 14 have an average size of labour force per household of between 2.66 and 4 persons; the other 3 have 4.09 to 4.69 working persons per household. The average for the 17 settlements (3.45) falls almost within the upper third of the size range 2.66 to 4 persons.

There does not seem to be any clear correlation between the average size of labour force per household in each village and its total area of cultivated land (see Table 7.2). Thus Koli possesses the lowest average garden acreage per unit of labour force. On the other hand, Selaghoghoru has the highest average garden acreage per unit of labour but is fourth in the average size of labour force per household. The labour-garden situation in Koli and similar places reflects the inclusion of a relatively large number of partially active old men and women in the labour force, and the fact that such villages are not heavily committed to the sale of surplus garden produce. Settlements like Selaghoghoru, indeed all the settlements on both sides of the Nalimbiu, have large areas of cultivated land and a relatively high average labour force as a result of their heavy commitment to foodstuff marketing. In some instances, labour is hired for foodstuff production for Honiara market.

Sometimes a kinsman of either spouse assists the nuclear family or household in its gardening work. The assistance most frequently involves mamata or kema members resident in the village. Assistance may also come from kin in a different locality. Despite the varied sources of gardening assistance, such help expresses the creation

¹ The conventional practice of limiting the work force to all people within the age groups 15 to 50 years is clearly inappropriate for the Melanesian village. The term 'labour force' refers here to all people over 10 years of age and with no upper age limit. It is at about the age of 10 years that Tadhimboko children begin to work regularly in the gardens and do other subsistence work, if they do not attend school.

Table 7.2

Population, labour force and cultivated garden acreage per head of
labour force in selected villages in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Village/ settlement	Total population	No. of households	Total labour force	Average size of labour force per household	Average acreage of garden per head of labour force
Roroni-Komunikau	163	25	79	3.16	0.57
Gorabau	67	16	47	2.93	0.30
Suagi	147	28	87	3.48	0.24
Tenahulu	78	13	47	3.61	0.62
Kokomu	68	11	45	4.09	0.36
Bebe	13	4	12	3.00	0.48
Koli	62	8	37	4.69	0.30
Taraia	11	2	7	3.50	1.14
Selaghoghorro	11	2	8	4.00	2.62
Susui	28	5	21	4.20	0.61
Nalimera	20	3	12	4.00	1.05
Ravu	31	4	12	3.00	0.54
Abuabili	19	4	13	3.25	0.88
Sopapera	18	3	8	2.66	0.84
Gaimali	46	8	30	3.75	0.52
Makile	53	9	34	3.77	0.34
Gilutae	27	5	19	3.80	0.53
Total	862	150	518	3.45	0.70

or persistence of obligatory connections in the society. In this respect the village big-man takes a leading part, particularly in the labour he is capable of manipulating. The repayment of such assistance is always made, and expected, either in kind or in reciprocal assistance when required. Assistance by kinsmen may occur during any phase of gardening operations. If male relatives are involved for an extended part of the day, it is usually for such tasks as land clearing and digging. The maintenance of the planted garden is invariably a family chore.

Large working groups including most, if not all, of the labour force of a village or people from different villages were traditionally associated with yam gardening, particularly at the planting stage. Communal village gardens involving the entire labour force were operated during Marching Rule days. Today village-operated gardens are planned for specific aims such as the cash needs of the village church or a particular development objective.¹ The assistance given in the planting of Kurirara's yam garden at Komuavogi² on 23 July 1966 will illustrate some of the salient features of such labour organisation. During the previous four weeks Kurirara had cleared the land chosen for this particular yam garden and had it burnt early in the fourth week. The kobe were laid out after the burn and the planting material heaped in a specially made hut near the garden. More than a week before the appointed day, which was chosen after consulting a number of villagers particularly from Roroni, Kurirara and his family commenced preparing the food which such a gathering of people demanded. By this time he had let it be known that he required the assistance of many people to plant his yam garden.

People started to arrive at Komuavogi at about 10.30 a.m. on the appointed day, but work did not begin until well after 11 a.m. In many instances whole families came. Table 7.3 shows their villages of origin and their affiliation in regard to the kema of Kurirara and his wife.

¹ Of special relevance here are the village-operated gardens cultivated during 1965 and 1966 in the name of the Gaubata Development Society. See p. 241.

² Komuavogi is about equidistant (1.5 miles) from Roroni, Gorabau and Suagi, and is situated on the west bank of the Balesuna River.

Most were members of the couple's two kema, with those of Kurirara's wife, Kema ni Gaubata, predominating. This demonstrates the operation of matrilineal kinship affiliation and associated obligations which are fundamental to Tadhimboko society. Most of the Kema ni Gaubata who helped Kurirara on this occasion were from Roroni, which contributed almost half the total labour force present.

Table 7.3

Distribution by village and kema of people
who helped in the planting of Kurirara's
yam garden, 23 July 1966

<u>Kema</u> represented	Gorabau	Suagi	Roroni	Kakalao	Total labour	Percentage of total labour
<u>Kema ni</u> <u>Thongo</u> (Kurirara)	1	5	6	1	13	31.71
<u>Kema ni</u> <u>Gaubata</u> (wife)	4	3	10	0	17	41.46
Others	2	6	3	0	11	26.83
Total labour by village	7	14	19	1	41	
Percentage of total labour by village	17.07	34.14	46.35	2.44		100.00

The work fell into two phases. Hole digging was undertaken by twenty-four men. Almost one acre (0.9 acre) was ready for planting when the digging phase ended at about 3.30 p.m.¹ Meanwhile, Kurirara and some of the seventeen women present prepared the gove.² These were planted by the women soon after the men completed the digging. The whole job was completed shortly after 5.30 p.m. and the

¹ At the rate of three yam holes to the square yard, the men dug 13,248 holes in four hours, an average of 2.3 yam holes per man per minute.

² Some women also helped with the final preparation of the feast.

feast followed.¹ At such feasts the participants usually eat soon after the work ends, unlike traditional feasts designed to repay past presents, services and obligations, where the bulk of the food distributed is never ready for recipients' immediate consumption. However, both kinds of feast demonstrate the principle of reciprocity.

A certain division of labour based on sex is apparent in Tadhimboko, although few tasks are performed by one sex only. Both men and women plant and maintain new food gardens, harvest the crop, fetch firewood and cook the evening meal when required. However, the initial land clearing is always the men's chore. The women often help clear away the trash after the burn.

Age also influences the kind of garden and other subsistence duties performed by an individual. Elderly members of the household normally mind the young children, even in the gardens, and do some very light agricultural duties such as weed pulling. At the other end of the age scale are boys and girls under ten years of age, most of whose time is spent on non-productive activities.

Table 7.4 shows the proportion of time spent by three villagers on the most important activities. These three villagers, all married men with children, are chosen to represent three broad 'types', based on the extent and avenues of their participation in the cash economy. Tubu of Roroni represents the villager to whom paid work within the village is an important source of cash. He also sells food crops in Honiara market. Kurirara is a Suagi villager who started building a house in his garden at Komuavogi during 1966, with the intention of eventually moving into it. His cash income is derived mainly from the sale of garden produce in Honiara, although during the period covered by Table 7.4 he did not sell anything there. Much of his time was spent in house construction. Like Tubu, he is planting coconuts in his present garden. Raitilava typifies the villager who depends heavily on copra for participation in the cash economy. The coconut groves under his control are old and mamata-owned, and he

¹ The food distributed and consumed included eight bowls of se (mashed purple yams), a fifty-lb baked pig, twenty-two baked megapode (Megapodus freycinet) eggs, four baskets of baked yams and 150 parcels of ghola (baked grated cassava). If sold for cash in Honiara, this food would have fetched more than \$21.

is not replacing them nor planting new coconuts in his food gardens.

The proportion of time spent on food garden work is similar in all three cases - about one-quarter of total time covered. Because of the general role of women as providers of food and the importance of gardens in the life of the people, Tadhimboko women spend a similar if not larger proportion of time in food garden work. Paid work and marketing of food crops, together with the planting and maintenance of young coconuts, are important activities for those with no coconut groves yielding copra.

Table 7.4

Time spent by three villagers on major tasks,
4 July to 31 August 1966
 (%)

Tasks	Tubu (Roroni)	Kurirara (Komuavogi)	Raitilava (Suagi)
Copra making	0	0	51.27
Paid work	20.76	0	0
Marketing food crops	4.67	0	0
Coconut planting and clearing	5.52	12.30	0
Food garden work	27.98	24.58	27.12
Food preparation and firewood gathering	2.54	6.78	2.54
Fishing	3.82	0	0
Pig-fence construction	0	4.25	0
House construction	0	26.69	0
Village welfare*	1.68	0	0
Ceremonial	3.38	3.38	1.69
Medical and educational work**	4.22	5.08	0
Mission work***	9.75	0	8.15
Resting#	10.17	13.56	7.54
Visiting	2.97	1.69	1.69
Sick	2.54	1.69	0
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

* Clearing of village road.

** Thatch making for school at Ñajilagu and attendance at Tetera dispensary.

*** Includes church meetings, clearing around church house and attendance at Sunday services.

Includes rests during Sundays and week-days.

The main crops

Tadhimboko West has almost 324 acres, or 2.5 per cent of the available cultivable land, cultivated under food crops (see Table 7.5). The Tadhimboko on both sides of the Ñalimbiu River (see Fig. 7.3) cultivate more land under food crops than Suagi and Gorabau together. The superiority of the Ñalimbiu area in regard to average acreage of garden land per capita is clear (see Table 7.6). The Malaitan migrants and the Gilutae-Gaimali group rank between the Ñalimbiu area and Gorabau-Suagi. The high relative placing of Tenahulu results from the demands of its traditional feast, while the low ranking of Gorabau, Suagi, Koli Point and the Metepono area stems mainly from the availability in these places of other means of sustenance, particularly copra production and occasional wage labour for fellow Tadhimboko and European enterprises.

More than 65 per cent of Tadhimboko garden acreage is occupied by sweet potato (see Table 7.5). It is a popular and quick-maturing crop and has clearly superseded both uvi and panna as the staple, although these latter crops are still cultivated in all villages.¹ More than 48 per cent of the total sweet potato acreage is grown by Malaitan migrants and Tadhimboko from Gilutae-Gaimali and along the Ñalimbiu River.

Tenahulu alone accounts for almost 48 per cent of the total uvi acreage in the region, while its sweet potato acreage is the lowest for any village. During the feast there in July 1966 uvi was the main food crop distributed.

Taro is recorded for two villages only - Gorabau and Suagi - largely because of the shortage of planting material following the devastating attack by the taro wilt disease during the 1960s.² The villagers realise rapid sale of taro when offered in Honiara market.

¹

Numerous gardens contained six varieties of sweet potato, a small number in comparison with the New Guinea highlands, for example, which is probably due to the much later introduction of the crop into the Solomons and its attack by the potato weevil during the 1950s.

²

Phytophthora colocasiae was first observed in the Western District in 1951 and by 1959 was causing serious damage to taro in coastal and interior villages of Guadalcanal.

Table 7.5

Acreages under main crops, by village in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Area/village*	Sweet potato	Uvi	Panna	Taro	Cassava	Pineapple	Banana	Watermelon	Cleared land	Total
Malaitan migrants:										
total acreage by crop	29.01	1.06	0.84	0	3.46	0	0	0	1.92	36.29
% of total acreage by crop	13.66	1.97	4.39	0	80.65	0	0	0	7.00	11.21
Gilutae-Gaimali:										
total acreage by crop	31.09	2.15	2.02	0	0	0	0.01	0	2.23	37.50
% of total acreage by crop	14.64	4.00	10.57	0	0	0	0.43	0	8.14	11.59
Nalimbiu:										
total acreage by crop	42.22	5.22	4.06	0	0.50	1.50	0	0	2.55	56.05
% of total acreage by crop	19.88	9.72	21.25	0	11.65	55.97	0	0	9.30	17.32
Koli Point:										
total acreage by crop	20.93	5.56	2.41	0	0	0.10	1.90	0	8.10	39.00
% of total acreage by crop	9.86	10.36	12.61	0	0	3.73	82.25	0	29.55	12.05
Metepono:										
total acreage by crop	27.33	2.25	1.00	0	0.16	0.33	0.40	0.73	5.45	37.65
% of total acreage by crop	12.87	4.19	5.23	0	3.73	12.31	17.32	100.00	19.88	11.63
Tenahulu:										
total acreage by crop	0.10	25.57	3.40	0	0	0	0	0	0	29.07
% of total acreage by crop	0.05	47.64	17.79	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.98
Gorabau:										
total acreage by crop	4.15	5.36	4.32	0.46	0.12	0	0	0	2.48	16.89
% of total acreage by crop	1.95	9.98	22.62	41.44	2.80	0	0	0	9.05	5.22
Suagi:										
total acreage by crop	15.15	4.06	0.87	0.65	0	0	0	0	1.63	22.36
% of total acreage by crop	7.13	7.56	4.55	58.56	0	0	0	0	5.95	6.90
Roroni-Komunikau:										
total acreage by crop	42.38	2.46	0.19	0	0.05	0.75	0	0	3.05	48.88
% of total acreage by crop	19.96	4.58	0.99	0	1.17	27.99	0	0	11.13	15.10
Total acreage by crop	212.36	53.69	19.11	1.11	4.29	2.68	2.31	0.73	27.41	323.69
% of total gardens by crop	65.61	16.59	5.90	0.34	1.32	0.83	0.71	0.23	8.47	100.00

* To facilitate the comparison of data, Tadhimboko West villages and settlements are placed under the following groups: Malaitan migrants include those living at Susui, Ravu, Abuabili, Taraia, Oba, Tearoku and Lathiko; Gilutae-Gaimali includes the two villages by those names plus Makile; Nalimbiu covers the Tadhimboko at Sopapera, Abuabili, Ravu, Nalimera, Najilagu, Selaghothoro, Nalivovo and Taraia - on both sides of the Nalimbiu River; Koli Point includes the villages of Komuporo, Kalitonia, Papagu, Komunivele and Koli; Metepono collectively refers to the villages on the left bank of the Metepono River - Bebe, Tumurora, Komuvaolu, Tatau-Komidi, Kokomu and Parisisi; the remaining four are single villages (see Fig. 7.3). A measuring tape and compass were used in the survey of gardens.

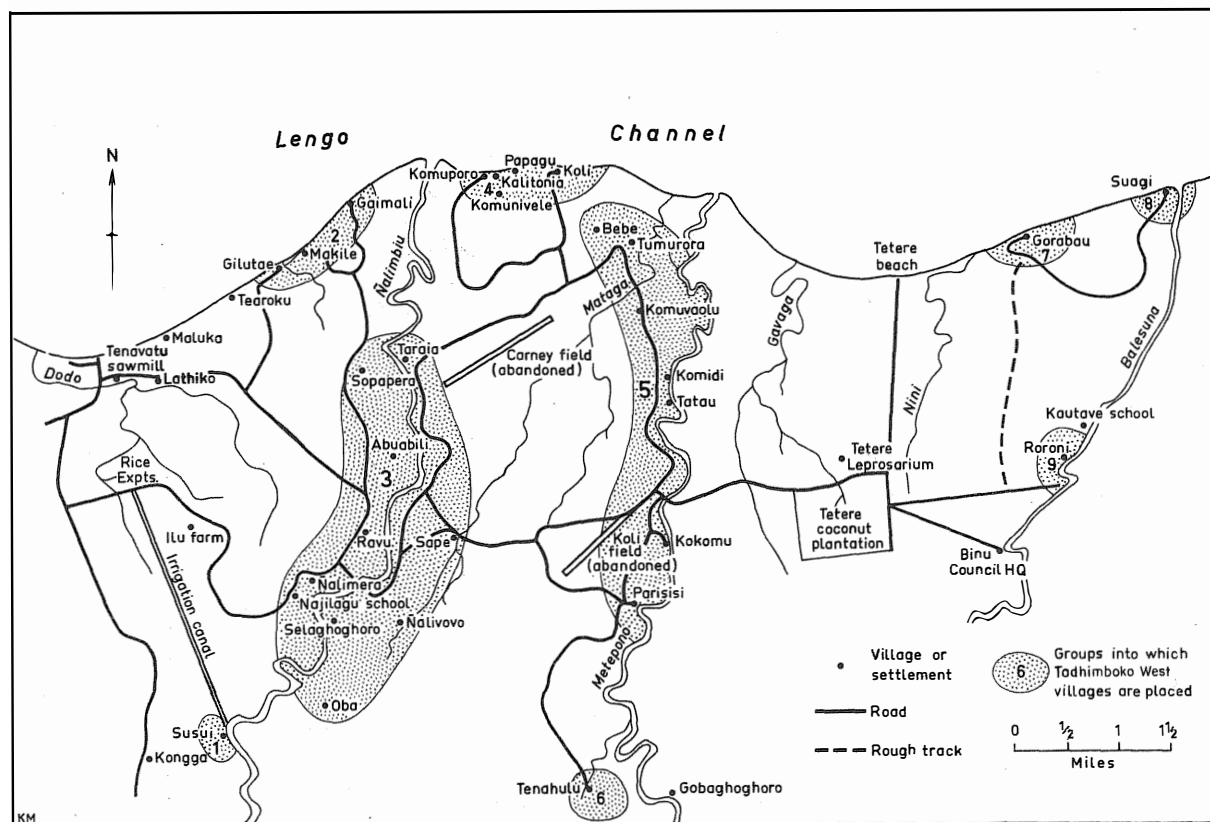


Fig. 7.3. Groupings of Tadhimboko villages, 1966

Table 7.6

Village population, acreage under
food crops, and acreage of food crops
per capita in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Village/ settlements	Total population	Total acreage under food crops	Acreage of food crops per capita*
Malaitan migrants	87	36.29	0.42
Gilutae-Gaimali	126	37.50	0.30
Ñalimbiu	79	56.05	0.71
Metepono	170	37.65	0.22
Koli Point	184	39.00	0.21
Tenahulu	78	29.07	0.37
Gorabau	67	16.89	0.25
Suagi	147	22.36	0.15
Roroni-Komunikau	163	48.88	0.30
Total	1,101	323.69	0.29

* These figures compare well with Barrau's estimate (1955:129) - 0.1 to 0.2 acres - of average garden area per head for coastal plains Melanesians who depend mainly on tubers, occasionally supplemented by sago when this is close at hand.

There does not seem to be any definite and exclusive link between specific food crops and the soil characteristics of the land. Everywhere in the region both sweet potato and yam thrive on the well-drained and forest-covered recent and older alluvium. Panna alone and in a few places only (5.9 per cent of total gardens) utilises the grass-covered older alluvium, although panna is not totally restricted to this kind of land. Malaitan migrants have successfully produced panna on the forest soils at Susui. However, no-one has successfully grown sweet potato and yam on the grassland soils using traditional methods of tillage.¹

¹ During February 1967 the Roroni people arranged with GPL that the Melanesian-owned grassland west of the village would be ploughed, disced and harrowed in return for river gravel collected by the company earlier in the year. GPL did this in May, and sweet potato and maize were planted in June in the name of the Gaubata Development Society. The crops grew well (personal communication: Vuiyasawa, Roroni representative of the society, August 1967).

The intercultivation of crops is a common feature of Pacific Islands subsistence shifting agriculture. In Tadhimboko the main crops intercultivated are uvi and panna with native vegetables, bananas, pawpaws, pineapples, maize, water-melons and beans.¹ Often fruit trees like banana and pawpaw are planted around the edge of the garden or divisions of a single plot to protect the main crop from strong winds and, like the kobe, to divide the garden into blocks which serve as units for labour.

There is a certain cropping cycle in Tadhimboko West. The gardener decides on the major crop for a new clearing after considering empirical evidence such as the experience of a previous or nearby operator, his own results on the same or similar soils, his own crop needs, and the availability of planting material. With yam, the gardener invariably obtains two successive crops; the second crop is planted soon after the first is harvested and before weeds become firmly established. This is followed by two or even three plantings of sweet potato. In this way a single garden will be operated and producing roots for two to three years before it is abandoned. If sweet potato is the main crop, the garden is usually planted two or three times, with no substantial drop in yield per acre, before fallowing. Thus a sweet potato garden is operated for between one and two years. However, in recent years this gardening cycle has tended to be considerably shorter, particularly where sweet potato is the major crop. Throughout the region coconuts are planted with the first or second sweet potato crop. This is creating a definite inroad into the food crop cycle and subsistence agriculture generally and is likely to reduce progressively the area at present most amenable to gardening.

The level of productivity of Tadhimboko gardens seems to depend primarily on the level of the plant nutrient content of the alluvial soils, which in turn is affected by the length of the fallow period and the degree of soil tilling, given specific units of land and labour. The soil survey of the Tadhimboko region (Ballantyne 1961) has demonstrated that the plant nutrient content of the soils is capable of sustaining a continuing number of subsistence croppings without serious pedological effects.

¹ However, the subsidiary crops are usually scattered throughout the garden and rarely cover a sizeable portion of the garden when intercultivated with a major crop.

The length of the fallow period varies markedly throughout Tadhimboko West: the present gardens opposite Roroni were cultivated 14 years ago, those at Suagi and Gorabau have not been worked during the last 8 to 10 years, while the villagers of Gilutae, Makile and Gaimali today cultivate land rested for between 4 and 8 years. The Tenahulu and Malaitans at Susui today cultivate lands which are being planted for the first time since World War II. On the basis of these figures, the average length of fallow is 13.8 years. However, if Tenahulu and Susui are excluded from the above calculation because they are very recent settlements, the average fallow period drops to 9.6 years.

There is a clear division between the Tadhimboko and Malaitans in the region in terms of crop productivity. The Malaitans at Susui and on both sides of the Nalimbiu River produce sweet potato at the rate of 3.15 to 3.30 tons per acre,¹ while the Tadhimboko in the same general locality, cultivating similar soils rested for similar periods, obtain between 2.00 to 2.57 tons per acre. Assuming soil fertility is generally constant throughout this area, these variations result mainly from the thorough tilling of the soil by the Malaitan migrants, and at Susui (where the yield per acre is highest) the longer fallow period perhaps gives an added advantage.

The pig

The pig was a main source of protein in the vegetable-dominated traditional diet of the Tadhimboko. It was also essential for any ceremonial. Today, however, pig meat is not readily available in quantity and supplies are being depleted. Wild pigs may be directly hunted from both the forest and the grassland, or by guarding gardens at night, but a catch is not always assured. Today many traditional functions are becoming non-traditional in their food component: tinned meat, tinned fish and rice are increasingly replacing pig and yams.

¹ These figures apply to the first harvest of a first crop, and do not include subsequent crops obtained after the sweet potato vines have had time to produce crops also. They may be compared with Ilu Farm when that property was operated by the Department of Agriculture: its first harvests of sweet potato produced yields of 4.15 to 5.32 tons per acre (BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Annual report for 1949', Appendix I).

The result is that few Tadhimboko make pig-keeping a part of their agricultural system. In Roroni five individuals claim the 13 pigs and piglets in that village, the 4 pigs in Gorabau belong to two men, the 13 pigs and piglets at Makile belong to three persons, while at Koli one individual owns all 5 pigs in that village.

New breeds of pigs were bought by the Tadhimboko from both Ilu and Kukum. These have improved the native strain, although the standard of pig-rearing in the area has changed little. Many villagers merely keep pigs and do not breed and rear them for a particular purpose, such as to earn cash. For a villager's pig to grow to a large size is invariably not the direct result of its proper care by the owner; rather it most likely means that the pig, fending for itself most of the time, has grown up during a period when no circumstances have demanded its disposal. However, there is some consciousness of its potential cash value.

The law demands that domestic pigs be fenced in, but it does not demand a minimum standard of pig-keeping among villagers.¹ Pig-fencing commonly utilises scrap metal such as steel-wire netting and marsden mats. In some instances the whole meander of a river-course might be fenced off (see Fig. 7.2) to give the pigs a fairly large area in which to roam and scavenge. More often than not, pigs are not provided with a proper shelter, and feeding is irregular and depends on what is left from the previous day's meal of the owner.²

As a source of income, pig-rearing holds definite promise since pig meat has an assured market in Honiara. What seems to be required is a reorganisation of the system of pig-rearing, and the diversion of a greater quantity of garden produce, in suitably prepared form, as pig feed. People realise the potential cash-earning power of pigs, but this realisation has yet to be translated into action.

¹ Such a stipulation would be difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil. Besides, pig-keeping in Tadhimboko is far from being even semi-commercialised, in which case conformity to minimum standards of pig rearing would approach the economic grasp of the people.

² In some interior villages of Tadhimboko East, sago pith is a supplementary pig feed, but not in Tadhimboko West.

Chapter 8

The sale of foodstuffs in Honiara market¹

Establishment of Honiara market

Chapter 7 shows that nearly all villagers in Tadhimboko West cultivate acreages of food crops well above their minimum subsistence requirements. The surplus is not utilised locally, either for human consumption or as stock feed, but is marketed in Honiara, the post-war capital and main urban centre of the Solomons.

The organised disposal of vegetable produce in Honiara commenced about 1950 as a result of the Government's agricultural development policy. Early in 1949 two Commonwealth Development and Welfare grants were made available to the Government: one to establish a demonstration and experimental farm on the former American Army vegetable farm at Ilu, the other to finance an agricultural station at Kukum with functions similar to those of Ilu and serving also as the main quarantine station for the Solomons.² By the end of 1950 both Ilu and Kukum were producing large quantities of fresh vegetables, much of which was bought by the Medical, Prison, and Police Departments to supplement imported rations issued to their Melanesian employees.³ After the needs of these departments were met, there remained a disposable surplus. In recognition of the need to provide a retail

¹ Much of this chapter is drawn from Lasaga (1969:48-96).

² BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1952 (1953:8-10).

³ The extensive use of imported rations by government departments was partly responsible for the late availability to Melanesians of a market for vegetable produce in Honiara.

outlet for Melanesian-grown produce, the Department of Agriculture established a market-place at Honiara.¹

The Ilu project ended in 1955, and when Kukum station was diversified with the introduction of a piggery, a dairy herd, and experimental plots of cocoa and pasture grasses, vegetable production received less priority. These changes gave the first major opening to Melanesian producers, who convincingly demonstrated that, given opportunity, encouragement and appropriate incentives,² they could supply more than sufficient garden produce to government departments. Other Melanesian producers sold their produce in the market-place.

The supply of produce to Honiara market³

More than 66 per cent (by value) of the \$9,653 worth of produce reaching Honiara market during the survey period⁴ is contributed by Tadhimboko West alone. In fact, its contribution is more than 60 per cent on eight of ten survey dates (see Table 8.1). Of the other areas (see Fig. 8.1), Visale alone contributes regularly although its contribution is well below that of Tadhimboko West. In Tadhimboko West⁵ the Malaitan migrants are consistently prominent as suppliers, as are the Tadhimboko of Gilutae-Gaimali and the Ñalimbiu group (see Plate 8.1), although

¹ The Department of Agriculture soon relinquished control of the market-place to the Central District administration which operated it between 1950 and 1957, until the Honiara Town Council was established.

² During the first half of 1957, for example, the Medical Department let local producers know that it would purchase all garden produce offered at a price agreed upon by the District Commissioner, Central Solomons.

³ Honiara has no single market day; instead, there is a distinct and overlapping pattern of bi-weekly and bi-monthly markets. The middle and end-of-month market periods are the most important in terms of number of vendors and produce.

⁴ Although the present tense is used, data presented here were collected during a five-month period from the end of March to the middle of August 1966.

⁵ The Tadhimboko West village groups used here correspond to those used in Chapter 7.

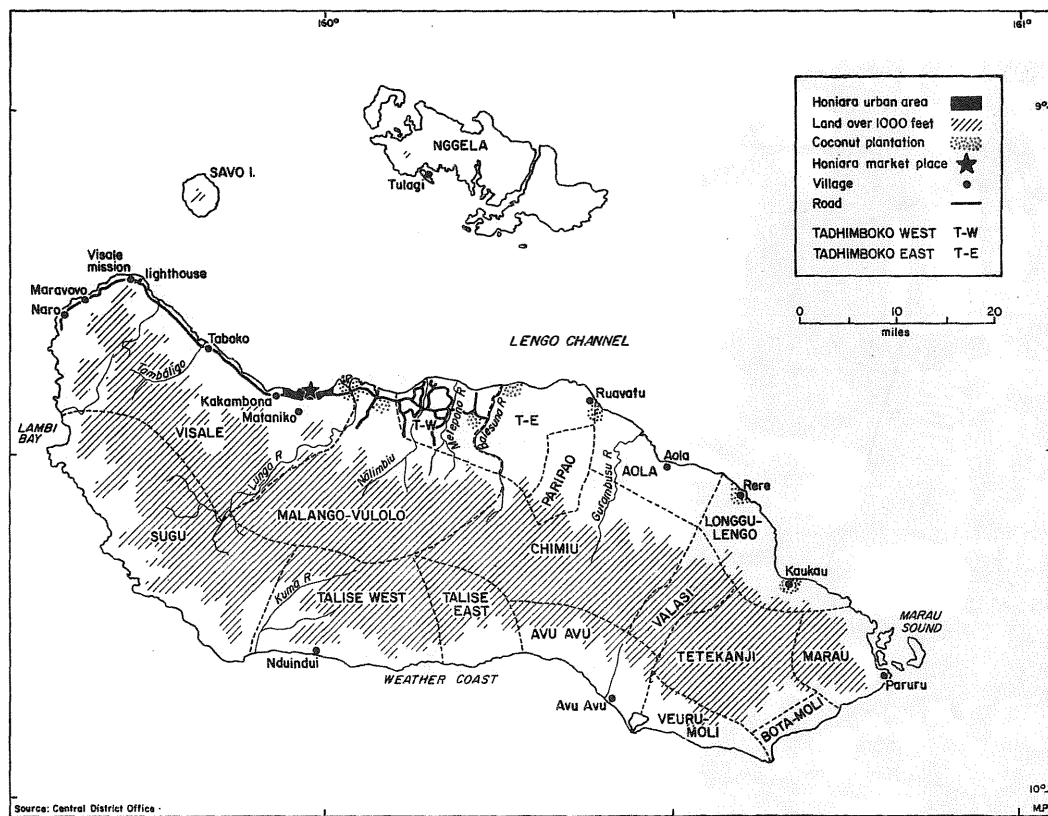


Fig. 8.1. Sub-districts of Guadalcanal and other areas represented at Honiara market at time of survey.

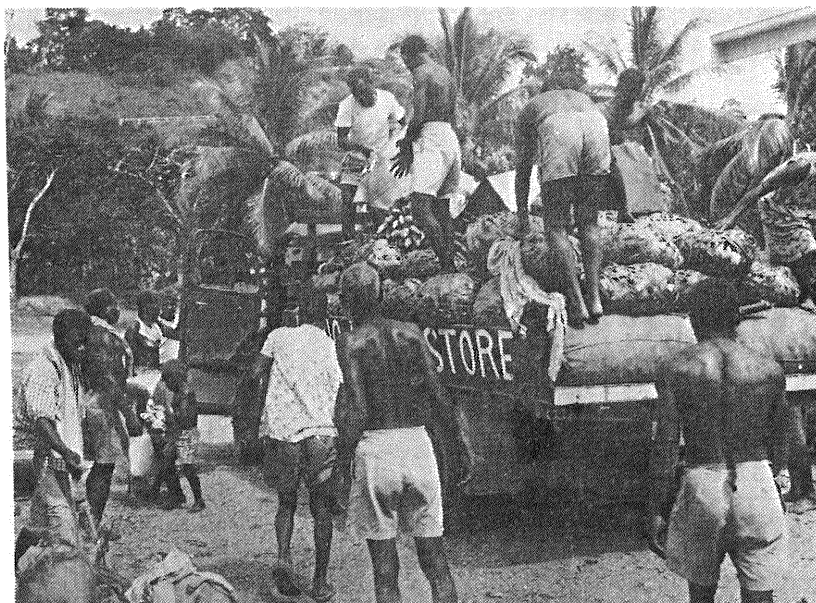


Plate 8.1. Tadhimboko vendors from Gilutae-Gaimali arrive at Honiara market

in total produce the latter fall behind the Malaitan migrants. The very low relative positions of Suagi and Gorabau are largely because their residents have other cash sources, particularly copra production. The same applies to Koli Point and the Metepono area. Tenahulu, as mentioned, prepared a traditional feast during the survey period, and figures significantly on one occasion only when its residents needed money to purchase pigs for the feast.

There is no seasonal variation in the supply of produce (see Table 8.2). However, over 64 per cent of the total came during the end-of-month markets while 36 per cent arrived during the mid-month markets. This reflects the producers' response to the greater purchasing power of Melanesian labourers at the end of the month, after government and private enterprise paydays,¹ in comparison with the smaller number of workers in non-government employment who receive twice-monthly wages. Few Melanesians buy produce at the bi-weekly markets.

¹ Most of Honiara's Melanesian labourers receive a basic wage of \$16 to \$20 per month.

Table 8.2

Produce sold in Honiara market
at each market date in 1966
 (%)

Date	Percentage
End of Mar.	10.61
Mid-Apr.	6.79
End of Apr.	14.39
Mid-May	9.30
End of May	14.61
Mid-June	8.24
End of June	13.17
Mid-July	6.43
End of July	11.32
Mid-Aug.	5.14
Total	100.00

In both value and volume, root crops comprise the bulk of all produce offered, followed by cooked foods, traditional stimulants, fruits, nuts, uncooked meat and fish, European vegetables, native vegetables (greens), handicrafts and pets, in that order (see Table 8.3). There is no marked monthly or seasonal fluctuation in supply although there is a clear intra-month trough-crest pattern which correlates with the rise and fall in the total number of sellers at each market time (see Table 8.4).

Table 8.3

Categories of produce sold in Honiara
market during the survey period
 (%)

Category of produce	Percentage
Root crops	67.34
Native vegetables*	1.06
European vegetables	1.84
Fruits	5.71
Cooked foods	8.12
Uncooked meat and fish	3.05
Nuts	4.77
Traditional stimulants	7.95
Handicrafts and pets	0.16
Total	100.00

* Greens only are included here.

Table 8.4

Number of vendors in Honiara market at each market date in 1966, by District

Dates	Tadhimboko West	Tadhimboko East	Visale	Malango	Paripao	Aola	Nggela	Talise West	Kukum	Total
End of March	66	13	38	4	13	7	0	0	0	141
Mid-April	41	1	41	1	0	0	0	0	0	84
End of April	83	19	37	0	8	12	1	0	0	160
Mid-May	43	1	28	4	0	11	0	5	0	92
End of May	87	38	43	5	7	0	1	0	1	182
Mid-June	58	4	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	99
End of June	92	43	57	7	12	0	4	0	0	215
Mid-July	40	9	21	5	0	0	0	0	0	75
End of July	100	19	25	3	5	0	0	0	0	152
Mid-August	58	0	17	3	0	0	0	0	0	78

Market incomes

A vendor's net income from a market outing depends on the type of produce offered, the volume sold,¹ and fares and freight expenses.

A pattern of supply of foodstuffs shows that some categories of produce are more prominent in areas where there is specialisation, and some types of produce are more significant than others as major income earners. At the end of June 1966 roots were the major earners of cash for most producers (see Table 8.5), and their importance as a source of cash, particularly to the Tadhimboko and Malaitans in the region, cannot be overemphasised.

Within Tadhimboko West only the Malaitan migrants and the locals from both sides of the Ñalimbiu and Gilutae-Gaimali have average total incomes above the district average (see Table 8.6). But this District average is far below that of the Malaitans; indeed, the earnings of the latter are the major element in the region's high average total income, in comparison with incomes of other Districts.

Average incomes of vendors during each of the survey periods emphasise the importance of the Malaitan migrants, particularly on six of the ten survey dates when their average incomes were as much as two to three times, in some cases four times, those of other areas. A number of individual incomes over \$50 ensures both a high average individual income per outing and a high standard deviation for the whole of Tadhimboko West, and especially for the Malaitan migrants. At the end of June 1966, for example, 6.5 per cent of Tadhimboko West vendors earned incomes more than two standard deviations from the area's high mean for that month.

But how profitable is the sale of produce in Honiara market in terms of total cash receipts, and in comparison with other sources of cash available locally and in Honiara? The cash earnings from all sources of six individuals during 1966 are used to illustrate the position (see Table 8.7). Turagarere and Wasaca represent the Malaitan migrants in Tadhimboko West. The former is a non-rent-paying tenant-at-will of the Government at

¹ All produce reaching the market is sold in units or multiples of 10c. Depending on its condition, unsold produce is either returned home or disposed of as waste.

Table 8.5

Percentage classification of income derived by produce class in
Honiara market at the end-of-June 1966 market period

Produce		Malaitan migrants	Tadhimboko West	Tadhimboko East	Paripao	Malango	Visale	Nggela	Total no. of producers	% of total producers
Roots	No. of producers	17	61	23	4	6	34	0	145	67.44
	% of total producers	94.44	82.43	53.49	33.34	85.71	59.64	0		
Fruits	No. of producers	1	4	1	1	0	5	0	12	5.58
	% of total producers	5.56	5.41	2.33	8.33	0	8.77	0		
Cooked foods	No. of producers	0	4	5	0	0	6	1	16	7.44
	% of total producers	0	5.41	11.63	0	0	10.53	25.00		
Uncooked foods	No. of producers	0	5	2	1	1	2	3	14	6.51
	% of total producers	0	6.75	4.65	8.33	14.29	3.51	75.00		
Coconuts	No. of producers	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	5	2.32
	% of total producers	0	0	6.97	0	0	3.51	0		
Traditional stimulants	No. of producers	0	0	9	3	0	6	0	18	8.37
	% of total producers	0	0	20.93	25.00	0	10.53	0		
Handicrafts	No. of producers	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	1.39
	% of total producers	0	0	0	25.00	0	0	0		
European vegetables	No. of producers	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.94
	% of total producers	0	0	0	0	0	3.51	0		
Total no. of producers		18	74	43	12	7	57	4	215	100

Table 8.6

Mean income (with standard deviations) derived from Honiara market, by vendors of each District and of each group within Tadhimboko West between end of March and mid-August 1966
(\$)

Area/District		End of March	Mid-April	End of April	Mid-May	End of May	Mid-June	End of June	Mid-July	End of July	Mid-August	Average over whole period
Tadhimboko West:												
Malaitan migrants	Mean	15.54	23.28	20.80	8.67	15.08	13.19	13.35	13.27	12.29	10.47	55.63
	S.d.*	12.17	12.66	15.40	8.47	15.36	9.76	9.95	13.93	11.69	10.89	
Gilutae-Gaimali	Mean	8.49	5.98	8.76	7.75	7.10	8.74	6.20	6.84	4.30	3.95	23.03
	S.d.	5.29	2.71	8.49	4.68	7.35	7.08	4.21	4.17	2.69	2.58	
Nalimbiu	Mean	9.12	8.00	14.42	7.14	13.00	8.15	9.00	19.94	6.90	14.53	27.84
	S.d.	4.95	9.32	10.60	2.76	9.21	4.78	8.95	17.08	5.92	6.20	
Koli Point	Mean	5.58	6.39	7.20	11.87	4.29	5.77	6.60	0	6.36	2.40	12.52
	S.d.	2.18	1.17	4.25	9.96	2.62	2.79	1.47	0	4.70	0	
Metepono	Mean	8.33	2.80	12.90	32.54	20.57	3.35	5.12	6.15	4.82	3.22	11.44
	S.d.	7.38	1.43	3.20	0	26.24	1.08	4.90	4.03	3.92	3.44	
Tenahulu	Mean	3.80	0	0	0	9.28	0	0	0	0	0	9.60
	S.d.	0	0	0	0	8.52	0	0	0	0	0	
Gorabau	Mean	5.54	5.25	4.58	1.35	6.51	3.80	7.22	7.07	2.81	3.59	11.51
	S.d.	1.77	2.05	3.78	0	3.11	0	1.28	3.86	1.59	1.84	
Suagi	Mean	4.80	7.11	2.53	8.50	3.91	0	2.85	4.92	5.66	3.35	6.43
	S.d.	0	3.37	2.16	0	3.74	0	3.24	1.89	2.57	1.83	
Roroni	Mean	1.10	0	3.47	3.80	4.86	4.70	3.88	5.41	5.20	5.88	9.63
	S.d.	0.25	0	1.80	3.93	3.71	2.61	2.83	3.22	3.63	1.55	
Tadhimboko West	Mean	8.25	8.99	9.58	8.49	8.88	8.05	6.89	9.60	6.18	5.98	19.41
	S.d.	6.88	9.04	10.36	7.59	11.43	7.03	6.99	10.85	6.24	6.24	
Other Districts:												
Aola	Mean	8.97	0	6.40	6.45	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.26
	S.d.	11.14	0	3.63	5.59	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Malango	Mean	3.65	2.60	2.50	4.97	2.53	0	5.31	1.96	8.05	12.96	7.71
	S.d.	2.73	0.20	0	3.38	2.69	0	9.77	1.98	4.03	9.14	
Tadhimboko East	Mean	5.78	21.00	4.23	12.80	5.55	3.43	4.55	3.20	4.03	0	7.07
	S.d.	5.86	0	2.80	0	4.04	1.67	4.79	1.98	3.38	0	
Paripao	Mean	3.16	0	2.28	0	2.91	0	3.11	0	3.11	0	3.93
	S.d.	3.27	0	1.25	0	0.24	0	1.63	0	0.20	0	
Visale	Mean	4.13	4.26	4.63	3.63	4.23	3.74	4.67	4.61	2.10	3.44	6.01
	S.d.	1.91	3.11	2.96	3.01	3.53	2.24	3.38	2.45	1.73	2.60	
Nggela	Mean	0	0	15.60	0	52.00	0	3.10	0	0	0	13.33
	S.d.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.99	0	0	0	

*Standard deviation

Table 8.7

Sources of cash earnings of selected individuals
in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Name	Place of residence	Home district	Earnings at Honiara market (\$)	Copra sales (\$)	Wage employment and employer	Total income (\$)
Turagarere	Susui	Malaita	502.15	0	Agriculture Dept (contract, \$26.90)	529.05
Wasaca	Ravu	Malaita	284.82	0	None	284.82
Mataika	Gaimali	Tadhimboko	156.50	0	None	156.50
Pareti	Gorabau	Tadhimboko	25.95	208.73	None	234.68
Meki	Abuabili	Tadhimboko	0	0	Tenaru Timber Co. (driver)	275.02
Vorata	Honiara	Roroni, Tadhimboko	0	0	Lands Dept (clerk)	552.00

Susui, while the latter is dependent on the Tadhimboko landlord at Ravu. Turagarere represents the peak of financial success in Malaitan participation in Honiara market, while Wasaca typifies their average position. Both attended the market on all occasions. Mataika of Gaimali represents the Tadhimboko for whom the sale of produce was the main cash source during the survey. He did not directly control or have access to any bearing coconut grove during the survey. He also attended every market. Pareti of Gorabau, with a market attendance rate of 40 per cent (almost double the average rate for his village), here represents the Tadhimboko for whom the sale of garden produce in Honiara is not the main source of cash. He controls a large area of bearing coconut palms. Meke of Abuabili and Vorata of Roroni represent the Tadhimboko in permanent cash employment, the former in the rural area, the latter in the town and with opportunities for advancement.

Under present conditions the sale of foodstuffs in Honiara market is rewarding to the Tadhimboko and Malaitan migrants prepared to make the necessary effort. Indeed, it can be as remunerative as unskilled wage labour in Tadhimboko itself or in Honiara. But to the Tadhimboko with other cash-yielding resources, particularly coconuts, the need to earn money is not the primary reason behind a market outing. Their purpose is rather to spend money earned from copra sales, and they can do this because transport is available at market times. Some surplus ripe coconuts and roots are usually taken along to avoid the higher fare someone without cargo has to pay.

The Malaitan migrants

Why are the Malaitan migrants such prominent suppliers of produce to Honiara market? Obviously opportunities for wage labour in expatriate enterprises in Tadhimboko West have stabilised with the new labour regulation in 1960 which abolished the system of recruiting workers for a definite contract period. Workers are staying longer at their jobs. Employment opportunities provided by Tadhimboko entrepreneurs are very limited, and less rewarding financially than work for expatriate enterprises. In addition, recent Malaitan migrants lack facilities available to those earlier arrivals who have married local women, associated with local big-men for considerable lengths of time, or who have acquired such resources as coconuts. Recent arrivals have been allocated only unused

forest-covered soils, and can earn money only from quick-maturing crops.

Not so obvious, however, are the sets of interpersonal relationships which give a delicate and uncertain foundation to the agricultural and produce-marketing operations of most Malaitan migrants. This precarious base offers little security. Obligations arbitrarily attached to cultivation rights are not matters for negotiation or bargaining. The grantor extends limited usage rights; the grantee accepts without question. The Malaitans at Susui have a particular problem: if Government succeeds in attracting developers into the area, they will have to vacate Susui. As with the Indians in Fiji, uncertain land tenure seems to sharpen the motive to make short-term profits.

Uncertainty about the future is thus the dominant and uniting factor in the lot of the recently settled Malaitan migrants in Tadhimboko West. There are instances, as at Ravu, where Malaitans are planting coconuts for the Tadhimboko land-owner, and here the Malaitans themselves bring closer the time when they must consider other means of earning money.

The cost of transport

At the time of this study, road transport was the main regular means of access to Honiara available to vendors. In Tadhimboko West four trucks regularly travel to Honiara, and can carry between half a ton and two tons of produce. Each carrier also has other commitments and deliveries to the market are often delayed, with consequent deterioration of produce.

An analysis of the cost of transport to Honiara market for groups of vendors from east of Honiara is given in Table 8.8. The wide range in the average cost of transport per vendor per mile (2.2¢ to 33¢) results largely from the different methods of computing freight rates, the amount of produce carried, and the number of vendors transported. Some carriers place a levy on each unit of produce transported; some charge a flat rate per distance covered; and some combine distance covered, time taken to cart the produce, and the likely total value of all produce transported. Thus for the same distance, freight rates vary both between different carriers and between different dates.

Table 8.8

Transport costs to Honiara market, 1966

Locality	Carrier	Distance covered on all trips (miles)	No. of vendors	Total cost to all vendors combined (\$)	Transport cost as % of gross income	Average cost per seller (\$)	Average cost per seller per mile (cents)
Koli Point-Gilutae	Low Ming	645	327	518.51	18.54	1.76	2.8
Average per market		64.5	32.7	51.85			
Gorabau-Suagi	Hing Mar	450	128	134.49	15.73	1.11	2.2
Average per market		50	14.2	15.05			
Susui Malaitans	Central Co-operative Association	28	8	13.25	11.40	1.65	11
Average per market		14	4	6.62			
Susui Malaitans	Hing Mar	84	40	58.50	12.38	1.46	10
Average per market		14	6.6	8.41			
Taraia Malaitans	Jay Nanikar	162	1	54.00	16.35	6.00	33
Average per market		18		6.00			

The transport of Tadhimboko West produce to the market at the time of the survey depended heavily on Asian entrepreneurs. The Tadhimboko believe that the latter make large profits out of the market business because they persist in providing the service. Although transport costs in the region are not cheap, it is vital that links with the town be maintained because since the mid-1950s many Melanesians have been committed to market production as a major source of income.

Chapter 9

Coconut planting and copra production

Introduction

Indigenous coconut planting and copra production have always been the main avenue of earning cash open to the Tadhimboko and Solomon Islanders generally. Both before and since World War II, copra contributed more than 70 per cent, and sometimes over 90 per cent, of the annual total value of domestic exports (see Table 2.1).¹ The coconut first became a commercial crop in the 1880s when European trading links were established with the indigenous inhabitants. When the Protectorate was declared in 1893 the coconut was already a significant item of trade. In the Tadhimboko region, Woodford reported in 1896² that there had been a considerable amount of fresh coconut planting in the coastal areas since he arrived in the Solomons in 1894. Further impetus came from the practical examples of large trading and plantation firms which acquired and planted under coconuts large areas of land on north Guadalcanal between 1900 and 1920.

Unlike plantation coconuts, however, early coconut planting by Tadhimboko was largely haphazard in distribution as it existed within the traditional subsistence agricultural and land tenure framework. Individual groves were therefore scattered widely. The total area of pre-war Tadhimboko coconut groves is much smaller than that of plantation coconuts, although both tend to be coastal in location. This latter feature testifies

¹ The Government also levies an export duty on copra at the rate of 15 per cent of the f.o.b. export value. This tax earned \$666,163 in government revenue in 1965, which is equivalent to 25.37 per cent of the total recurrent revenue for that year (BSIP Annual Report for 1966 (1967:18) and Annual Report for 1967 (1968:21)).

² Woodford to Thurston (1896).

to the dominant role of sea transport in the cash economy of the Solomons, and in Tadhimboko its continuing importance until the 1950s. The small area of pre-war indigenous groves in comparison with plantation coconuts largely reflects the uneven progress of Melanesian coconut planting, the availability of wage employment, at first in Queensland and Fiji and later in the Solomons itself, and the fact that coconut planting was, and still is, part of the complex of village life and its many commitments.

Post-war progress in coconut planting

Table 9.1 summarises the age-structure of coconut groves in the various parts of Tadhimboko and in the region as a whole. Tadhimboko has approximately 1,300 acres of land at present under coconuts, 44 per cent of which has been planted since about 1961 while 37 per cent was planted before the war. Less than 9 per cent was planted during the decade 1946-56 and these should now be in the prime of their productive life, while nearly 8 per cent - planted during 1956-60 - are beginning to bear. In the region as a whole, then, coconut planting has only intensified since 1961. Continued agricultural extension work commenced during early 1963¹ when the Department of Agriculture appointed a coconut assistant² and a senior field assistant for Aola, Tadhimboko West and East; two more coconut assistants were appointed early in 1965, one to Aola and the other to Roroni.³ Early in 1964 a number

¹ Before this, the Central District agricultural staff had concentrated on Santa Isabel and Nggela.

² Since 1955 Solomon Islanders have been undergoing two- to three-year courses in tropical agriculture at the Kukum Agricultural Institute. On completion of the course they become field assistants working under expatriate agricultural field officers. The post of coconut assistant was created when the new drive to extend and improve the coconut industry began in 1960. Villagers, often with very little formal education, were given short courses in coconut management for three to six months (Agricultural officer, Central Solomons, 'January-June report 1963', pp.2-3).

³ Agricultural officer, Central Solomons, 'Annual report' (1965:3).

Table 9.1

Age-structure of coconuts in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Period planted and age		Gilutae	Makile	Gaimali	Nalimbiu	Koli Point	Metepono	Tenahulu	Gorabau	Suagi	Roroni	Total
1965-66 (under 1 year)	Total acreage	7.38	11.79	20.77	56.86	37.95	38.63	5.36	7.50	7.88	25.45	219.57
	%	25.03	15.13	23.87	28.95	19.77	17.09	54.30	2.98	5.38	29.08	16.83
1961-64 (1-5 years)	Total acreage	5.17	25.03	28.12	66.30	71.90	89.73	3.00	20.67	22.72	33.58	366.22
	%	17.54	32.11	32.32	33.76	37.45	39.69	30.40	8.22	15.50	38.37	28.08
1956-60 (6-10 years)	Total acreage	3.64	8.70	3.54	41.31	10.10	11.17	1.51	7.14	9.99	5.59	102.69
	%	12.35	11.16	4.07	21.03	5.26	4.94	15.30	2.84	6.82	6.39	7.87
1951-55 (11-15 years)	Total acreage	1.14	4.70	8.49	15.96	17.96	11.79	0	3.64	4.47	21.43	89.58
	%	3.87	6.03	9.76	8.13	9.36	5.22	0	1.45	3.05	24.49	6.87
1946-50 (16-20 years)	Total acreage	1.29	3.66	4.99	2.85	12.57	2.87	0	2.77	7.14	0.70	38.84
	%	4.38	4.70	5.73	1.45	6.55	1.27	0	1.10	4.87	0.80	2.98
Pre-war	Total acreage	10.86	24.06	21.10	13.13	41.49	71.86	0	209.81	94.34	0.77	487.42
	%	36.83	30.87	24.25	6.68	21.61	31.79	0	83.41	64.38	0.89	37.37
	Total acreage	29.48	77.94	87.01	196.41	191.97	226.05	9.87	251.53	146.54	87.52	1,304.32
	%	2.26	5.98	6.67	15.06	14.72	17.33	0.76	19.28	11.23	6.71	100.00

Sources: Department of Agriculture for coconuts 10 years and less; field survey for other figures.

of influential men and successful coconut farmers from Tadhimboko visited LPPL's coconut plantations in the Russell Islands under the sponsorship of the Department of Agriculture. Other incentives to coconut planting were the high post-war price of copra and the increasing accessibility of the Tadhimboko region to Honiara following bridge construction and the rehabilitation of war-time roads. Rapid road transport meant that agricultural officers from Honiara could visit the region more frequently and offer advice on agricultural matters to farmers.

The relatively low proportion of indigenous groves planted during the decade 1946-56 must be viewed against the unsettled political conditions throughout the Solomons and the cash opportunities available in Tadhimboko at that time. The Marching Rule aimed to produce quick-maturing food crops for local consumption. Opportunities for local wage employment were plentiful; first there was scrap-metal collection and later plantation and timber milling work. When these short-term opportunities tapered off after the recruiting system was abolished in 1960, the Tadhimboko turned back to their land. This resulted in some expansion in coconut planting and the growth of food crops for Honiara market. The Guadalcanal Council also made specific demands on the Tadhimboko during this time. Apart from requiring the payment of head tax (increased from \$1 in 1953 to \$6 in 1964), the council stipulated that all adults devote one day per month to council work under the direction of the district headman and council members.¹ In Tadhimboko these council work-days were spent on the maintenance of main tracks and roads and the construction of foot bridges across minor creeks and water-courses. Such work frequently involved overnight

¹ In Tadhimboko West the first Wednesday of each month was set aside as council work-day (resolution no.12 of 1957 of the Guadalcanal Council). The abolition of compulsory council work-days which were considered contrary to the spirit of the International Labour Convention was discussed by nearly all local government councils during 1965. This work is now considered as voluntary self-help labour.

stays in other villages and, therefore, a decrease in the amount of time that might have been spent on agricultural chores.¹

Progress at an inter-village level was uneven, and the rate of coconut planting also varied among residents of a particular village. Tenahulu lacks mature palms because it is only a recently established village, and has a small coconut acreage because of the scarcity of seed nuts for new planting.² Generally, long-established villages like Makile, Gaimali, villages of the Koli Point and Metepono areas, Gorabau and Suagi, have large acreages of mature coconuts which ensure a large overall acreage per capita. Abundance of bearing palms, of course, ensures an adequate supply of planting material. However, there are exceptions to this. The Ñalimbiu area has only been recently settled - its Tadhimboko occupants moved from Makile, Gaimali, Papagu and Koli between 1954 and 1963 - but all of them either control or have access to locally selected seed nuts from their coastal villages. This, and their use of hired or 'free' labour, help to account for their very high acreage of palms less than six years old. In contrast, Suagi and Gorabau - which have the highest acreages of pre-war palms but possess relatively low acreages of coconuts under six years - are the most regular producers of copra in the region. These differences must be seen largely in terms of competing demands for the use of available coconuts: copra making, further planting, market trade, and daily subsistence needs. Indeed, these demands on the coconut apply throughout the region, but nowhere is the regularity of copra trade more apparent than in the eastern part of Tadhimboko West.

As in the past, coconut planting in Tadhimboko operates within the context of village subsistence agriculture. Coconuts are rarely planted on their own, but are usually

¹ However, resolution no.4 of 1959 of the Guadalcanal Council stipulated that all adult males maintain at least fifty coconuts. This requirement is indicative of the unrealistic approach to the problems of economic development taken by members of the Guadalcanal Council and is remarkably similar to aspects of the work programme once adopted by the Fijian Administration.

² The seed nuts planted so far were either bought or 'borrowed' from coastal villages.

Table 9.2
Age-structure of selected villagers' coconut palms, 1966

Name	Village	Kema	Mamata and kema land planted with coconuts	Number of coconut trees at each age group under villager's control							Total no. of trees as % of village total
				Under 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15-20 years	Over 20 years	Total number of trees	
Vouza	Roroni	<u>Thongo</u>	<u>Thongo</u> but of a separate <u>mamata</u>	136	310	80	530	0	0	1,056	19.43
Rasolea	Roroni	Malaitan	<u>Thongo</u>	190	390	503	103	0	0	1,186	21.82
Dakai	Parisisi	<u>Thongo</u>	Planting on <u>Gaubata</u> and <u>Thongo</u> land	243	800	175	130	0	0	1,348	8.92
Cakau	Ravu	<u>Gaubata</u>	Planting on <u>kema</u> land	695	0	52	0	0	350	1,097	8.83

Sources: Department of Agriculture for coconuts 10 years and less; field survey for other figures.

components of a garden complex. Thus coconut development has progressed within the existing framework of social relations, land tenure, land resources, competing demands for labour and planting material, and the influence of both local and central government. The following examples show how some of these variable have interacted (see also Table 9.2).

Jacob Vouza's long service with the pre-war Solomons' Constabulary explains the absence of pre-war palms under his control. He had not been long at Koli when war broke out in 1942. It was not until a permanent settlement was established at Roroni in 1951 that Vouza diverted some of his attention to coconut planting. He obtained locally selected seed nuts from kema members at Gorabau and obtained usage rights to the karuba on which these early plantings were made. The karuba fronts the American-built motor road joining Suagi and Gorabau. This location proved advantageous at a time when sea transport from Gorabau was the main link with Honiara. With the advent of motor road transport following the bridging of the Metepono River in 1963, the advantage of the roadside situation was enhanced. Vouza was assisted by close kin in establishing his coconuts and he usually paid them in kind. These payments gave their recipients some satisfaction in being associated with the enterprise of the big-man. Between 1953 and 1960 Vouza's pre-eminence in the political life of Tadhimboko, and the Solomons generally, limited his efforts at coconut planting. Being a member of the Advisory Council between 1950 and 1960, district headman, and president of the Native Court at its inception meant extensive touring throughout his District and the entire island, and long periods of absence from Roroni. During this period he turned his attention to trading and cutter-boat operation. The cutter-boat fell into disrepair and the store ultimately ran at a loss. Although Vouza still retains the position of district headman, the demands of official duties have slackened considerably since 1960. Whereas Vouza's early plantings were made in an irregular fashion, with little regard given to the spacing of palms and the selection of the best seed nuts locally available, those planted during the last six years exhibit a fair degree of attention to these aspects

of coconut establishment. At the same time kin now demand a cash wage for their assistance. This is particularly so when interior villagers with relatively few cash openings are employed. Vouza is the only Tadhimboko whose coconut planting enterprise attracted a loan from the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board.¹ He applied for this loan in 1961 to plant another ten acres (750 trees) under coconuts adjoining his early plantings which were then beginning to bear. Both forest and grassland were to be planted and it was thought that because a fair amount of grassland would be involved, the loan should provide for the mechanised preparation of the land. 'Although applications were normally considered only from persons resident in areas where the Agricultural Department is doing extension work and where... development requires encouragement other than by the provision of normal extension services',² the agricultural officer, Central District, considered that he would be able to exercise some degree of control and supervision over the project despite the inadequacy of transport links with Honiara at that time. After examining Vouza's land, he reported that it was suitable for the crop but recommended the use of fertiliser. Further points raised by the agricultural officer in support of Vouza's loan were the appli-

¹ This Board was created in January 1955 to lend money for 'the development, maintenance and improvement of land; the promotion and development of craft and industries; the promotion of any scheme of such other nature as may from time to time be approved by the High Commissioner' (Section 15(1), Agricultural and Industrial Loans Ordinance (BSIP 1961b:829)). During its first ten years the Board lent \$591,352 of which \$14,688, or 2.5 per cent, was specifically for coconut development and this can be taken as specifically for Melanesians. The Board seems to have emphasised general improvements to large expatriate-owned plantations (31.7 per cent) and loans for non-Melanesian commercial and industrial development (28.2 per cent) (BSIP Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board, Annual Report for 1965-1966:3).

² This extract is part of a general policy statement issued by the Board in February 1962, indicating the conditions under which loans for coconut and cocoa development would be made.

cant's receptiveness to advice and the demonstration value of the farm when established. An application for \$600¹ was therefore submitted to the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board with the support of the District Commissioner, Central Solomons,² and the District agricultural officer. The loan was approved, but the Board considered that Vouza, being a man of substance,³ should finance part of the scheme himself, and the amount was accordingly reduced to \$500. Largely because it was to be a mechanised enterprise, the loan was paid in a lump sum.⁴ In December 1962 Agriculture Department officials noted that Vouza had been prompt with the repayment of his loan but that little new coconut planting had been made.

Rasolea is a Malaitan who had worked as a 'boss boy' for nearly ten years at R.C. Symes' Doma estate. While working there his family lived in Roroni and he visited them when opportunity allowed. This arrangement was made possible by the link his father-in-law had with Vouza who granted Rasolea full usufructuary rights to the land at Roroni. His first plantings were made during these visits, before he left Doma to live permanently in Roroni in 1959. In these early plantings Rasolea bought the necessary seed nuts from Gorabau villagers at the rate of twelve nuts for 10¢. For land clearing, local labour was hired on an irregular cash-and-kind payment basis. Rasolea planted the sprouting seed nuts himself. The pattern of these early plantings shows the influence of the owner's experience as a plantation worker. Although the coconut palms are spaced irregularly - 20 feet to 30 feet apart in many

¹ The \$600 was divided as follows: initial clearing, lining and staking (mechanised), \$300; planting material and nursery, \$150; maintenance, \$100; other costs, \$50.

² The Board relied on the District administration to furnish confidential reports dealing with such matters as the credit rating, land rights, and income of all applicants.

³ The District Commissioner, Central Solomons, stated that Vouza received \$240 per annum as headman salary and estimated that his store made a net profit of about \$400 in 1961.

⁴ The Loans Board usually pays coconut loans in instalments which are dependent on the progress of the applicant.

places - they form definite rows (see Plate 9.1). Today Rasolea uses many of his ripe coconuts to plant up further areas, but he no longer hires labour for this purpose. His coconuts planted since 1964 have benefited from the advice of the resident coconut assistant, both in spacing, using a 27-foot triangle,¹ and in selecting the best local seed nuts to plant.

Dakai of Parisisi is a member of the mamata of Kema ni Thongo which are widely considered to own the land at Roroni, Gorabau and Suagi. He was a resident of Volonavua before and after the war. Dakai owns no pre-war coconuts but some of those planted while he was resident at Volonavua and Marui when the former was destroyed in 1952 are now bearing. Many of the ripe nuts from bearing, post-war groves are used to extend new plantings around Parisisi which is Kema ni Gaubata land, of which his deceased wife was a member, but of a different mamata. Before and after the war Dakai was occasionally employed on the plantations of north Guadalcanal. His earliest coconut plantings are fairly regular in spacing and lining. They have not been properly maintained and in places weed growth has effectively retarded development. They are on Kema ni Thimbo and Kema ni Thongo land north of Komuvaolu. His latest plantings, on Kema ni Gaubata land, have benefited from the practical tuition given by the coconut assistant to Dakai's son in the selection of the best seed nuts,² nursery prepar-

¹ This is the spacing recommended by the Department of Agriculture. Experiments conducted by LPPL and Government in the Russell Islands show that it is most favourable to early flowering of palms. Other spacings being experimented with are 21.5 feet and 24 feet (BSIP Department of Agriculture and LPPL 1966:22-3).

² In 1960 LPPL set aside a fifty-acre block of Federated Malay States (FMS) palms on their Lingatu estate for the purpose of seed nut production. In the same year the Government lodged an application to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for the use of \$12,000 from Japanese Assets to subsidise the cost (up to 50 per cent) of these seed nuts which it was hoped would be sold by LPPL for between 8¢ and 10¢ each. The application was not

ation, size of planting holes,¹ lining and spacing. Dakai's two- to five-year-old palms have also been regularly sprayed against possible insect damage by the coconut assistant at no cost. The bearing, post-war grove on Kema ni Gaubata land south of Parisisi is well maintained, perhaps because of its nearness to Parisisi and Dakai's intention to fence the grove. The scattered distribution of Dakai's groves reflects the shifting nature of his place of residence since 1945, the distribution of his land-ownership and land-usage rights in the Metepono area, and the availability of what is locally considered as good coconut land. But if he successfully encloses his bearing grove south of Parisisi, the pattern of land alienation in the area will restrict him to a very small and insignificant portion of the grassland west of the Metepono River.

Cakau was the first Tadhimboko to vacate his coastal village (Makile) in favour of the Nalimbiu area when he moved to Ravu in 1954. Cakau, a Kema ni Gaubata, claims that the land at Ravu belongs to his mamata. However, other adults and elders in the locality say that Ravu belongs to a separate mamata of Kema ni Gaubata whose members are still adolescents and therefore too young to exert their ownership claims. Cakau's youngest coconuts were planted by two Malaitan families he brought to Ravu in mid-1965. Mamata coconuts under his control at Makile were inherited from his father, also a Kema ni Gaubata but of a different mamata. These mamata palms provide his seed nuts. Cakau has had varied experience in wage employment in many parts of the Central

2 (cont'd)

approved and the farmers, especially the Melanesians who need some assistance in order to use the best seed nuts available, today pay 10¢ per FMS seed nut. However the Government is responsible for distributing these nuts.

¹ Experiments at Russell Islands show that holes for planting coconuts should be 2 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet.

² Particularly Brontispa spp. which eats into the leaves of young palms. Early nutfall due to Amblyopelta cocophaga was never serious in Tadhimboko where protection was provided by two ant species, Anoplolepis and Oecophylla (Brown 1957:2).

Solomons. He represented Tadhimboko West in the Guadalcanal Council in 1959-60 and supervised the construction of foot bridges and road clearing. As a result of his involvement in these activities, only a relatively small number of his post-war palms are approaching production. Cakau is a Tadhimboko 'landlord' whose recent coconut planting progress is the result of his exploitation of Malaitan labour. In return for land-usage rights extended to them, the Malaitan families at Ravu have, since 1965, been required by Cakau to carry seed nuts from Makile to Ravu, clear land for their planting, and maintain them. Moreover, Cakau can, and does, harvest food crops from the Malaitans' gardens, whether for subsistence use or for sale in Honiara market. Almost all the land at Ravu has been planted under coconuts. Only here in the Nalimbiu area do the youngest coconuts also occupy the lowest terraces which are only four feet above the level of the Nalimbiu when that river is not in flood. Thus Cakau's youngest coconuts are the most susceptible to damage by minor floods. Further coconut planting will depend largely on his acquisition of land-usage rights elsewhere, but this will not be easy since Cakau is widely regarded as a 'land-grabber' and he has openly declared his opposition to the Gaubata Development Society which nearly all the Tadhimboko support.

Some implications

Prolonged absence from the village partly explains the lack of pre-war palms planted by some Tadhimboko. Engagement in local and Protectorate-wide political activity in the post-war years also seems to result in a small number of bearing post-war palms under the control of certain villagers. In contrast, long, continued residence in the region seems an essential aspect of progress in post-war coconut planting.

Experience of plantation work has had a visible effect on villagers' coconut plantings which often display an attempt at lining the new palms, although intervals between palms are fairly irregular. Proper spacing of palms is only a post-1963 practice, for which many young Tadhimboko men have received valuable practical tuition from the resident coconut assistant. Although planting material is available locally and in quantity, seed nut selection and nursery preparation are still rudimentary.

Direct cash assistance by the Government has been extended to only one individual, Jacob Vouza. This help was provided largely because of his community standing, his position in and relationship with the Government, the backing he received from the Department of Agriculture which hoped to use the assisted coconut farm as a model and demonstration unit in the region, and the expectation that some degree of mechanisation would be involved.

Post-war coconut planting in Tadhimboko is a part of village agriculture, and no soil selection as such is undertaken. The family is the basic unit of operation, and outside labour is utilised on a reciprocal basis. However, this does not exclude the use of hired labour on a cash basis for specific tasks. Further, coconut planting operates within the framework of land-usage rights, which are either pre-existing or acquired prior to the establishment of gardens. All these conditions result in the location of a villager's coconut groves in a number of different areas; in certain instances, changes in places of residence since the war accentuate the wide dispersal of an individual's coconut groves.

Land alienation has restricted the endeavours of many Tadhimboko coconut planters, particularly in the Nalimbiu-Metepono area. Among the Tadhimboko who have employed free Malaitan labour the situation is serious. Much of the area under their authority - and locally considered suitable for coconuts - has been planted or will, at the present rate, be completely planted under coconuts by 1975.

Coconut maintenance

Tadhimboko coconuts are, on the whole, poorly maintained. This applies to both new plantings and pre-war mamata groves, but especially the former. The explanation lies mainly in the different demands made on the Tadhimboko's time, and the fact that coconut planting still operates within the confines of village agriculture and its supporting tenurial practices and bush fallow system. The practice of abandoning old gardens after the final crop is harvested still persists although coconuts have been planted. In effect the bush cycle is allowed to run its initial stages until time permits clearing. This applies especially to palms aged one to six years where the groves have been cleared only once or not at all since planting. This neglect retards the growth of the palms.

With bearing palms some, usually small, groves are cleared only when coconuts are picked for copra making. The obvious consequences of lack of maintenance of bearing palms, particularly on mamata groves, are that not all the ripe coconuts are picked, the potential copra production is not realised, and the establishment of self-sown seeds is encouraged. Overcrowded groves result. Agricultural extension workers have tried with little success to persuade the Tadhimboko to thin-out overcrowded mamata groves to a density of about 70 to 80 palms per acre.¹ However, unless practical demonstration shows that thinning-out will appreciably increase the volume of copra produced, and unless the cash return is attractive in relation to the effort involved, mamata groves are likely to remain overcrowded. Another difficulty is that mamata groves have potential owners other than the present holders whose interests have to be considered before the latter commit themselves to a thinning-out programme. A subsidy may prove effective in this regard although Government considers that a comprehensive subsidy scheme, similar to that operated in Fiji, is unnecessary for the Solomon Islands. This view is based on the results of surveys ascertaining the total area of land planted under coconuts. A sample survey of Arosi sub-district, Santa Cruz, northwest, northeast and south Malaita, Kolombangara and Ganongga revealed that of 10,945 acres planted under coconuts, 6,235 acres, or 56.9 per cent, were not yet in bearing.² It seems that the Melanesian's realisation of the cash-earning power of the coconut is sufficiently strong to ensure further coconut planting without a subsidy scheme, but such interest will not necessarily ensure proper maintenance. It is in this field and in the thinning-out of the old groves that some direct cash incentive such as a subsidy is needed.³

¹ This has occurred in parts of Visale due, according to the District's administration and the Department of Agriculture, to the influence of Michael Rapasia, Legislative Council member for Guadalcanal from 1961 to 1966, president of the Guadalcanal Council from 1961 to 1968, and resident of Visale. Perhaps the early rehabilitation of American-made roads in the area also had some influence.

² BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1965 (1966:15).

³ Towards the end of 1967 the Government announced that as from 1 January 1968, it would pay coconut planters a

The volume and quality of
copra produced

Total copra production in Tadhimboko during 1966 was estimated at about 164 tons,¹ or approximately 5 per cent of the Melanesian-produced copra on Guadalcanal during 1965.

The average yield per acre of bearing palms is about 4.6 cwt per annum which is slightly lower than yields obtained on plantations on the Guadalcanal Plains.² The most important reasons for this lower level of productivity are the past use of low-quality and unselected seed nuts,³ poor maintenance of bearing groves, and the fact that not all available nuts are being turned into copra.⁴

3 (cont'd)

subsidy of up to \$50 per acre for seed nuts, insecticide and fertiliser for the replanting of 10,000 acres of senile coconuts in the Solomons over the following five years. To qualify for the subsidy, senile palms had to conform to the approved spacing (BSIP News Sheet, no.21 of 1967, p.3). The Member for Honiara thought that this subsidy would 'help the big plantations more than the small farmer' (BSIP News Sheet, no.23 of 1967, p.4).

¹ Following a survey of the coconut-producing villages of north Guadalcanal in 1957, the Department of Agriculture estimated that the area between Suagi and Makile was potentially capable of producing 145 tons of copra per annum. Since that survey was undertaken, about 190 acres of coconuts have come into bearing and should add at least 40 tons of copra to the region's potential annual production (excluding the amount consumed for subsistence and nuts sold in Honiara market). But my estimate is based on records of sales and the destructive influence of the floods during November 1966 so future production could be even higher.

² Comparative figures for Berande and Lunga during 1963 were 6.00 cwt and 5.64 cwt respectively.

³ I estimate that approximately 7,000 village-grove coconuts will produce one ton of copra compared with 4,500 FMS nuts ex-Lingatu.

⁴ At the conservative rate of three coconuts per person per week, the Tadhimboko consume the equivalent of at least 20 tons of copra in coconuts per annum. During the Honiara market survey, sufficient dry coconuts were sold by the Tadhimboko to make at least 10 tons of copra.



Plate 9.1. A newly cleared coconut grove shows attempts at orderly planting

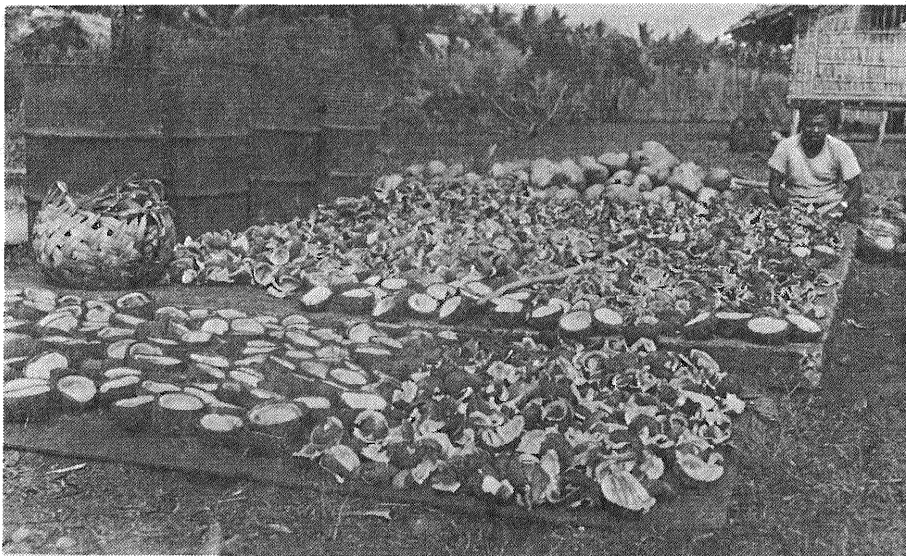


Plate 9.2. Masonite boards and war-time concrete platforms serve a useful role in the village copra industry

At least 50 per cent of the total Tadhimboko copra tonnage in 1966 was contributed by Suagi and Gorabau villagers who have 47 per cent of the total acreage of palms more than six years old. Moreover, they have established a regular copra-purchasing arrangement with the local Chinese trader, Hing Mar, who buys copra on the spot once a week and provides incentive goods.¹ Although villagers west of the Metepono River also possess sizeable areas of bearing palms, copra making seems to compete for their time and resources with the demands of further planting and foodstuff sales in Honiara. The latter activity is of minor importance in Suagi and Gorabau.

Most copra produced by the Tadhimboko today is either second or third grade.² This indicates the prevalence of sun-drying and smoke-drying techniques (see Plate 9.2) which do not ensure uniform or adequate drying, but encourage the formation and accumulation of 'defective matter'.³ However, sun-drying of copra is effortless and is encouraged by the generally dry conditions of the region, although a smoke-drier can be quickly constructed using bush timber. Thus low-quality copra is still widely produced since it involves minimal capital investment.

The volume of Tadhimboko-produced first-grade copra is relatively small because very few Tadhimboko own hot-air or Kukum driers (see Plate 9.3).⁴ Even so, possession of a Kukum drier does not guarantee that the user will turn out high-quality copra, for sometimes the fire is neglected or there is a delay in commencing the fire after the green copra is placed in the drier.

¹ Hing Mar also supplies consumption goods to villagers who operate stores.

² Copra for export must contain less than 6.5 per cent moisture. Colour, cleanliness, condition and smell determine grading, which is done on a points basis: Solomons' first grade, 100 points; Solomons' second grade, 70 points; Solomons' third grade, 30 points. During 1960 moisture meters and tintometers were installed in the three main ports to help standardise grading. Only 50 per cent of the 1966 production (20,344 tons) was first grade.

³ The Copra Ordinance (BSIP 1961b:815) defines 'defective matter' as 'copra which...is... mouldy, insect damaged, burnt, immature, produced from a germinated nut, rotten or decomposed or green copra'.

⁴ There were twelve in 1966, or one Kukum drier to about 100 persons.

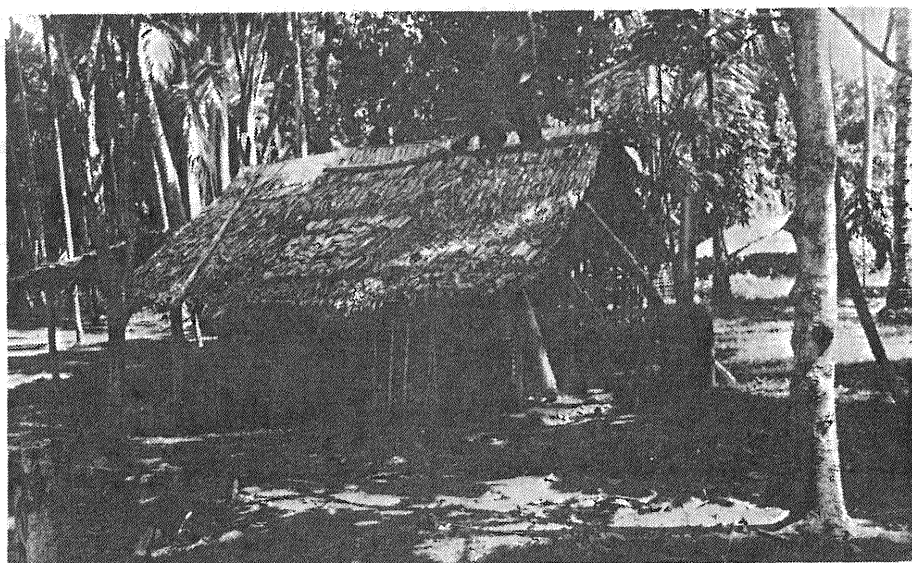


Plate 9.3. A typical hot-air drier

The Tadhimboko who own Kukum driers also own or control sizeable areas of bearing palms.¹ The large financial outlay involved in the construction of such a drier makes it worthwhile only to large producers of copra.² Ownership of a Kukum drier is still given a low priority by most Tadhimboko in their allocation of cash resources.

The organisation of copra making

Copra making in Tadhimboko is primarily done by the nuclear family.³ Unlike subsistence garden work, it is not usually associated with potentially reciprocated

¹ The converse, that those who own large areas of bearing palms also own Kukum driers, does not apply.

² A Kukum drier costs approximately \$60. During 1966 Hing Mar bought copra at an average price of 3.84¢ per lb. On this basis a copra producer needed to make 9.5 bags of copra each weighing 165 lb before he could buy a Kukum drier. If the copra was sold to the Copra Board, and without deducting freight costs of 50¢ per bag, a producer needed 6.7 bags of copra to be able to purchase one Kukum drier, assuming that the copra was third grade, for which the average price during 1966 was 5.5¢ per lb.

³ Women who produce copra in their own right are middle-aged widows who have been allocated mamata groves by mamata elders.

labour from close or distant kin. If labour outside the nuclear family is used, as by holders or a large number of groves, it is nearly always rewarded in cash. Two systems of remuneration exist. In the first, a labourer is engaged on a temporary contractual basis and receives from 50¢ to \$1 for every bag of dry copra he produces. He is normally allotted a specific number of groves from which to gather nuts and this limits his potential income. This method of labour reward is a direct adaptation to the village copra industry of the 'piece rate' system operating on expatriate copra estates. But, significantly, it excludes such higher productivity incentives as the bonus, which may be inappropriate in the village setting. This is because village groves are smaller than estates and their labour turnover is usually much higher for the would-be labourer in the village has other commitments. In the second system, a labourer may be employed to perform various jobs, of which copra making is only one, for a particular period and wage. Most labourers engaged on this basis earn an average monthly wage of \$8 to \$12.

Although village copra producers operate individually, there is some co-operation among some of them. Married adult sons, particularly those who have inherited only a small patch of coconuts, make copra from their fathers' groves under the direction of the latter who have the major say in the expenditure of the income thus earned. By co-operating with their fathers and accepting a non-ownership role in regard to the coconuts worked, sons maximise their chances of inheriting a large share of their parents' coconuts, be they in mamata groves or otherwise.

The nature of rights to mamata coconuts facilitates the use of this resource by members of the mamata other than the present holder. Traditionally mamata coconuts are held by the male member of the mamata closest genealogically to the original planter. The present holder of a mamata grove is its recognised 'overlord', but his usage rights do not completely exclude those of other members of his mamata.¹ Consequently other mamata

¹ In many cases increasing cash consciousness, and a great awareness of the cash value of coconuts, have tended to blur the potential rights of other members of the mamata to the group's coconuts and a corresponding increase in the tendency towards exclusive ownership of the coconuts by the present holders; hence the prevalence of patrilineal inheritance of coconuts.

members not in control of mamata coconuts, or whose plantings are not bearing, can and do make copra from mamata groves or a section allocated to them by the present holder.

A conspicuous aspect of coconut groves in Tadhimboko today is the fragmentation of blocks held by a single man or mamata, and the small size of most individual groves. As a result, coconuts are usually cut in the groves and the kernel is removed there; whole nuts for copra-making are rarely carried to the village or a central drying place.¹ The practice of husking the coconut before the kernel is removed from the shell is never followed. If a villager's groves are dispersed, copra making becomes tedious and time consuming. This seems to be one reason for the small amount of copra regularly offered for sale by most village producers. Obviously only one grove can be worked at one time, particularly where only family labour is available. When the groves are far from the owner's village, copra making entails temporary residence in a different village.

Copra marketing and copra incomes

All Solomons' copra offered for export is marketed through the Copra Board or licensed exporters and is shipped from the three main ports at which the Board has established buying agents.² The fragmented nature of the Solomons influences the significant role sea transport has played in the internal marketing of copra to these ports. In Tadhimboko sea transport dominated copra marketing until recently. When internal political conditions stabilised in the early 1950s, Chinese traders

¹ There are two exceptions. Firstly, where village store-owners accept coconuts in lieu of cash (twelve coconuts for 10¢) to pay for goods 'bought', the coconuts are carried to the village. Usually there are not more than twenty-four coconuts per transaction. Secondly, some villagers whose groves are near the main road often arrange with Hing Mar to transport their coconuts to the village on the understanding that the copra produced will be sold to him.

² Honiara, Yandina and Gizo are the three buying centres, in which the respective Copra Board agents are the Ports Authority, LPPL and the BSIP Trading Corporation. They receive a commission of about \$6 per ton of copra handled.

and cutter-boat owners operating from Honiara commenced buying copra from village producers on the north coast of Guadalcanal. Some Tadhimboko producers shipped their copra direct to Honiara for an average freight charge of \$1 per bag of copra over a distance of approximately twenty miles or 65¢ per ton mile. Most village producers, however, preferred to sell their copra to the traders who offered cash on the spot and consumption goods on which copra incomes might be spent. Some Chinese traders even established tradestores in north Guadalcanal which also served as copra-buying stations.¹

Although Chinese traders have dominated the shipping and copra trade of Tadhimboko, Melanesians have attempted to participate in the copra-marketing business. They have been motivated by their belief in the profitability of produce marketing, their desire to share in some of this profit, and their ambition to run their own commercial enterprises as a means of bettering their living conditions. From 1955 to 1960 two Tadhimboko-owned vessels bought some copra from village producers, but mostly freighted copra into Honiara at the same freight rate as the Chinese traders. Only one of these, that of Saki,² continues to operate today. High overhead costs, the small volume of cargo handled, endless repair difficulties, and competition from Chinese traders who offered incentive goods rendered the other vessel uneconomic.

In 1959 a consumer and producer co-operative society, centred at Kalitonia village, was formed to market copra for members and other Tadhimboko, using the Department of Co-operative Societies' launch. Largely because of competition from Chinese traders and inadequacies in the internal organisation and management of the co-operative society,³ it failed to operate successfully beyond 1962. Thus the field was again left to Chinese traders and Saki. Saki, however, has confined his marketing operation largely to Tadhimboko East and Aola and only occasionally freights into Honiara copra from the few larger producers in Tadhimboko West. Since about 1963, therefore, the purchase and marketing of most Tadhimboko West copra has been

¹ In 1956, for example, Wong Kong and Company ran a store at Aola. The Melanesian manager was provided with a small launch to use while buying copra in the area.

² See p. 235 ff.

³ See p. 225 ff.

undertaken by Hing Mar. The penetration of road transport into the eastern sector of the region during 1963 and the establishment there of Hing Mar's tradestore in that year have been major factors in his monopoly of the Tadhimboko West copra trade.

Hing Mar buys copra regularly from the Tadhimboko; Table 9.3 compares his prices with those offered by the Copra Board in Honiara.¹ Despite the fact that Hing Mar offers no price differential with regard to quality, the Tadhimboko continue to patronise him. In strict economic terms, the minimum difference between the price of a bag of copra sold to the Copra Board in Honiara and to Hing Mar (see Table 9.4), after accounting for fares and freight (\$1.30), seems enough to avoid a net loss had the producer sold the copra in Honiara. However, Table 9.5 shows that few Tadhimboko consistently sell more than two bages of copra at one time and they don't consider that the price incentive offered by Honiara is worthwhile. Moreover, should the village producer travel to Honiara he cannot be sure of returning to his home village the same day, and there is little suitable accommodation available in Honiara. Hing Mar pays cash on the spot and offers in his store at Tetere a range of trade goods similar to that available in Honiara. Hing

¹ The Copra Board announces at the beginning of each month the prices at which it will purchase copra at the main ports. These prices are determined after it hears the spot price of copra on the London market. Like other Pacific territories, the Solomons sold copra to the British Ministry of Food until 1956, after which it had to compete in the open market; hence the need to improve quality. The price differential was designed to encourage the production of high-quality copra. Since its statutory creation in 1953, the BSIP Copra Board has seen its role primarily in terms of cushioning the fluctuations of copra prices in the world market. The bulk of its reserve funds (approximately \$1m) are being used to this end. On rare occasions, some of this money is paid as a bonus over and above the declared price of the three grades of copra. It might be more profitable in the long run to channel some of this money either through local government councils or co-operative societies for the construction of Kukum driers, concrete-floored copra storage sheds and jetties - structures which are clearly beyond the financial resources of such bodies.

Table 9.3

Comparative copra prices, 1966
(cents per lb)

Month	Copra Board prices*			Hing Mar prices**
	First grade	Second grade	Third grade	
January	7.14	6.96	6.52	5.00
February	7.14	6.96	6.52	5.00
March	7.14	6.96	6.52	5.00
April	6.25	6.07	5.63	4.00
May	6.25	6.07	5.63	4.00
June	6.25	6.07	5.63	4.00
July	5.80	5.63	5.18	3.00
August	5.80	5.63	5.18	3.00
September	5.80	5.63	5.18	3.00
October	5.80	5.63	5.18	3.00
November	5.36	5.18	4.73	3.00
December	5.36	5.18	4.73	3.00

* f.o.b. Solomons' ports

** No price differential

Sources: BSIP market reports (1966) for Copra Board prices; field survey for Hing Mar prices.

Table 9.4

Comparison of costs of one bag of copra sold
to the Copra Board and to Hing Mar during 1966
correlated with drop in prices
($\$$)

	Prices if sold to the Copra Board			Price if sold to Hing Mar	Minimum differences
	First grade	Second grade	Third grade		
Jan.-Mar.	11.78	11.48	10.76	8.25	2.51
Apr.-June	10.31	10.02	9.29	6.60	2.69
July-Oct.	9.57	9.29	8.55	4.95	3.60
Nov.-Dec.	8.84	8.55	7.80	4.95	2.85

Sources: BSIP market reports (1966) for Copra Board prices; field survey for Hing Mar prices.

Mar is also patronised because he provides transport to Honiara during market time and occasionally helps to transport heavy loads between Tadhimboko villages.

Data collected on copra sales by villagers from Suagi and Gorabau, the two largest groups of producers, from May to mid-October 1966 are summarised in Tables 9.5 and 9.6. Total production, total number of sellers and cash receipts rose markedly during the dry mid-year months despite a drop in price during that period. This dry, sunny weather, and the dependence of many village producers on it for copra making, contributed significantly to the high copra incomes during that period (see Table 9.5). Table 9.6 shows that individual total copra incomes vary greatly from \$2.10 to \$329.69, with an average of \$68.56. Sellers' average incomes per sale and per month also show wide variations. Of course, these differences largely reflect the area of bearing palms under the seller's control or his access to bearing palms, and available methods of copra drying. All producers who earned an average monthly income of over \$20 from copra either owned or had access to hot-air driers during this period.

A few Tadhimboko, particularly those producing a sizeable quantity of copra, invest some of their copra incomes in hot-air driers, and also employ some short-term labourers (not only for copra making). In the past, incomes earned from copra were sometimes invested in launches, cutter-boats and trucks to improve links with Honiara. Mechanical difficulties, lack of cargo, organisation and management inadequacies, and competition from Chinese transport operators led to the complete failure of all but one of these investments. Today a few Tadhimboko, chiefly those with extensive areas of palms under their authority, are investing in cattle projects. Thus it seems that Tadhimboko investment in capital goods is a mixture of failures and promising trends.

Expenditure on consumption goods, however, reveals a different picture. By regularly providing Suagi and Gorabau villagers with transport to and from Tetere during his copra-purchasing rounds, Hing Mar encourages them to spend their newly earned income in his own store. Rice, biscuits, tinned meat, tobacco and cigarettes are the most popular purchases. Moreover, Hing Mar supplies these items to villagers operating small stores of their own, such as that operated by Karakivosa, Bai's son, of Gorabau village. During June 1966 Karakivosa sold to his fellow villagers \$104.82 worth of rice, tinned fish

Table 9.5

Suagi and Gorabau copra sales from May to mid-October 1966*

	Total volume sold (lb)	Number of sales	Average weight sold per sale (lb)	Range (lb)	Average number of bags per month (165 lb per bag)	Total income (\$)	Average return per sale per month (\$)	Range (\$)
<u>Suagi:</u>								
May	7,395	26	284.42	23-1,688	1.7	380.46	14.63	1.18-95.00
June	6,601	31	212.93	120- 470	1.2	330.14	10.65	6.00-23.50
July	14,900	45	331.11	78- 677	2.0	496.63	11.04	2.60-22.59
August	13,621	38	358.45	70-1,012	2.2	454.09	11.95	2.33-33.75
September	5,963	42	141.98	7- 397	0.8	196.78	4.69	0.22-13.25
October	2,737	15	182.47	31- 421	1.1	91.34	6.09	1.05-14.05
Total	51,217	197	259.98	7-1,668	1.5	1,949.44	9.90	0.22-95.00
<u>Gorabau:</u>								
May	6,007	17	353.35	70-1,712	2.1	321.76	18.93	3.50-107.00
June	4,761	15	317.40	50-1,107	1.8	238.11	15.87	2.50-55.38
July	9,876	31	318.58	54-1,053	1.8	328.98	10.61	1.80-35.10
August	6,807	21	324.14	130- 586	1.9	227.06	10.81	4.35-19.55
September	5,143	19	270.68	61- 675	1.6	171.44	9.02	2.02-22.50
October	3,672	14	262.29	14- 568	1.5	122.46	8.75	1.60-18.95
Total	36,266	117	309.97	14-1,712	1.8	1,409.81	12.05	1.60-107.00
Grand Total	87,483	314	278.61	7-1,712	1.6	3,359.25	10.70	0.22-107.00

* Most copra sold during this period went to Hing Mar although a small proportion was sold to the Copra Board in Honiara

Table 9.6

Copra sales of individual copra producers from Gorabau and
Suagi from May to mid-October 1966

Copra producers by village	Volume sold (lb)	Total copra income (\$)	Number of sales	Average weight sold per sale (lb)	Average income per sale (\$)	Average monthly income from copra (\$)
<u>Suagi:</u>						
Tosara	5,911	246.12	16	369.44	15.38	44.75
Nokata	1,553	57.85	8	194.13	7.23	10.52
Qiolele	1,953	71.74	8	244.13	8.97	13.04
Suka	2,212	93.97	12	184.33	7.83	17.09
Takali	3,747	171.85	6	624.50	28.64	31.25
Rebe	1,811	67.30	6	301.83	11.22	12.23
Uluna	3,530	130.68	15	235.33	8.71	23.76
Vereta*	42	2.10	1	42.00	2.10	0.38
Goneca	5,514	207.55	17	324.35	12.21	37.74
Salavata	1,836	71.04	10	183.60	7.10	12.92
Raitilava	3,988	152.48	14	284.86	10.89	27.72
Kau	657	26.94	5	131.40	5.39	4.90
Kata	1,402	52.65	8	175.25	6.58	9.57
Basuka	1,894	67.52	7	270.57	9.65	12.28
Ravita	3,429	120.86	13	263.77	9.30	21.97
Laqa*	429	16.71	3	143.00	5.57	3.04
Tolani*	192	6.40	3	64.00	2.13	1.16
Mawi	819	36.58	4	204.75	9.15	6.65
Vaqasena*	711	24.55	4	177.75	6.14	4.46
Vorata	290	12.20	2	145.00	6.10	2.22
Gonelevu	3,407	116.00	10	340.70	11.60	21.09
Qasota	1,703	56.76	4	425.75	14.19	10.32
Coka	625	20.85	4	156.25	5.21	3.79
Sote	229	7.65	2	114.50	3.83	1.39
Uluda	622	20.76	3	207.33	6.92	3.77
Bokocina	590	19.67	2	295.00	9.84	3.58
Lamu	1,139	37.89	6	189.83	6.32	6.89
Duru*	982	32.77	4	245.50	8.19	5.96
Total	51,217	1,949.44	197	259.98	9.89	12.66

Gorabau:

Bai	8,490	329.69	17	499.41	19.39	59.94
Cumu	2,875	123.22	9	319.44	13.69	22.40
Tavu	2,346	86.20	11	213.27	7.84	15.67
Loco	2,983	110.76	11	271.18	10.07	20.14
Pareti	4,696	208.73	12	391.33	17.39	37.95
Kayaga	1,209	42.48	7	172.71	6.07	7.72
Toqa	157	7.85	1	157.00	7.85	1.43
Sauta	136	6.80	1	136.00	6.80	1.24
Nabuna	855	31.80	3	285.00	10.60	5.78
Rara	4,215	157.81	11	383.18	14.45	28.69
Druadrua	790	31.16	5	158.00	6.23	5.67
Moi	1,107	40.41	6	184.50	6.74	7.35
Tinai	725	25.01	5	145.00	5.00	4.55
Vulaca	2,086	88.00	5	417.20	17.60	16.00
Basa	310	10.32	2	155.00	5.16	1.88
Finau*	360	12.00	1	360.00	12.00	2.18
Suka	195	6.50	1	195.00	6.50	1.18
Basika	979	32.67	4	244.75	8.17	5.94
Qaliqara	531	17.70	2	265.50	8.85	3.21
Vulu*	384	12.80	1	384.00	12.80	2.33
Melanesian Mission	837	27.90	2	418.50	13.95	5.07

Total	36,266	1,409.81	117	309.97	12.05	12.20
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Grand total	87,483	3,359.25	314	278.61	10.70	12.46
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* Female

and meat, biscuits, sugar, condensed milk, tea, tobacco and cigarettes. This sum is equivalent to 44.2 per cent of the total copra income earned by Gorabau villagers during that month. Such a pattern of expenditure therefore tends to support Nurkse's assertion (1960:67) that, in underdeveloped countries, income tends to be spent on luxury forms of consumption.

Chapter 10

Other agricultural pursuits: cocoa production and cattle grazing

Cocoa production

As mentioned, the cash economy of the Solomons, particularly its export trade, has been overwhelmingly dependent on copra. Cocoa was introduced as a new cash crop in order to diversify the export economy, provide a cash crop to Melanesian farmers with little or no coconut for copra making, and offer a further source of cash to small copra producers (BSIP 1964:16-17). Cocoa was chosen following favourable reports on its possibilities under local conditions by three experts who visited the Solomons during 1951-54.¹ One of these men visited again in 1959 and reported that 'cocoa is a quick-growing cash crop which appeals to the Melanesian farmer and fits into his way of life' (Urquhart 1959:2-3).

During 1953-54 cocoa seeds² were obtained from Kerevat in New Britain and two Department of Agriculture seed plots were planted - two acres at Auki and one acre at Kukum - while other seeds from Kerevat were sold to interested Melanesian farmers.³ In 1957 these two plots

¹ These were D.H. Urquhart (1951), formerly Director of Agriculture in Ghana and adviser to Cadbury and Sons Ltd, H. Greene (1952), adviser on tropical soils, and Sir Geoffrey Clay (1954), agricultural adviser to the Secretary of State, United Kingdom Government.

² These were Trinitario-type cocoa seeds which produce a fine cocoa with a mild chocolate flavour in contrast to the strong chocolate-flavoured cocoa produced from the West African Amelonado. Trinitario-type cocoa was introduced into the Solomons before World War II, but it is impossible to say if this was the only type introduced then.

³ Seeds from Kerevat were sold at 20¢ to 25¢ per pod, including freight. This price proved to be a sore point among Melanesian cocoa growers from whom the Department of Agriculture later bought planting material at the rate of 10 to 15 pods for 10¢.

were ready to supply seeds to other Melanesians. By that date, too, about 340 acres of cocoa had been established throughout the Solomons.¹ This figure gives an average rate of progress of about 68 acres planted per annum since 1953, which would not ensure that cocoa made 'an early and substantial contribution to the economy of the Protectorate' (BSIP 1964:16).

In 1958 a drive for cocoa development was launched and by the year's end approval had been given by the Secretary of State for expenditure of \$95,262 under a Commonwealth Development and Welfare scheme² to set up a Cocoa Division within the Department of Agriculture and intensify the introduction of suitable planting material.³ Between 1959 and 1965 the cocoa development programme was regularly reviewed by Government and staff added to the Cocoa Division (Keevil 1966:1).

As Table 10.1 shows, from 1959 to 1966 total cocoa acreage increased by 5,918 acres or at the rate of approximately 845 acres per annum - more than twelve times the rate of increase from 1953 to 1958. This meteoric rise in cocoa acreage resulted primarily from the relatively large quantities of cocoa seeds available for planting through increased introductions and from the trial plots at Auki and Kukum, the availability of seeds from Melanesian cocoa plots planted during 1953-57, and the persuasion, assistance and advice of a large cocoa extension staff. At the time the new extension campaign for cocoa was undertaken, the world price for dry cocoa beans was \$1,140 per ton, a point which was widely advertised by the cocoa extension staff (Keevil 1966:2) and must have favourably impressed Melanesian growers.

From its inception, cocoa extension work concentrated on Malaita, where the headquarters of the Cocoa Division

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1957 (1958:4).

² BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1958 (1959:14).

³ Further seed introductions included Upper Amazon type from Fiji in 1959, Forastero and Amelonado types from North Borneo in 1960, and other seeds from Kew, London. These introductions, plus those already established in the Solomons were later planted at Dala, Malaita, the main cocoa experimental station which was established in 1961.

Table 10.1

Progress of the Solomons' cocoa industry, 1958-66

	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
Acres planted	?	1,135	3,251	3,764	4,523	5,897	6,552	7,012	7,053	
Cocoa officer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Agricultural officers (cocoa development)	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	
Field Officers (cocoa)	1	3	8	8	10	10	10	10	10	
Field assistants/cocoa assistants	6	6	74	74	74	74	83	83	83	
Cocoa agronomist	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Cocoa production (tons)	?	0.5	7.0	12.8	24.0	37.5	63.0	72.0	96.0	60.0
Cocoa production targets* (tons)							72.0	246.0	360.0	600.0

* No targets set prior to 1964.

Sources: BSIP (1964) for production 1959-63 and targets 1964-67; BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports for 1961, 1963 and 1966 (1962, 1964 and 1967) for staffing 1961, 1963 and 1966; BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports for 1964-66 (1965-67) for production 1964-66; BSIP News Sheet, nos 1 and 2 of 1968, p.5 for production 1967; Keevil (1966) for acreage planted 1959-65 and staffing 1958-60, 1962, 1964-65.

were established and most cocoa trees were distributed at the end of 1957 (see Table 10.2). Hence Malaita has contributed up to 50 per cent of total annual production in recent years. The other major producer is the Western Solomons, where cocoa extension commenced in 1960 and producers themselves control cocoa processing and marketing. Yet despite the establishment of the Cocoa Division, production fell far short of the targets set (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.2
Distribution of cocoa trees in
the Solomons, November 1957

Area	No. of trees
Malaita	43,000
Santa Isabel	16,500
Shortland	6,750
Rendova	16,000
Russell Islands	18,000
Guadalcanal	1,000
San Cristobal	1,000
Total	102,250

Source: BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1957 (1958:4)

The concentration of cocoa extension efforts on Malaita is the result of a deliberate effort to 'spread' development in the Protectorate. Although Malaita has approximately 38 per cent of the estimated Solomons' population of 142,000, it provides only 5 per cent of the total annual copra output of the Solomons, and it was thought that cocoa would give many Malaitans a new source of cash.¹ Melanesian attempts to plant cocoa in the unstaffed Districts were given little, if any, support or were even discouraged.

Cocoa in Tadhimboko. Only 4,851 cocoa trees have been planted by Melanesians in Tadhimboko since 1953.² They

¹ Wage employment on expatriate enterprises in other parts of the Protectorate had always been a major source of cash to Malaitans. The introduction of cocoa threatened to lead to a shortage of labour from that island but this did not occur since cocoa was introduced on the west and north coasts of the island while the bulk of Malaitan workers came from the interior and east coast.

² Guadalcanal Plains Ltd owns 1,800 cocoa trees planted under coconuts at its Terere plantation.

cover slightly more than twenty-two acres and involve only fifteen villagers.¹ Individual plots contain between 8 and 940 trees, with eleven of the sixteen plots (Vouza has two) falling below the District average of 323 cocoa trees per plot.

Table 10.3 illustrates the uneven progress of cocoa planting between 1956 and 1964. More than 75 per cent of cocoa trees in Tadhimboko were planted during or after 1963 and are not yet bearing. Most of the trees now bearing were planted between 1959 and 1961. Only Vouza planted some cocoa before that date. This lack of planting before 1959 reflects the official cocoa extension view that Tadhimboko was too dry for cocoa. Vouza alone overcame this caution. As early as 1953 he indicated to the senior agricultural officer, who was present at the first meeting of the Guadalcanal Council, that the people of his island wanted to plant crops other than coconut, especially cocoa. Vouza's personal drive, determination, political status and financial position enabled him to obtain the necessary planting material.

Nearly all the Tadhimboko who planted cocoa between 1959 and 1961 reside in Roroni.² Obviously they were encouraged by Vouza's example, and were supplied with planting material by him. The cocoa plot at Kukum also provided cocoa pods, at fifteen pods for 10¢. By 1959, too, the agricultural officer, Central Solomons, occasionally visited Tadhimboko to advise Melanesians interested in the new crop. However, it was not until early 1963 that a field officer was posted to Guadalcanal specifically for cocoa development. As a result, cocoa planting increased during 1963-64, but no further plantings have been undertaken since then, primarily because of low cocoa prices.³

Table 10.4 and Fig. 7.2 show that Tadhimboko cocoa has been planted on reasonably fertile, well-drained, recent

¹ Thus each cocoa grower in the region owns, on an average, 323 cocoa trees or 1.46 acres of cocoa, assuming a density of 220 trees to the acre at a spacing of 15 feet between each tree.

² The exception is Muanivatu of Sape, but he also once lived in Roroni.

³ The price of wet beans dropped from 6¢ per lb in 1958 to 3¢ per lb in 1966.

Table 10.3

Cocoa planting in Tadhimboko West, 1956-64

Growers by village	Number of trees planted per grower per annum									Total
	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	
<u>Roroni:</u>										
Vouza	160	0	0	0	220	0	0	193	99	672
Matia*	0	0	0	60	0	100	0	210	0	370
Rasoiea*	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	138	0	238
Vakaoti	0	0	0	0	130	0	0	50	124	304
Lasu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	360	510
Loseyaqona	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
Volavola	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80	80
Bogiwalu	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	12
<u>Suagi:</u>										
Tao	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	130	130
<u>Koli:</u>										
Naikasau	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	810	130	940
<u>Bebe:</u>										
Senitoa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	310	310
<u>Sape:</u>										
Muanivatu*	0	0	0	0	0	380	0	0	0	380
<u>Nalivovo:</u>										
Qaraqara	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	127	127
<u>Tenahulu:</u>										
Sakivaka	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	220	220
Bose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	550	550
Total	160	0	0	60	350	592	0	1,559	2,130	4,851

* Malaitan

Sources: BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Cocoa register' (1966), Honiara, for 1960-64 plantings; field survey for pre-1960 plantings

to older alluvium which once carried secondary forest. Official assistance has ensured orderly planting and the use of the best planting material available. However, whether shading is provided by secondary forest or the coconut palm, there is a tendency towards overshading.¹ Only in Vouza's cocoa is Leucaena glauca used as shade, but even there it was successful only after considerable thinning-out by agricultural extension personnel.

On the whole, cocoa maintenance in Tadhimboko is reasonably good as a result of overshading, relatively dry conditions,² and increased attention to the crop since regular crop collection rounds began in 1963. Also relevant is the proximity of the cocoa to the home of the planter. In Roroni cocoa groves are within 2,000 yards of the village (see Fig. 7.2). The best maintained ones are those nearest the village and those bearing. At Sape, Ñalivovo and Bebe the cocoa plots are 500 to 2,000 yards from the homes of their owners. Although the cocoa at Sape started to bear in 1964, the owner has not sold one bean mainly because of the low price. The low price has indeed been a major factor in the neglect of a number of cocoa groves. The cocoa plots owned by the Suagi, Tena-hulu and Koli villagers are between 2,000 and 3,000 yards from the homes of their owners. None has started to bear and the standard of maintenance is much lower than at Roroni.

As with coconut planting and food crop gardening, land-ownership and land-usage rights in the field of cocoa growing are markedly inconsistent (see Table 10.4). Without exception, the Tadhimboko who own cocoa plots planted cocoa when coconuts gave them little, if any, cash income. Even today, Tadhimboko cocoa owners and producers are relatively insignificant as copra producers, while copra producers in Suagi and Gorabau have paid little attention to cocoa as a supplementary source of cash.

Cocoa production and processing : practice and policy.
Vouza's cocoa began producing pods during 1959, and until

¹ Natural shade provided by second-storey forest trees is most widely used. Ideal shade gives about 50 per cent light intensity within the cocoa grove on a clear day.

² Black Pod (Phytophthora palmivora) has been most damaging in the wetter parts of Malaita.

Table 10.4

Condition of cocoa groves in Tadhimboko, 1966

Villager	No. of trees bearing	No. of trees not bearing	Soil conditions	Spacing	Source of seed	Kind and degree of shade	Maintenance	Land-owning <u>kema</u>	<u>Kema</u> and land rights of planter
Vouza	380	292	Deep recent alluvium, older alluvium	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	<u>Leucaena glauca</u> ,	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> but of separate <u>mamata</u>	Member of land-owning <u>kema</u> and big-man
Matia	160	210	Older alluvium, moist in places	15ft x 15ft	Vouza and Agriculture Dept	Coconut grove, overshadowed	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	Malaitan, wife a member of land-owning <u>kema</u>
Rasolea	100	138	Older alluvium, moist in places	15ft x 15ft	Vouza and Agriculture Dept	Coconut grove, overshadowed	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	Malaitan, rights to land extended by Vouza
Vakaoti	130	174	Older alluvium, moist in places	15ft x 15ft	Vouza and Agriculture Dept	Coconut grove, overshadowed	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u> , planting on step-father's <u>karuba</u>
Lasu	0	510	Old alluvium, moist in places	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest and coconut grove, overshadowed	Neglected	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> , granted usage rights by owning <u>mamata</u>
Bogiwalu	12	0	Old alluvium, moist in places	Uneven	Vouza	Coconut grove, overshadowed	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> , granted usage rights by owning <u>mamata</u>

Volavola	0	80	Old alluvium, moist in places	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest, overshaded	Neglected	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> himself but his father a member of land-owning <u>mamata</u>
Loseyaqona	8	0	Old alluvium, moist in places	Uneven	Vouza	Coconut grove, overshaded	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u> , planting on own <u>karuba</u>
Tao	0	130	Old alluvium, moist in places	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest, overshaded	Good	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u> , usage rights granted by owning <u>mamata</u>
Naikasau	0	940	Old alluvium, stony in places	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest, overshaded	Good	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> , usage rights granted by owning <u>mamata</u>
Senitoa	0	310	Old alluvium	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest, overshaded	Good	Disputed land	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> ; father, a <u>Kema ni Gaubata</u> , claims ownership of land
Muanivatu	380	0	Old alluvium	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest, overshaded	Neglected	Disputed land	Malaitan, usage rights extended by one of rival claimants
Qaraqara	0	127	Old alluvium	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Coconut grove, overshaded	Good	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u> , his father is elder of owning <u>mamata</u>
Sakivaka	0	220	Old alluvium	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest overshaded	Neglected	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u> , usage rights granted by owning <u>mamata</u>
Bose	0	550	Old alluvium	15ft x 15ft	Agriculture Dept	Secondary forest, overshaded	Neglected	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u> , usage rights granted by owning <u>mamata</u>

1963 these were sold (at ten pods for 10¢)¹ for further planting in Tadhimboko and beyond. No wet beans were produced. But as other cocoa plots in Tadhimboko and other parts of Guadalcanal came into bearing, it became essential to process wet beans into dried cocoa. Early in 1963 the Department of Agriculture started to regularly collect wet beans from Guadalcanal cocoa growers accessible by road from Honiara. That year Vouza alone contributed Tadhimboko West's share of wet beans which was 38 per cent of the total volume processed in Honiara (see Table 10.5). Although Vouza's total wet bean production increased by more than 270 per cent during 1963-66, his share of total production decreased relatively as other cocoa plots in Roroni came into production. Cocoa producers from Tadhimboko West accounted for almost 32 per cent of the total wet beans processed in Honiara during 1963-66; Vouza alone contributed 25 per cent of the total.² The yields from cocoa in Tadhimboko West in 1966 compare favourably with the yield obtained by GPL at Tetere in 1965³ (see Table 10.6). But Tadhimboko's high productivity is primarily due to the high yields obtained on Vouza's cocoa plot. If his 1966 production is excluded, the productivity of the remaining Melanesian cocoa plots in Tadhimboko West falls to slightly below that of GPL (see Table 10.6). Vouza's high level of productivity is largely the result of careful maintenance, adequate shade, and above all the very high fertility level of the recent alluvium on which the bearing cocoa now thrives. All other cocoa in the region utilises less fertile older alluvium.

Wet bean production in Tadhimboko West during 1963-66 followed a seasonal pattern: production of wet beans rose markedly during the mid-year and end-of-year months, especially the latter (see Table 10.7). Production in 1966, when nearly all cocoa owners in Roroni sold wet beans, rose and fell for the first time from month to month, while the two main flush periods were still main-

¹ Vouza was paid a relatively high price per cocoa pod because his pods were much larger than those produced elsewhere in the Solomons.

² Visale, Tadhimboko East and Malango, in that order, supplied the remainder.

³ GPL did not harvest any wet beans from its cocoa plot at Tetere during 1966.

Table 10.5

Wet cocoa beans collected in Tadhimboko West for processing in Honiara,
compared with remainder of Guadalcanal, 1963-66

Producer	1963		1964		1965		1966		Total	
	Volume (lb)	% of total	Volume (lb)	% of total	Volume (lb)	% of total	Volume (lb)	% of total	Volume (lb)	% of grand total
Vouza	771	38.04	771	22.18	1,624	21.28	2,971	26.58	6,137	25.24
Matia	0	0	132	3.80	439	5.75	555	4.97	1,126	4.63
Vakaoti	0	0	0	0	154	2.02	292	2.61	446	1.83
Rasolea	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0.16	18	0.07
Bogiwalu	0	0	0	0	10	0.13	18	0.16	28	0.12
Loseyaqona	0	0	0	0	13	0.17	10	0.09	23	0.10
Total Tadhimboko West	771	38.04	903	25.98	2,240	29.35	3,864	34.57	7,778	31.99
Total other parts of Guadalcanal	1,256	61.96	2,573	74.02	5,393	70.65	7,312	65.43	16,534	68.01
Grand total	2,027	100.00	3,476	100.00	7,633	100.00	11,176	100.00	24,312	100.00

Source: BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Records of purchase of wet beans' (1966), Honiara

Table 10.6

Comparative yields of dry and wet cocoa beans in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Producer	Wet beans (lb)	No. of bearing cocoa trees	Wet beans per tree (lb)	Wet beans per acre (lb)	Dry beans per tree (lb)	Dry beans per acre (lb)
Vouza	2,971	380	7.82	1,741.76	3.36	748.96
Other East Tadhimboko	893	790	1.13	248.74	0.49	106.96
Tadhimboko West	3,864	1,170	3.30	727.68	1.46	312.90
GPL (1965)	2,860	1,800	1.59	353.08	0.68	151.82

Source: BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Records of purchase of wet beans' (1966), Honiara

Table 10.7

Monthly wet bean production in Tadhimboko West, 1963-66
(1b)

Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total per annum
1963	21	0	0	0	28	0	233	80	70	169	0	170	771
1964	60	0	70	0	0	146	0	60	64	213	173	117	903
1965	304	61	0	257	223	0	457	0	0	276	576	86	2,240
1966	84	103	69	371	134	151	679	105	519	670	555	424	3,864
Total	469	164	139	628	385	297	1,369	245	653	1,328	1,304	797	7,778
Average monthly production	117	82	70	314	128	149	456	82	218	332	435	199	1,944

Source: BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Records of cocoa purchase' (1963-66), Honiara

tained. However, 56 per cent of the total wet beans produced by Tadhimboko West in 1966 was sold between September and December.

The official view is that a locality must contain at least 2,000 bearing trees before it can economically support a small cocoa processing unit.¹ If all cocoa plots in Tadhimboko West receive adequate husbandry, the region should reach that position about 1968.² At present, however, all wet cocoa beans produced in the accessible parts of Guadalcanal are collected on the spot and purchased by the Department of Agriculture at 3¢ per lb and processed by it in Honiara using a Kukum drier.³ At first cocoa was collected on a monthly basis but trips became more frequent as production increased.⁴ The dry cocoa thus produced is marketed by Government through a London broker.

The Government expects that ultimately the producers themselves will handle not only the growing of the crop but also its processing and marketing. Legislation has been passed for the formation of a statutory corporation to handle all matters pertaining to the industry (Ordinance no. 34 of 1963), but the present low world price of cocoa and the weak financial position of the cocoa industry as a whole prevent its implementation. Government therefore continues to market and process the crop, especially in areas outside the Western Solomons. The processing of wet cocoa beans involves complicated procedures and it will be some time before Melanesian producers can produce dry cocoa of a marketable standard. However, Melanesians in the Western Solomons are handling, with official guidance, all aspects of their cocoa industry. Cocoa growers

¹ Government policy with regard to cocoa processing was presented in BSIP (1961). Briefly the main conclusion reached was that large, centralised processing units using large, hot-air driers would be built, but in areas where production was small, Kukum driers would be utilised.

² However, this was not actually achieved.

³ In Auki, Malaita, a price differential of 0.5¢ is paid if the grower brings his cocoa to the fermentary.

⁴ There were 10 trips in Tadhimboko during 1963, and 18 in 1966.

there have formed small cocoa-processing co-operatives which buy and process members' cocoa. Melanesian fermentary managers have been trained in cocoa processing by the Department of Agriculture at its Gizo fermentary. These small primary societies have formed themselves into a co-operative marketing association which grades and sells the dried beans overseas. This group produced 14.5 tons of dry cocoa or nearly 21 per cent of the total Solomons' production in 1965.

Until the Solomon Islands Cocoa Corporation is established, the Government will continue to collect, process and market much of the cocoa produced. Officials recognise it as a necessary burden on the Government's meagre financial resources because the industry itself is not yet able to undertake all services associated with cocoa production.¹

Relative returns from cocoa and coconuts. The incomes earned from cocoa by Tadhimboko producers between 1963 and 1966 are shown in Table 10.8. Vouza's superior posi-

Table 10.8

Cocoa incomes of Tadhimboko cocoa producers, 1963-66
(£)

Producers	1963	1964	1965	1966	Total
Vouza	28.39	29.13	58.11	89.13	204.76
Matia	0	4.94	15.68	16.65	37.27
Vakaoti	0	0	5.43	8.76	14.19
Rasolea	0	0	0	0.54	0.54
Bogiwalu	0	0	0.38	0.54	0.92
Loseyaqona	0	0	0.45	0.30	0.75
Total	28.39	34.07	80.05	115.92	258.43

Source: BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Records of cocoa purchase' (1963-66), Honiara.

¹ During 1966, for instance, Honiara produced about 2.15 tons of dry cocoa beans. On an average price of \$460 per ton, these would have fetched about \$980 in the London market. This money is not sufficient to cover a 30 per cent depreciation per annum on the value of a Landrover used in cocoa collection which is valued at approximately \$3,500 (landed Honiara).

tion as a cocoa producer is obvious, as is the increase in individual and total annual cocoa incomes during the period. In 1966 the average return to the Tadhimboko producer was \$21.83 per acre per annum, due largely to Vouza's income of about \$51.52 per acre per annum. Vouza's level of cash return from cocoa is far above the average return from copra which, with a mean yield of 4.6 cwt per acre per annum and an average price of 3.8¢ per lb offered¹ by the local Chinese trader, is \$19.57 per acre per annum. However, the average cash return from cocoa for the region as a whole is similar to that from copra.

Coconut continues to be the more popular cash crop from the point of view of planting progress and number of producers. All Tadhimboko plant coconut, but very few have planted cocoa since it was introduced in 1953. Although there was a rapid expansion in Tadhimboko cocoa planting in 1963-64, none was planted after 1964.² Unlike cocoa, coconuts for further planting have always been available locally and do not necessarily have to be purchased with cash. Indeed, the supply of cocoa pods for more planting on Guadalcanal has not kept pace with demand.³ In its early stages of growth, cocoa requires such measures as the provision of shade and weed clearing. Tadhimboko do not regard these measures as vital for coconut growing. In local conception non-adherence to them in regard to coconut groves tends to balance out the longer period after planting before the palms bear nuts. The costs of government services in cocoa processing and marketing are spared the cocoa producer, yet Tadhimboko still receive slightly more from the Chinese trader for one lb of copra than from the Government for one lb of wet cocoa beans. This relative advantage seems an effective incentive to continue copra production despite the greater effort involved.

¹ BSIP Department of Agriculture, 'Records of cocoa purchase' (1963-66), Honiara.

² In 1965 the Department of Agriculture actually discouraged growers from planting new areas, but exhorted them to maintain their present groves (BSIP Annual Report for 1966 (1967:5)).

³ Field officer, East-Central Solomons, 'Annual report for 1964', p.2, unpublished.

Cattle grazing

In 1967 there were 8,786 head of cattle (in 156 herds) in the Solomons,¹ of which about 4,000 belonged to LPPL. This figure was increased above the pre-war total² in August 1965 when GPL, LPPL and the Government imported 600 head of cattle from Australia. Hereford and Zebu breeds were dominant in the pre-war herds and are still so today, although most recent imports were Australian Illawarra Shorthorn.

Both before the war and today plantation cattle have been used almost exclusively for weed control, although they provide some fresh meat for plantation labourers. There is in the Solomons, however, a fresh-meat market much larger than before the war, and its presence is stimulating a new approach. LPPL plan to build up the present herd to about 10,000 head of cattle. Together with the herd of GPL, the cattle of LPPL will ultimately provide fresh meat for local consumption, especially in Honiara.³ Mission stations also run small herds to supply milk, and occasionally meat, for their staff and other workers.

On the Guadalcanal Plains the Tadhimboko appreciate the value of cattle both from observing the plantation and mission practice of running them under coconuts and by working in these institutions. Their interest in cattle ownership has increased greatly since the war. The grassed areas of the Guadalcanal Plains appear to be eminently suitable for cattle grazing. However, lack of a breeding herd as a source of supply has prevented many potential cattle-owners from obtaining suitable stock to graze their coconut groves, and the capital-intensive nature of a full cattle enterprise would limit its feasibility to a few individuals.

¹ BSIP News Sheet, no.4 of 1968, p.6.

² There were about 8,445 head of cattle in the Solomons in 1940. During the war many ran wild or were slaughtered for army rations, especially in the Russell Islands (BSIP Annual Report for 1946 (1947)).

³ Meat of all kinds imported into the Solomons during 1966 was valued at \$403,001 (BSIP Annual Report for 1966 (1967: 100)).

Part of the original concept of the Ilu Farm scheme was to develop a basic stud herd from which breeding stock could be supplied and also to organise the project as a commercial cattle-raising scheme. Both objectives proved uneconomic because of staff shortages, insufficiently developed pastures and inadequate shade. However, both Ilu and Kukum have supplied some cattle to interested Tadhimboko and some were also bought from mission stations. From Kukum have also come recommended pasture grasses such as Batiki blue (Ischaemum indicum), Centro (Centrosema pubescens), and Pangola grass (Digitaria decumbens).

After the Ilu scheme was abandoned in 1955, Government's role in the field of cattle extension work assumed modest proportions, as staff and financial resources were concentrated on copra and cocoa. Even so, a fence and stock-yard subsidy was provided to interested farmers,¹ grass seeds from Kukum were distributed, and cattle were inspected and tested by a veterinary consultant.²

¹ The fencing subsidy scheme operated from 1958 until March 1964, during which time 80 subsidies valued at \$18,326 were granted. Of these, 33 subsidies with a total cash value of \$3,542, or 19.33 per cent of the total, went to Solomon Islanders. The percentage shares of plantations and missions were 52.25 per cent and 28.42 per cent respectively. To replace the fence subsidy Government allocated \$20,000 from the Japanese War Reparation Account to finance a freight subsidy on imported cattle. This will make direct and substantial financial assistance to small Melanesian cattle-farmers - the group most in need of it - rather uncertain. In fact, only GPL and LPPL - both large expatriate enterprises - have benefited from this scheme (BSIP Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for 1964-1965:8 and 21). At the December 1967 session of the Legislative Council, the Government was asked about the possibility of reintroducing the fencing subsidy. The Director of Agriculture replied that the scheme was discontinued only because there had been no applications for two years. However, the Solomons' development plan still had provision for such a subsidy whereby Government would pay three-quarters of the cost of wire, up to \$300 a mile, with a maximum of \$900 per applicant (BSIP News Sheet, no.23 of 1967, p.6).

² A veterinary consultant from the University of Queensland has been visiting the Solomons since 1960. A full-time veterinary officer was appointed in 1967.

Tadhimboko cattle-owners. During 1966 only six individuals owned the thirty-two cattle in the region. A detailed analysis of how two of them obtained cattle and capital and enclosed the required land will illustrate the main factors involved in contemporary Melanesian cattle enterprises (see also Table 10.9).

Table 10.9

Comparative costs of cattle purchase and
fencing for two Tadhimboko cattle-owners, 1966

Items	Saki	Bale
Cost of foundation stock (\$)	90.00	40.00
Cost of wire, timber for stockyard and nails (\$)	572.50	143.00
Hired labour (\$)	78.00	37.00
Transport of posts (\$)	0	10.00
Total cost (\$)	740.50	230.00
Less fence subsidy (\$)	480.00	107.20
Net cost (\$)	260.50	122.80
Total acreage fenced	200	15
Net cost of establishment per acre (\$)	1.30	8.19
Number of cattle grazed	25	3

Saki owned 25 of the 32 head of cattle in Tadhimboko West in 1966 - 2 bulls and 23 cows including heifer calves. He made three separate purchases of stock between 1955 and 1963 at an average cost of \$14 per head.¹ His herd of cattle, containing a mixture of Hereford and Zebu breeds, increased from 2 in 1955 to 25 in 1966. The area of land enclosed has risen from 20 to 200 acres, thus maintaining the available acreage of unimproved pasture land per animal at a fairly high level.² The enclosed grazing land is

¹ His foundation stock were purchased from Ilu Farm, Pawa Melanesian Mission school in the Eastern District, and Tenaru Roman Catholic mission station.

² The veterinary consultant considered that, under Solomons' conditions, four acres of unimproved pasture would provide sufficient feed for one beast (unpublished report of veterinary consultant, Honiara, 1964).

immediately south of Koli village. Although Saki has planted some introduced pasture species in isolated clumps, they have not been firmly established and more than 90 per cent of his enclosed land is still under secondary growth and Themeda (see Plate 10.1). Unlike other Tadhimboko who have embarked on a cattle venture, Saki has enclosed only the grass and bush land containing few or no coconut palms. At the same time new grasses were not given a chance to establish themselves. Inocarpus spp. and banyan provide adequate shade for the cattle. These trees are crowded along the eastern perimeter of the enclosed land and appear to follow a minor water-course which is the main source of water for the stock. This small creek is unreliable since it dries up rapidly under prolonged spells of dry weather; in mid-1963 lack of water resulted in the loss of two one-month-old calves. Although Saki's cattle are quiet and appear to be reasonably healthy, they have not been tested for bovine tuberculosis and other cattle diseases, despite the fact that the veterinary consultant visited the Solomons six times between 1960 and 1965. Most of the enclosed land belongs to Saki's mamata of which he is the senior male member. A small proportion of the enclosed land which was fenced most recently (January 1967) belongs to a separate mamata of Kema ni Gaubata who agreed during 1966 that Saki could enclose it. Fencing wire, nails and timber for the stockyard claimed 77 per cent of total capital outlay. However, the fencing subsidy offset 64 per cent of the total cost. As in his coconut planting enterprise, Saki used both hired and 'obligatory' labour in the construction of his cattle fence. The eight labourers remunerated in cash (see Table 10.9) received an average of \$9.76 each. In other words, Saki spent an average of 39¢ per acre for the labour of those non-Tadhimboko and non-kin who erected his cattle fence and were paid in cash. Tadhimboko who did not receive proper cash payment soon after completing their part of the task were members of his mamata and other close relatives. They normally received payment in kind. For example, when Saki's brother-in-law was at Papagu in 1963 he cut about 100 mamavua (Securinega flexuosa) posts which were required for the extension and repair of Saki's



Plate 10.1. Saki's cattle and unimproved pasture grasses



Plate 10.2. Lack of suitable pasture forces this cattle owner to feed cassava leaves to his stock

cattle fence at the time the latter received the fencing subsidy. Had he not been a relative, Saki would have paid him the same rate (15¢ per post) paid to non-Tadhimboko. But this relative preferred to accumulate a store of credit with the big-man until the need arose for its utilisation. Another close relative who constantly helped Saki in his cattle enterprise was Nabaro of Sopapera and a Kema ni Thongo. Nabaro's father was an elder brother of Saki's mother (his uncle). During 1965-66 Saki gave Nabaro \$60 to help the latter finance the education of his daughter at Bungana mission school in Nggela. A significant variation in the way the labour of the Tadhimboko was remunerated by Saki in 1963 resulted in a slight diminution of his herd. Much of the work required in the repair of the old fence and the erection of new ones in that year was undertaken by three Kema ni Gaubata men. Although other Tadhimboko around Koli assisted in the work at various times, these three men had arranged with Saki that they would construct the fence. The work was completed in about two weeks. At the conclusion of the task, Saki offered to pay the men a total of \$60 in cash. They indicated that they preferred to be rewarded with a bull calf and a heifer calf with which to start their own cattle scheme. This Saki did with some reluctance in view of his own aim of building up his herd and the difficulty of obtaining replacement stock locally or from overseas. But social mores, and the fact that these Kema ni Gaubata men had completed their part of the 'contract', persuaded Saki to yield. To these men, this was the least expensive and least difficult way of acquiring cattle. During 1964 the three men bought the necessary fencing wire and enclosed four acres of Themeda between Mataga Creek and Komuvaolu. No pasture species has been established but the cattle have an ample supply of water and adequate shade. They own the two cattle jointly and are conscious of its cash possibilities. Although Saki will not sell his calves for a cash return, since 1955 he has sold five cows locally for feasts at \$50 each. Cash returns so far have recouped almost all his capital outlay. An organised marketing system and further increase in the herd, without extra capital expenditure, would demonstrate to the Tadhimboko and the Govern-

ment alike the profitability of his cattle scheme as an economic enterprise.

Bale enclosed 15 acres of his mamata land at Tearoku in 1964; 10 acres are under mamata coconuts while Themeda covers the remaining 5 acres. A small creek at the eastern end of the enclosure provides water for his three cattle, although this supply fails occasionally. As with Saki, Bale has not succeeded in establishing introduced pasture grasses: the planting of new grasses was patchy and where grass was planted the pasture was never completely free of cattle (see Plate 10.2). His small herd has also not been tested for bovine tuberculosis. Bale bought a heifer calf and one bull calf from the Tenaru Roman Catholic mission. One heifer calf was born late in 1966. Bale's comparatively high cost of establishment per acre (see Table 10.9) reflects the relatively high cost of labour and transport of materials. He employed two groups of boys from Ñajilagu school, each for two days, to cut mamavua posts at the rate of 50¢ per day. Four boys for two days at 50¢ per day and another eleven boys for two days at the same daily rate, gave a total expenditure of \$15. These boys were also responsible for loading and unloading the posts onto trucks which carted them from the Ñalimbiu area to Tearoku. As well as assistance from his two sons and one Malaitan in erecting the fence, two other Malaitans were hired on a contractual basis to do most of the fence construction for one month early in 1964. For this they received \$22 in cash. Thus the cost of labour and transport of materials averaged \$3.15 per acre. The corresponding figure for Saki was 39¢. Both men, however, have benefited from the fencing and stockyard subsidy, although in Bale's case no stockyard has yet been constructed. The need for this to be done may not be very pressing in view of the present small size of his herd. Bale's cattle scheme has a further disadvantage as he is unlikely to be able to expand his present grazing land at Tearoku. Adjacent coconut land belongs to members of another mamata who contemplate enclosing it while nearly all the grassland between Gilutae and Tenavatu is on a ninety-nine-year lease to the Government.

Prospects. Cattle grazing in Tadhimboko is still limited to a very small number of people because of

both a lack of stock and the capital-intensive nature of this activity. It is significant that 3 of the 6 Tadhimboko cattle-owners today control large areas of bearing palms or have obtained cash from other sources to finance their cattle projects.

The Tadhimboko realise the cash possibilities of cattle, although it is not clear whether cattle have superseded pigs in their value system. The small number of cattle does not indicate that this has happened yet. Their activities are certainly not 'a form of cargo cult', as was the opinion of some agricultural officers in the Central Solomons during 1962-64.

Certain weaknesses stem from the Tadhimboko conception of cattle primarily as a substitute for weeding their coconut groves. Cattle cannot completely control pasture, even after new pasture grasses have been firmly established. In Tadhimboko, where cattle are grazed under coconuts, few attempts have been made to establish suitable pasture grasses although some have been planted. To be successful, pasture establishment must be seen in the general framework of pasture management and controlled grazing. There is clearly a need to replace Themeda, which is still the dominant pasture species, with introduced grasses and mechanisation may be a necessary corollary to pasture improvement.¹ The provision of a reliable supply of water for stock poses a serious problem to cattle-owners, particularly during long spells of dry weather.

The fencing subsidy scheme substantially reduced the cost of fencing to some Tadhimboko. Variations in overall cost of establishment per acre reflect local practices and conditions, such as the organisation of labour, methods of remuneration, and the transport and cost of stock and materials other than fence wire.

Cattle grazing in Tadhimboko is limited in its expansion, particularly to between the Ñalimbiu and Metepono

¹ In 1965 the Department of Agriculture laid out a number of experimental plots on GPL land at Gavaga to observe the growth of a number of pasture species. The grasses grew vigorously, but such a demonstration probably had no impact on Melanesian cattle grazing in the region. It would have been better had Saki's land been used for the trial as GPL did not need such assistance.

rivers and north of Muvia, by land alienation of the Government. Their cattle will be confined to the small and dispersed coconut groves, leading to a costly fragmentation of labour, cash and 'holdings'. With the replacement of the fence subsidy scheme by the freight subsidy scheme, official assistance for Melanesian efforts at cattle grazing seems even less than it was during 1958-64.

Chapter 11

Commercial enterprises

Tradestores

The consumption of trade goods in Tadhimboko began with contact by European traders in about the 1860s. The recruitment of labour for Queensland and Fiji between 1871 and 1912, permanent European settlement in the 1880s, and the development of land acquisitions on the Guadalcanal Plains by individual traders and large expatriate companies between the 1880s and 1920, all ensured a flow of trade goods to the Tadhimboko.

Wage employment in expatriate work-places before about 1960 was strictly regulated by law. A few Solomon Islanders had easy access to trade goods through paid work, but the main centres of commerce and trade goods were distant from most villagers. Thus the expansion of small-trader activities could be viewed mainly as a response to the demands for trade goods of villagers with some cash, but nowhere to spend it. In Tadhimboko Melanesian-produced copra encouraged Chinese entrepreneurs to trade in the region, both before and after World War II.

Solomon Islanders realise that prices demanded by traders in their outer stations are much higher than Honiara prices. The Tadhimboko have a vague although reasonable notion that the Chinese traders are profiting greatly by the sale of store goods and the purchase of their copra; and they are apparently establishing tradestores in order to share in this profit, if not to try to eliminate the Chinese traders, and to satisfy villagers' demands for trade goods.

During the 1950s there was a rapid proliferation of Tadhimboko tradestores. In 1956, for example, there were fourteen tradestores and three bakeries in Roroni, Suagi and Gorabau. This development occurred during the Marching Rule and the desire it generated for trade goods. Moreover, tradestores offered a ready avenue by which to invest cash saved and hoarded during the war and income obtained collecting scrap-metal during 1950-53. Government had also adopted a more liberal policy in granting

store licences to enterprising Melanesians.¹ Most trade-stores operated during this time were individually owned and entailed small capital outlays. The infrequent and unreliable means of transport into Honiara meant that most functioned very irregularly.

During 1966 sixteen Tadhimboko sold store goods for periods of at least one month (see Table 11.1), more than twice the number of trading licences issued to them that year (see Table 11.2). Obviously a number of tradestores were operated without licences, mainly because their owners found it difficult to pay the \$20 store licence fee.² Store licences could legally be transferred from one operator to another provided the licence was still current. But in Tadhimboko most stores operated for less than twelve months (see Table 11.1). The people believe that a store must operate for twelve months before a new licence becomes necessary, irrespective of the period for which the licence was issued.

Table 11.1

Number of individuals who sold store goods and periods of operation, by village in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Village	Number of stores	Number of months in business
Suagi	3	8,7,6
Gorabau	2	12,12
Roroni	4	10,5,3,1
Parisisi	1	3
Tenahulu	1	5
Tumurora	1	4
Koli	1	12
Makile	2	9,2
Gilutae	1	8
Total	16	Average period of business, 7 months

¹ BSIP Department of Co-operative Societies, Annual Report (1957:6).

² Few stores, however, operated for long periods as commercial undertakings. To encourage the establishment of stores, the Guadalcanal Council decided in 1967 to reduce the store licence fee to \$10 while increasing the hawker licence fee from \$4 to \$6 (BSIP News Sheet, no.5 of 1968, p.3).

Table 11.2

Store and hawker licences issued to
Tadhimboko West villagers, 1964-66

Year	Store licences	Hawker licences
1964	9	3
1965	10	5
1966	6	1
Total	25	9

Source: Guadalcanal Council, 'Trading licence book', Honiara.

Most stores in Tadhimboko commence business with investments of \$20 to \$30,¹ and fail to proceed beyond this level of capitalisation. Many stores are not operated as strictly commercial undertakings, but provide store goods - tinned fish and meat, rice, sugar and biscuits - for consumption by the owners' families.

All Tadhimboko store-operators buy their stock at retail prices either from Chinese traders or the British Solomon Islands Trading Company in Honiara. The three Chinese traders who most regularly sell goods to Tadhimboko store-owners have been or are closely associated with them in their various economic activities.² Although most store-owners make little or no direct cash payments for the delivery of their goods,³ their sale prices are from 5 to 66 per cent higher than prevailing Honiara prices (see Table 11.3). Such a practice, regarded in official quarters as gross profiteering,⁴ contributes to the Tadhimboko view that tradestores should be lucrative enterprises, irrespective of proper costing of operations

¹ Naitokatoka of Roroni, for instance, commenced his store with an initial capital investment of \$22.60 in one bag of sugar, two tins of hard biscuits, and twist tobacco.

² These are Hing Mar, who buys Tadhimboko copra on the spot and provides transport to Honiara; Low Ming, whom the Tadhimboko west from Koli Point patronised in the transport business; and Kwong Kwong, whose coconuts at Soso - east of Gavaga Creek - gave wage openings to some Tadhimboko in the past.

³ Tradestore goods are usually bought at market times and the return fare also covers the transport of the passenger's store purchases.

⁴ BSIP Department of Co-operative Societies, Annual Report (1957:1).

Table 11.3

A comparison of prices of store goods: Honiara and two Tadhimboko traders, 1966 *

Item	Honiara price (cents)	Naitokatoka's price (cents)	Per cent increase over Honiara price	Karakivosa's price (cents)	Per cent increase over Honiara price
One tin corned beef	35	40	14.29	45	28.57
One tin corned mutton	38	40	5.26	45	18.42
One tin fish (large)	23	30	30.43	35	52.17
One tin fish (small)	12	15	25.00	15	25.00
One tin ox palm meat	24	30	25.00	30	25.00
One tin steak and onion	22	30	36.36	30	36.36
One tin condensed milk	15	25	66.67	25	66.67
One packet tea (small)	10	15	50.00	15	50.00
One packet tea (large)	25	30	20.00	30	20.00
One exercise book (16 leaves)	10	15	50.00	15	50.00
One packet salt (small)	9	15	66.67	15	66.67
One packet cigarettes(10)	15	20	33.33	20	33.33
One box matches	2	2	0	2	0
One cake Lux soap	9	15	66.67	15	66.67
One stick tobacco	6	10	66.67	10	66.67
Four hard biscuits	8	10	25.00	10	25.00
One bottle kerosene (13oz)	10	15	50.00	15	50.00
Twelve oz rice	8	10	25.00	10	25.00
One bar Sunlight soap	25	30	20.00	40	60.00
One packet chewing gum	2	2	0	2	0
Twelve oz sugar	8	10	25.00	10	25.00
One tin camp pie meat	20	25	25.00	30	50.00

* Prices of goods sold in Tadhimboko vary between villages, but store-owners in one village tend to sell their goods at the same prices.

and commodities involved. There is a clear need for advice to villagers on pricing of store goods.

Village tradestores depend for their day-to-day business on village residents. Table 11.4 shows that in the two tradestores examined in detail,¹ villagers contributed 76 and 84 per cent of total cash sales. The relatively low percentage contributed by the Roroni people in the trade of Naitokatoka's store is due mainly to the high volume of purchases made by Malaitan migrants (many from the same district, Kwarae, as Naitokatoka) employed by GPL at Gavaga. However, the average number of transactions per day, average value of each transaction, and average total cash receipts per day are similar in each case.

Table 11.4

Total cash sales of two Tadhimboko tradestores,
25 May 1966 to 30 June 1966

	Karakivosa's store (Gorabau)	Naitokatoka's store (Roroni)
Total cash sales (\$)	147.23	104.95
Number of days	37	37
Total number of transactions	544	424
Average number of trans- actions per day	14	11
Average value of total cash sales per day (\$)	3.97	2.84
Average value of cash sales per transaction (\$)	0.27	0.25
Total value of cash sales contributed by fellow- villagers (\$)	124.23	79.82
Percentage of total cash sales contributed by fellow-villagers	84.38	76.06

¹ Naitokatoka's tradestore began early in 1966 with cash earned through wage employment at Ilu Farm from January to March 1966. Karakivosa's store has a more involved history. His father, Bai, operated a tradestore immediately after the war, but it was never run as an economic enterprise. The present tradestore is controlled by Karakivosa, who received formal education at Maravovo mission school. Although no systematic records are kept, he regularly attempts to reconcile goods bought and sold.

Table 11.5

Pattern of spending per household at two stores in Roroni and Gorabau,
25 May 1966 to 30 June 1966

Householder	Total spent at store (\$)	Total number of purchases	Average spent per day (cents)	Average spent per month (\$)	Average spent per transaction (cents)
<u>Gorabau:</u>					
Pareti	13.75	58	37	11.10	24
Bai	31.65	77	86	25.80	41
Colacola	8.50	44	23	6.90	19
Moi	6.85	44	19	5.70	16
Damusa	9.25	42	25	7.50	22
Kayaga	5.50	22	15	4.50	25
Loco	10.80	40	29	8.70	27
Vulika	10.80	30	29	8.70	36
Turaga	1.20	7	3	0.90	17
Goneteavoro	0.30	2	0.8	0.20	15
Tinai	6.28	19	17	5.10	33
Vulaca	0.30	1	0.8	0.20	30
Kalou	1.65	5	4	1.20	33
Qumika	6.25	29	17	5.10	22
Roqica	8.40	19	23	6.90	44
Lomatani	2.75	15	7	2.10	18
Gorabau average per household	7.76	28	21	6.34	26
<u>Roroni:</u>					
Nasarava	6.85	29	19	5.70	24
Kakua	3.70	9	10	3.00	41
Vakaoti	1.80	11	5	1.50	16
Maitokatoka	3.05	12	8	2.40	25
Gucake	3.31	16	9	2.70	21
Vanua	1.25	7	3	0.90	18
Matia	5.45	29	15	4.50	19
Rasolea	19.80	41	54	16.20	48
Beranaveta	5.60	14	15	4.50	40
Vouza	4.80	16	13	3.90	30
Volavola	5.45	15	15	4.50	36
Sobo	2.15	11	6	1.80	19
Vuiyasawa	4.55	20	12	4.60	23
Tuqota	1.05	3	3	0.90	35
Bogiwalu	1.90	11	5	1.50	17
Vatanimoto	3.85	13	10	3.00	30
Tubu	0.95	2	3	0.90	47
Marama	1.05	4	3	0.90	26
Tukasara	5.26	21	14	4.20	25
Roroni average per household	4.30	15	11	3.55	28

Table 11.5 shows that the average amounts spent by each household per transaction range from 15¢ to 48¢, with an average of 27¢.¹ Fifteen of the 35 households spent more than the average per transaction. The amounts spent per household per day have a wider range: from 0.8¢ to 86¢, with a mean of 15¢. The superior position of Gorabau is seen clearly in Table 11.6 which shows that 9 of 16 households purchased goods on twenty or more occasions from Karakivosa's store.

Table 11.6

Frequency of purchases per household at two stores
25 May 1966 to 30 June 1966

Number of purchases	Number of households	
	Karakivosa's store	Naitokatoka's store
Over 37	6	1
20-36	3	4
10-19	3	9
1- 9	4	5
Total	16	19

The total value of goods bought, turnover and gross profits of the two stores are shown in Table 11.7. Naitokatoka is heavily dependent on credit sales not only to fellow villagers but particularly to 'one talk' employed by GPL. Credit sales are an accepted practice in the village commercial setting. In Roroni, Naitokatoka extends this favour willingly and liberally to people earning a regular income, and from whom repayment is fairly likely. During the period covered by Table 11.7, Karakivosa offered no credit sales. His much higher gross profit, due largely to his comparatively higher prices, higher average value per transaction, and higher average total cash sales per day, reflects the high copra income of Gorabau. Tadhimboko do not keep records of goods bought from the Chinese traders and sold to customers, although they do record credit transactions. Storekeepers generally think it easier to assess profit by a reconciliation of total cash receipts against the invoices of goods bought, but even this is not yet a routine practice for many store-owners.

¹ These purchases exclude the few occasions (at Gorabau) on which coconuts were bartered for twist tobacco, cigarettes or other minor items.

Table 11.7

Value of goods bought, sold, and
gross profits of two stores
25 May 1966 to 30 June 1966
 (\$)

	Karakivosa's store	Naitokatoka's store
Value of goods bought	92.80	165.55
Total cash sales	147.23	104.95
Total credit sales	0	0
Total sales	147.23	185.30
Gross profit	54.43	19.75
Possible gross profit per year	537.21	194.83

Kalitonia Co-operative Society

The background to co-operation. Because of the generally difficult economic conditions of the Protectorate immediately after World War II, particularly the non-payment of war damage compensation, the large trading firms did not return to the Solomons in 1945. Government was forced to participate in trade and commerce with the formation of the trade scheme. The Department of Co-operative Societies¹ was established in the hope that co-operative societies would eventually handle much of the retail trade in which Government, through the trade scheme, was participating, and at the same time 'provide Government with a legitimate means for directly promoting, controlling and advising native enterprises...'.²

At the end of 1956 the co-operative societies officer visited a number of sub-districts in the Central Solomons and decided that Tadhimboko West was sufficiently large and economically advanced to warrant the formation of two co-operative societies, one centred on Roroni and the other on Gaimali.³

¹ Known since 1963 as the Department of Co-operative Development.

² Co-operative societies officer, 'Annual report' (1957:2-3).

³ Local informants revealed that these were the two villages in which the co-operative societies officer held meetings during his tour of north Guadalcanal in 1956.

The co-operative movement appealed to Tadhimboko but its novelty and the people's unfamiliarity with its structure, principles,¹ aims and modes of operation led to a non-committal attitude towards the immediate formation of a society in the region. The people preferred to see first how the movement fared in other districts before they became involved in it. Thus it was not until 1959, after the Legalau Co-operative Society in Tadhimboko East had been operating for almost two years, that a co-operative society was formed in Tadhimboko West. It centred in neither of the villages officially regarded as the natural foci for such a development, but at Kalitonia. It seems probable that the co-operative societies officer either took inadequate consideration of, or regarded as irrelevant, the divisive tendencies inherent in Tadhimboko society as possible limitations on the formation and success of co-operatives in the region.

Formation of the society. Early in 1959 less than twenty individuals openly declared their willingness to subscribe to a co-operative in Tadhimboko, but when the society was actually formed membership reached 37. It remained at that level until it ceased to function early in 1963. The intention was to run a consumer and producer society. A meeting of members, with official guidance, decided that each member should buy five shares, each worth \$2, but this requirement was never fulfilled.² It is pertinent to note that 13 of the registered members were women (mostly wives of male members), who bought less than five shares each.

¹ The basic principles of the co-operative movement are as follows: membership shall be voluntary; one vote is allowed each member irrespective of the number of shares held by him in the society; membership shall be open to all interested persons; surplus funds shall be distributed in accordance with the degree of patronage of members; individual shareholding shall be limited; the movement shall maintain political, religious and racial neutrality; the society's business shall be operated on a strictly cash basis; and the movement shall promote education in co-operative methods and principles (Co-operative Societies Ordinance 1956).

² A total share capital of \$370 would have accumulated had all shares been paid up, but the total never exceeded \$291 (co-operative societies officer, 'Annual reports' (1959-63)).

Tioka, big-man at Kalitonia, was elected chairman of the organisation. Most of the committee members resided at Kalitonia and Papagu. All of them were locally regarded as substantial copra producers and senior men in their mamata. Few were formally educated beyond the village-school level and all were over forty years old. The most important post, that of secretary-storekeeper, was filled by Tiko, an educated young man who had received some instruction in co-operative methods from the co-operative societies officer and had visited the Legalau Co-operative Society in Tadhimboko East early in 1959. Tiko was the only salaried official of the society and received \$6 a month for his services.

Komuporo-Kalitonia-Papagu was the core area of the co-operative society, containing 25 of the 37 members; the remainder resided at Gilutae, Malile, Suagi, Roroni and Komuvaolu (see Table 11.8). Without exception the members from Suagi, Roroni and Komuvaolu possessed either direct marriage, mamata or kema links with society members in the core area or indirect links through members from Gilutae and Makile who were themselves related to members in the core area. It might seem, therefore, that traditional ties were invoked when the society was being formed. However, members were divided in their kema affiliation (see Table 11.8) and allegiance to local big-men, and almost one-third did not reside in the core area. It was primarily economic considerations which brought together a number of individuals possessing diverse and frequently conflicting social interests. Time and the actual operation of the society's business were to test severely the internal cohesion of the organisation.

Difficulties were posed by opposition from outside the movement. Many Tadhimboko saw it as an alien, government introduction, to be treated with caution. They saw in it a contradictory government policy: while one arm of Government offered economic advice and guidance the other attempted to take away their land.¹ At the same time, and not unreasonably, non-members considered that society members would not be able to discharge adequately their obligations to the Guadalcanal Council, which was locally regarded as an indigenous institution. Some opposition

¹ It is significant that the co-operative societies officer was himself involved in the negotiations over Muvia and Ilu while acting District Commissioner, Central Solomons, in 1955.

Table 11.8

Membership, place of residence and share capital in
Kalitonia Co-operative Society, 1959

Name	Kema	Village	Share capital (\$)	Position in the society
Tioka	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Kalitonia	10.00	President, 1959-62
Tiko	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Makile	3.00	Secretary, 1959-62
Tuiloma	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Kalitonia	10.00	President, 1962-63
Lewanavanua	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Kalitonia	10.00	Secretary, 1962-63
Koroi	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Papagu	10.00	Committee member
Baniya	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Papagu	10.00	Committee member
Ratudara	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Papagu	4.00	Committee member
Bale	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Makile	8.00	Committee member
Vosarua	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Kalitonia	10.00	Member
Vuki	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Gilutae	10.00	Member
Naikasau	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	Koli	10.00	Member
Kerekere	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Papagu	8.00	Member
Tamana	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	Komuporo	10.00	Member
Conedau	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Komuporo	10.00	Member
Vutua	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Vatukaca	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Papagu	4.00	Member
Moro	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Vakatoto	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Qalo	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Gilutae	4.00	Member
Malake	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Komuporo	10.00	Member
Tutuvou	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Komuvaolu	8.00	Member
Bogiwalu	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Roroni	10.00	Member
Mateni	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Suagi	10.00	Member
Vularua	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Makile	3.00	Member
Veata*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Kalitonia	10.00	Member
Vaqe*	<u>Kema ni Lathi</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Qalirere*	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Gilutae	4.00	Member
Tinai*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Papagu	4.00	Member
Yaca*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Kalitonia	8.00	Member
Waqanitoga*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Makile	4.00	Member
Kubou*	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Katu*	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Lati*	<u>Kema ni Thimbo</u>	Papagu	3.00	Member
Taburara*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Kalitonia	8.00	Member
Qiolevu*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Makile	4.00	Member
Serelaka*	<u>Kema ni Gaubata</u>	Komuporo	4.00	Member
Ciri*	<u>Kema ni Thongo</u>	Papagu	10.00	Member
Total share capital			291.00	

* Female

towards the co-operative society was also based on economic considerations. Tadhimboko store-owners (and presumably Chinese traders) saw the movement as a threat to their own enterprises. A statement by the co-operative societies officer that the society was only for those who intended to join it was widely interpreted to mean that it was incompatible with, and in opposition to, the individual and collective economic interests of non-members.

Operation. The society's first business - copra purchase from members - commenced about mid-1959. During the remainder of that year the society bought over four tons of copra. The following three years saw a steady flow of approximately ten tons of copra per annum. In 1963 copra was bought only during the first three months, before the society became inactive (see Table 11.9). These figures suggest that the society bought between 0.80 and 1.97 tons of copra per month but informed sources indicate that purchases fluctuated markedly between 0.75 and 2.50 tons. This fluctuation was largely the result of dependence on the official regulation of shipping facilities because the Department of Co-operative Societies' vessel¹ transported the society's copra to Honiara and delivered store goods to Kalitonia.

The Kalitonia Co-operative Society bought copra at the rate of about 3¢ per lb, a much lower price than at Honiara. Its justification lay in the need for funds to meet the loss in weight during storage, cost of bags and twine, handling and freight costs to Honiara, plus a system of deferred payment made at the end of each year. These are orthodox commercial charges, especially the cost of bags and twine, and handling and freight costs, while deferred payment falls appropriately within the field of co-operative methods. They led, however, to an unfavourable comparison of the society's copra business with those of Chinese traders who purchased copra at a slightly high price and for spot cash in full. Thus the society lost some of the copra it would have obtained. The system of deferred payment failed to achieve its

¹ The five co-operative societies which existed in 1957 formed the Central Co-operative Association. In its early period of existence, its functions were discharged by the Department of Co-operative Societies. A loan from the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board enabled the association to purchase a launch, built by a Sydney firm, and commissioned in mid-November 1958.

Table 11.9

Copra purchases by Kalitonia Co-operative Society, 1959-63

Year	Copra bought (tons)	Average bought per month (tons)	Average bought per member per month (1b)	Average annual copra income per member (\$)
1959	4.83	0.80	291	8.74
1960	10.26	0.85	627	18.82
1961	11.79	0.98	716	21.50
1962	12.26	1.02	739	22.18
1963	5.92	1.97	358	10.75

Source: Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Annual Reports (1959-63), Honiara.

anticipated effect, which was to act as an incentive to members to sell their copra through the society with the possibility that a bonus would be paid to them at the end of the year. Indeed, it would seem that deferred payment had the reverse effect. When one considers the small average volume of copra sold per member per annum and the corresponding average income earned from the year's copra sale (see Table 11.9), the average value of the bonus a member would receive would not have been much. To this could be added the competitive effect of the Gaubata Development Society which, between 1961 and 1964, bartered store goods for coconuts in the region.¹

The sale of consumer goods by the society reached a peak in 1960 and declined steadily during the next two years (see Table 11.10). Informed sources revealed that total sales per month fluctuated even more than copra purchases - from \$20 to \$480 worth of goods were sold in different months. This situation seems to have been closely associated with the general decline in the total volume of consumer sales, apart from periods when stocks ran short.

The decline in the volume of consumer sales, particularly the average value of sales per member per month (see Table 11.10), resulted from a number of factors. On the whole the society sold consumer goods at prices com-

¹ See p. 239.

Table 11.10

Consumer sales of Kalitonia Co-operative Society, 1959-63
(\\$)

Year	Consumer sales	Average monthly sales	Average sales per member per month
1959 (4 months)	966.00	241.50	6.53
1960	2735.00	227.91	6.16
1961	2124.00	177.00	4.78
1962	982.00	81.83	2.21
1963	100.00	33.33	0.90

Source: Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Annual Reports (1959-63), Honiara.

parable to those charged by individual Tadhimboko store-owners and, therefore, higher than Honiara prices. As Honiara became more accessible by road, it was perhaps inevitable that the Tadhimboko, including society members, turned to the town for some of their requirements. This trend was encouraged by the official policy that co-operative stores concentrate initially on the sale of essential subsistence items. By 1962 also, Chinese traders were firmly established at Tetere and Tenavatu, and offered a wider variety of trade goods at generally lower prices. The Gaubata Development Society was also in business at this time.

The affairs of the society were supposed to have been managed by a committee including the chairman and secretary-storekeeper. The overseeing of commercial enterprises by a formally elected committee is alien to Tadhimboko economic experience. Thus it was not surprising that the committee met infrequently and the operation of the society, especially its tradestore, was left to the secretary-storekeeper. This individual felt with reason that his salary was grossly inadequate in relation to his qualifications and responsibility. After a time, some of the store stock was missing, and although no responsibility was ever determined, a new chairman and secretary-storekeeper were elected. Even so, the members' faith in their society and its economic utility had been shaken considerably.

The causes of failure. According to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, co-operative societies invariably

fail because

of failures of integrity and responsibility among office bearers.... On Guadalcanal apathy and indolence led members back to dealing with itinerant trading vessels and native-owned cutters, with the result that the societies have just ground to a halt and show little likelihood of revival.

(BSIP Department of Co-operative Societies,
Annual Report 1963:7-8)

The foregoing analysis of the Kalitonia Co-operative Society indicates that this official view oversimplifies the case and fails to see the co-operative movement in its wider setting, and through the eyes of indigenous participants. The Tadhimboko who joined the movement were enthusiastic about its possibilities as a means of economic betterment, but few grasped the full implications of, and the demands made on them by, co-operative principles, structural organisation and mode of operation. All these remained foreign to local economic practices.

Officers seemed to have been elected on the basis of their status in the local community, and few possessed sufficient education to run the society. Thus the first secretary-storekeeper managed single-handed. His low salary reflected the belief of society members that store-keeping was a part-time responsibility. Reliable sources indicate that credit sales valued at about \$40 were extended to society members. Officials considered that stock losses could be absorbed by the society's reserve fund, but that if the society was to function successfully it was vital that it reorganise itself and come to terms with the requirements of successful co-operation. This was perhaps difficult considering the lack of trained personnel in the core area.

The anticipated economic gains were sufficiently attractive to hold together a number of individuals with diverse social interests. But economic considerations proved in the long run to be destructive: the low copra price paid by the society and the higher cost of trade goods sold by it nullified the earlier hope that co-operative methods would yield a way to better living for participants. There was clearly a certain degree of discord between the potentialities of co-operative methods as seen by the Tadhimboko and as conceived by government officials. At the same time, effective competition was provided by local traders and access to Honiara became easier.

Transport operators

The first trucks. Unlike their consumption of trade goods, Tadhimboko have only operated transport facilities since World War II, although their interest was alive well before then. This interest is part of the wider desire among Melanesians to run enterprises of their own. Like tradestores, transport activities by Chinese traders were considered to be making exorbitant profits at the expense of Melanesians.

At least ten Tadhimboko owned jeeps and trucks between the end of the war and February 1967, but not one was operating during 1966; many had become junk pieces (see Plate 11.1). Many trucks had had at least two owners before they were acquired by Tadhimboko, often from Chinese traders. Endless repair difficulties have been the inevitable consequence. The purchase of a truck demands an extensive outlay of capital and few Tadhimboko have individually saved sufficient cash to buy a new one.

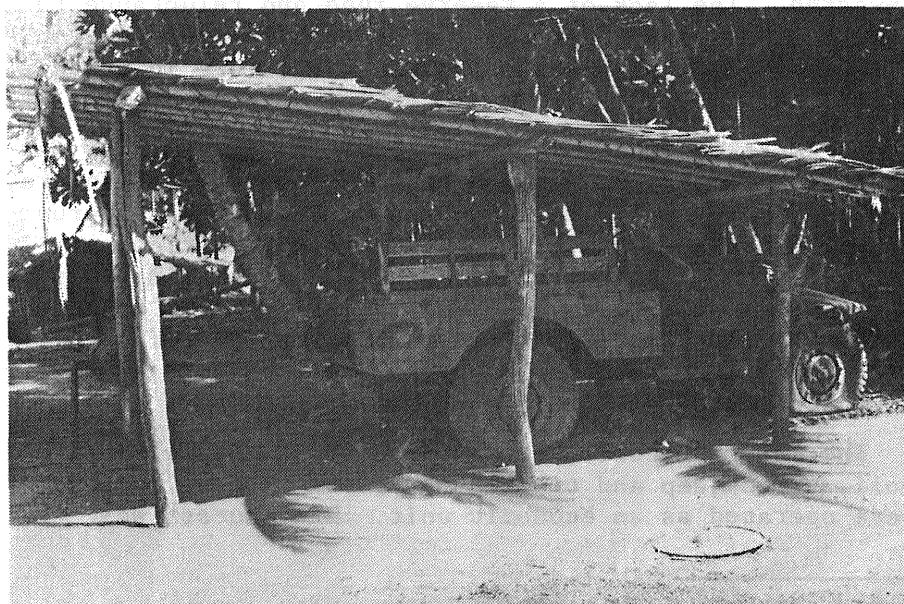


Plate 11.1. A non-serviceable ex-Army truck at Roroni

Also new trucks have not always been available at the time they were required by prospective buyers. Although the Tadhimboko are usually at ease when involved in a business transaction with Chinese traders, their lack of mechanical knowledge and their desire to buy the first

vehicle available with the cash at hand, frequently make them the losers in such purchases.

Nearly all Tadhimboko who have operated trucks in the past are local big-men. Few of them owned vehicles individually, although they tended to be the largest shareholders. The most common method of raising cash to purchase a truck was by collecting subscriptions from interested individuals. Shares for investment in a truck have varied between \$10 and \$200.¹ Cash for such an investment has been saved from copra sales, wage employment and the sale of garden produce in Honiara.

In such collective capital investments, the largest shareholders tend to have the major say in the operation of the truck and in the use of any profits. Where only a few shareholders are involved, they are usually closely related people. In such instances one of the shareholders is responsible, by mutual agreement, for running the business and allocating profits. This latter aspect is haphazard and not based proportionally on the share capital invested. The lack of a reserve fund and reluctance to make further contributions to meet costly repair bills have been the most frequent causes of failure in truck enterprises.²

The most obvious purpose of investing in vehicles was to provide transport for people and produce into Honiara, with the hope that some financial benefits would accrue in the process. However, nearly all the vehicles purchased by the Tadhimboko have been small and limited in carrying capacity: few were capable of carrying as many as ten bags of copra. This situation brought high running costs and overhead charges. The high cost of repairs demanded further financial outlays.

The most successful truck operator was Samuel Saki of Koli, whose jeep and trailer never ran without cargo and were operated as an economic unit. His success was

¹ In 1965, for example, Vesi of Abuabili purchased a second-hand jeep valued at \$160 from a Chinese trader in Honiara. His younger brother, Ulunikuaita, contributed \$30, a Malaitan tenant gave \$60, and Vesi subscribed the remainder. The vehicle was immobile throughout 1966.

² This situation is similar to that experienced by some Gorokan entrepreneurs (Finney 1969).

primarily due to his ability to manipulate the labour of relatives and others to grow garden produce for sale in Honiara, and to the training of a maternal nephew in the basic skills of motor operation and repair. Thus repairs to the vehicle were undertaken at little direct financial cost to Saki. Saki sold the vehicle after he ceased to participate in the vegetable trade in 1959.

Cutter-boat and launch. Only one cutter-boat and a launch have been owned and operated by Tadhimboko. The cutter-boat was owned by Vouza. Today it lies as a wreck on the beach at Longgu, northeast Guadalcanal, a reminder of poor advice in the Melanesian struggle towards economic betterment. The vessel and its dinghy were constructed by a Malaitan boat-builder during 1954-55; Vouza paid \$1,300 for it over a period of years. From 1955 to 1962 the vessel was used primarily to carry produce and store goods at freight rates similar to those charged by Chinese traders. Its slow speed gave it a distinct disadvantage compared with motorised vessels trading in the region. Only on a few occasions did it lift a full cargo. Thus the cutter was never an economic venture. By 1963 it had reached such a state of disrepair that it was no longer serviceable without extensive, costly repair work.

The only Tadhimboko vessel operating today is Saki's launch, his second since 1952. Saki's first launch, 18 feet long and petrol-powered, was ordered through a Honiara trader in 1953. It cost \$1,300. Although Saki personally managed the launch, it did not belong solely to him. Two other Tadhimboko, Bai and Vuce, contributed \$400 each towards its cost. The former had a tradestore¹ at Gorabau and was a major copra producer, as today, while the latter ran a successful tradestore at Volonavua before that village was abandoned in 1952. The launch concentrated on transporting people and their produce on the north coast of Guadalcanal between Visale and Aola, including Nggela. The shipping trade in this area was particularly profitable then since road transport, both east and west of Honiara, was still limited.

The repair and maintenance of vessels are always expensive in the Pacific Islands, where conditions result in a high degree of general wear and tear.² Saki had

¹ This is not the same tradestore presently managed by his son, Karakivosa.

² Couper (1965:33) made this point in the case of Fiji. The same observation would apply with equal force to Solomons' inter-island and coastal shipping.

prepared for this even before his launch was ordered. During the years of scrap-metal collection he was on close and friendly terms with an Australian businessman who had a one-quarter share in the scrap-metal business. The same individual also possessed a fleet of launches which were used in his own business and for copra loading onto overseas vessels. During 1951 Saki arranged for the Australian's shipping concern to train two members of his mamata in the basic skills involved in launch operation and repair. When the launch was delivered in 1953 the two men were able to run the vessel. Today they undertake the necessary repairs at little direct financial cost to Saki.

The first two years of business must have been fairly successful, and by the end of 1954 Saki bought the shares of his two partners, without interest. In mid-1955 Saki sold the launch to a Nggela man for \$1,100. This money, plus his savings from the enterprise, scrap-metal collection and vegetable marketing, and a contribution of \$400 from a mamata member employed in Honiara, went towards the cost of a new and much larger launch - twenty-nine feet long - valued at \$2,800. In 1962 a \$600 loan from the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board¹ made possible the installation of a new diesel engine to replace the petrol-powered motor.

The much larger size of the new vessel, capable of carrying up to five tons of copra, has facilitated the expansion of Saki's trading and shipping enterprise. Since about 1956 Saki has also engaged in copra buying from indigenous producers at prices identical to those paid by Chinese traders, as well as transporting passengers and their goods to and from Honiara. Road development on north Guadalcanal and the load capacity of the launch have limited its area of operations. Today Saki does not operate in Visale but buys copra from Nggela, Aola and Tadhimboko East. He never buys copra from Tadhimboko West but will transport produce for the Tadhimboko West at freight rates slightly lower than those applied to Nggela and areas east of the region.

¹ The loan was repaid in six equal instalments of \$100 each at six-monthly intervals. Interest was charged at the rate of 5 per cent if the principal was repaid within fourteen days of due date. Otherwise interest rose to 7 per cent.

Table 11.11

Comparative fares and freight rates on copra, sweet potato and general cargo
charged by Samuel Saki, Ports Authority and the Government during 1966

To and from Honiara	Distance in miles	Return fare (\$)	Freight per bag copra (\$)	Freight per ton copra (\$)	Freight per ton mile/ copra (cents)	Freight per basket sweet potato (cents)	Freight per ton sweet potato (\$)	Freight per ton mile/sweet potato (cents)
<u>Samuel Saki:</u>								
Nalimbiu	13.0	0.40	0.50	7.50	57.69	15	5.55	42.69
Metepono	15.5	0.50	0.60	9.00	58.06	15	5.55	35.81
Balesuna	19.0	0.60	0.70	10.50	55.26	15	5.55	29.21
Berande	20.5	1.00	0.80	12.00	58.54	20	7.40	36.10
Bokokimbo	26.0	1.00	0.90	13.50	51.92	20	7.40	28.46
Aola	36.5	1.20	1.00	15.00	41.10	20	7.40	20.56
Nggela	24.0	1.20	1.00	15.00	62.50	20	7.40	30.83
<u>Ports Authority:</u>								
Tulagi (Nggela)	24.0	1.50		5.00	20.83			
Auki	60.0	2.50		7.00	11.67			
<u>Government:*</u>								
Tulagi (Nggela)	24.0	0.40		3.00	12.50			
Auki	60.0	1.30		7.50	12.50			

* During 1965 Government decided that freight and fare rates on its vessels would be increased to the same level as those levied by private enterprise in order, so Government claimed, to encourage the carriage of goods by private enterprise and reduce the role of Government vessels as common carriers.

Sources: Personal communication, Superintendent of Marine, for Ports Authority and Government rates; field survey for other figures.

He prefers to conduct most of his business outside Tadhimboko West so that he can operate on a largely impersonal basis.

When levying freight rates, Saki considers the approximate value of the produce and the distance covered. Thus a bag of copra shipped to Honiara attracts a freight rate ranging between 50¢ and \$1 if transported anywhere between the Nalimbiu and Aola. This results in a freight structure - on a ton-mile basis - which tends, on the whole, to be less expensive with increasing distance (see Table 11.11). The same trend applies when market produce, sweet potato especially, is shipped to Honiara (see Table 11.11). Two Chinese traders also run transport and copra-buying businesses in north Guadalcanal, but in different areas to Saki so there is little competition between them.

Table 11.12 shows the profitability of Saki's shipping business, particularly in copra purchasing. The period covered, February 1967, was an average month, particularly from the viewpoint of copra making in Tadhimboko East and Aola which had sufficiently recovered from the November 1966 floods.

Table 11.12

Income and expenditure of Saki's launch
and copra business, February 1967
(£)

Income		Expenditure	
Resale of copra to	912.22	Copra buying	470.40
Copra Board		Fuel and oil	25.00
Fares and freight	62.00	Wages	55.00
		Rations	10.00
		Depreciation	26.00
		at 25%	
		Licence	3.60
		Maintenance	10.00
Gross income	974.22	Total expenditure	600.00
Net income	374.22		

Saki's position as local big-man and his manipulation of labour resources, of both his mamata and kema,¹ bring

¹ His five crew are all members of Kema ni Gaubata.

calls for financial assistance of various types. He has to contribute substantially to the bride-price and marriage feasts of his permanent launch crew, and his financial reserves are sufficiently large to absorb these demands. At the end of February 1967 Saki took delivery of a new four-ton truck, which he purchased himself for \$2,680. This will be used in the transport business both east and west of Honiara.

Gaubata Development Society

Origins. Gaubata Development Society (GDS), an unregistered organisation to which nearly all villages in Tadhimboko West belong,¹ is the result of the initiative and managerial ability of Samuel Saki. Forty dollars, donated to Tadhimboko sub-district in 1960 by the retiring High Commissioner, was divided by Vouza equally between coastal Tadhimboko East, interior Tadhimboko East, Roroni-Gorabau-Suagi, and the remainder of Tadhimboko West. The last area's share was given to Saki and used to purchase twist tobacco, each stick of which was bartered in the Gilutae-Gaimali area for sixteen coconuts. These coconuts were processed into copra and sold in Honiara for \$24, which was used to buy two bags of flour (\$8.50 each), one bag of rice (\$4.50) and more twist tobacco. These were again bartered for coconuts - sixteen coconuts for 10¢ - at Koli Point and the Metepono area. More flour, rice, sugar and tobacco were purchased and the process was repeated in the two areas and also at Gilutae-Gaimali. Early in 1964 the Roroni people joined this money-multiplying venture and contributed \$22. During 1964 more rice, flour, sugar and tobacco were bartered in the name of the group at Roroni, Tumurora, Koli and Gaimali (see Plate 11.2). Most Tadhimboko, realising that the venture was one of their own creation and that reward in the form of desirable consumption goods was immediate, bartered more than sixteen coconuts for each unit of goods worth 10¢. Thus support and enthusiasm for the enterprise were strong.

¹ Tadhimboko West villages outside the organisation are Suagi, Gorabau and Tenahulu. During 1966 villagers in the interior of Tadhimboko East expressed their desire to join, but the Tadhimboko West thought it essential that the movement first become firmly established.

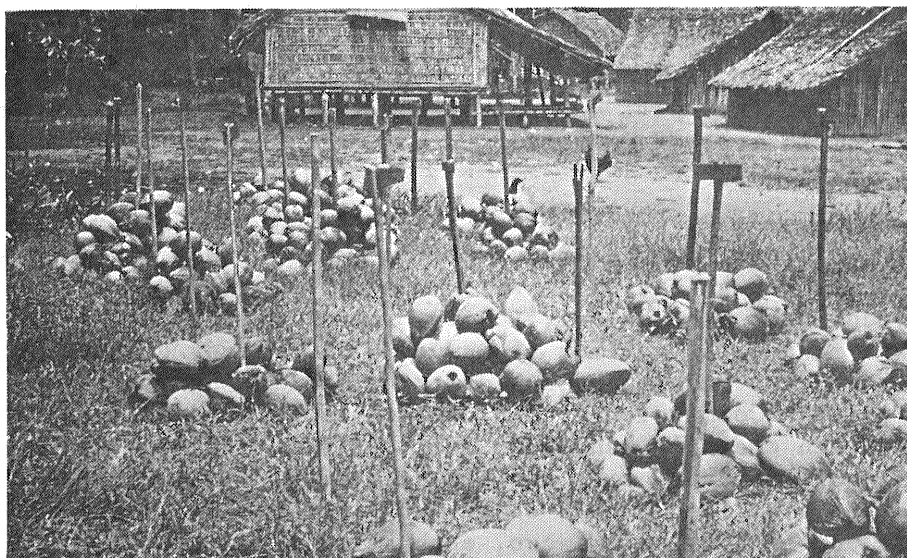


Plate 11.2. The 'self-raising' coconuts of the Gaubata Development Society



Plate 11.3. The Gaubata Development Society transport unit

Early in 1965 a sweet potato garden opposite Abuabili was established in the name of the organisation, and supporters spent seven days in clearing and planting. The crop was harvested towards the end of the year and sold at the Central Hospital and Honiara market for about \$100. For the convenience of villagers east of the Nalimbiu, gardens were established near their own villages; in January 1966 Roroni commenced clearing its own 'communal' garden east of the village, and Koli Point followed in mid-1966.

Table 11.13

Cash deposits credited to Gaubata Development Society
at Commonwealth Savings Bank, Honiara, 1964-65
 (\$)

Date	Amount deposited
25 February 1964	49.49
12 March 1964	20.41
9 April 1964	1.25
13 July 1964	106.48
19 August 1964	2.40
9 September 1964	200.04
8 December 1964	10.45
1 April 1965	1,089.45
1 April 1965	223.85
1 June 1965	0.46
1 June 1965	18.11
1 June 1965	126.76
Total	1,849.15

Source: Gaubata Development Society, Savings Bank pass book.

By mid-1965 the organisation had saved about \$1,850 (see Table 11.13). Saki suggested that the group buy a tractor and trailer for transport to Honiara and the people generally approved of this idea. Saki and other members of the organisation then approached the agricultural field officer, East Guadalcanal, who suggested that financial assistance from the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board might be sought. The membership of the group, their resources, and the area likely to be served by the tractor and trailer were assessed during January and February 1966, and in March an application for a loan of \$1,500 to complete the cost of a tractor

Table 11.14

Gaubata Development Society statement of account, 1966
(\\$)

Item	Value
<u>Cost of tractor-trailer:</u>	
Dexter 2000 37 BHP Diesel tractor ex Trading Co.	1,888.00
Five-ton tipping trailer ex R.C. Symes	960.00
Spare wheel for trailer	50.00
Spare front wheel for tractor	60.00
Insurance	80.00
Registration and licences	40.00
Total	3,078.00
Contributed by the Society	1,560.00
Loan applied for	1,518.00
<u>Possible income per month from tractor-trailer:</u>	
Copra freight, four tons per month at 60¢ per bag	38.40
Garden produce freight, 2500 baskets at 10¢ per basket	250.00
Passengers travelling with produce at 10¢, 80 per month	8.00
Passengers travelling without produce at 30¢, 40 per month	12.00
Passengers travelling out at 30¢, 120 per month	36.00
Back freight from Honiara, and hire of unit per month	40.00
Total	384.40
<u>Running costs per month:</u>	
Wages for tractor driver	24.00
Wages for part-time helper when carting produce	10.00
Fuel, oil and servicing	70.00
Depreciation at 15%	40.00
Miscellaneous	5.00
Interest on loan at 5%	6.50
Total	155.50
Possible net income per month	228.90

Source: Personal communication: agricultural field officer,
East Guadalcanal.

and trailer was submitted by the agricultural field officer on behalf of the organisation, with the support of the District Commissioner, Central Solomons. The application also set out details of the proposed use of the loan money, estimated income and running costs, and suggested terms of repayment of the loan (see Table 11.14). On 9 May 1966 the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board outlined the conditions under which it was prepared to offer a loan to the Gaubata Development Society.¹ Arrangements for the purchase of a tractor and trailer from the British Solomon Islands Trading Company were subsequently made, but largely because of shipping delays the Tadhimboko did not take delivery of their vehicle until 25 November 1966 (see Plate 11.3).

Organisation. Saki is undoubtedly the guiding force of the GDS, but he does not openly dictate its policy. He realises that the group is loosely structured, based as it is on a common identity among its adherents. The organisation is for the Tadhimboko: it was originated by them and is run by them. However, Saki's suggestions are always listened to and invariably followed, principally because of his success as an entrepreneur and his status as a big-man. Thus, on Saki's suggestion, the first lot of tobacco was bartered at Gilutae-Gaimali, and not at Koli Point where the Kalitonia Co-operative Society was still operating. He wanted to avoid both open competition with the Kalitonia Co-operative Society and the possible identification of the new venture with his own enterprise.

The Tadhimboko nominated by Saki to barter the organisation's goods were young men, and locally regarded as responsible persons, but Saki regularly checked on their progress. His offer to transport the society's copra to Honiara at a much reduced freight rate enabled him to maintain a close watch on finances and to demonstrate to his own people the sincerity of his desire to assist them. It was largely through his initiative and wider knowledge of commercial matters than other Tadhimboko, that a savings bank account was opened early in 1964 in the name of the GDS.

The need to secure financial assistance from the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board led to the introduction of a more formal and democratic organisation. A

¹ See Appendix C.

committee was formed, although a de facto committee already existed. Members of the latter were the Tadhimboko who accompanied Saki to present the group's case before the agricultural field officer, and to whom the first offer of a loan was made on 9 May 1966.¹ Most of them were frequently involved during 1964 in bartering the organisation's store goods. Unfortunately four members of this first committee were also members of the Tadhimboko West Sub-District Committee,² whose chairman, Volavola (the Guadalcanal Council member for the region), came under a cloud of suspicion following alleged conversion of tax money collected in 1964.

By the time the loan application was submitted, local opposition to the GDS was beginning to gain strength. It began in the copra area of the Kalitonia Co-operative Society, with 7 of its 14 advocates ex-members of the co-operative society, one of them a past chairman. All of them, however, had previously expressed their support of the GDS, while one of them (not a member of the Kalitonia Co-operative Society) was responsible for the early barter of GDS store goods in that area. This small dissenting group intended to revive the Kalitonia Co-operative Society. They claimed that one of them had seen the Registrar of Co-operative Societies³ who welcomed their intention. They knew that the Central Co-operative Association still retained funds in the name of the Kalitonia Co-operative Society. This fact strengthened their belief that the Kalitonia Co-operative Society was not really 'finished', although most of this money belonged to people who firmly supported the GDS and wanted their shares refunded. The dissenters maintained that it was too early yet to use the group's accumulated funds; that the idea of using this money to purchase a tractor and trailer was not referred to the people; and that GDS work was coming more and more under the control of 'section belong Volavola'. Rumours were

¹ See Appendix C.

² This is an informal arm of the Guadalcanal Council whose members represent various localities in the area and meet to discuss general matters such as education and agricultural work in the region.

³ Conversation with the Registrar of Co-operative Societies proved that this was not so.

circulated that the GDS would not 'help the people' and that those who did not carry out GDS work would be penalised. To combat these disturbing trends, Saki asked Vouza, whose sympathy lay with the GDS, to call an informal meeting of the entire region at Papagu. At this meeting both Vouza and Saki told the people that the GDS was theirs: Vouza told the breakaway group that they were turning away from something they themselves had helped to create. Saki added that should they persist in their endeavour to revive the Kalitonia Co-operative Society, they would not be debarred from using the services of the GDS if they required them. These exhortations were to no avail: the dissenting group was firm in its desire to restart the Kalitonia Co-operative Society. Towards the end of 1966, however, it became apparent that the dissenters' resolve had weakened, especially after their leader had told them that they should start their own gardens: this they saw as being no different from the GDS. Official advice had also been received that the GDS tractor and trailer would definitely be operating before the end of 1966.

At another general meeting of the GDS Saki explained that the committee to whom the loan had been offered was only an interim one: the permanent committee to run the organisation would consist of two representatives each from the five kema in Tadhimboko. Saki named the ten individuals he had in mind¹ - two of whom were members of the old committee and one of them a member of the Sub-District Committee - of whom there was unanimous approval. On a new committee member's suggestion, Saki was also included. No chairman or secretary was elected, and members relied on Saki to lead the discussions and on Vakaoti, a secondary-school-educated Tadhimboko, to maintain the records and accounts.

The re-organisation of the committee was an attempt to meet the objections of the breakaway group, and it received maximum support among the people. It represented all social groups, as well as being the apex of a combined unit of economic organisation. Committee members were also chosen by Saki so that they represented village groups from west of the Ñalimbiu, Koli Point, the Metepono area and Roroni. These were also the units of GDS garden

¹ See Appendix C. Before this meeting Saki had discussed informally the general acceptability of the new committee with a number of people in the area.

work. It was the responsibility of the committee members, who met eight times between May 1966 and February 1967, to explain broad policy decisions in their own areas and lead their people in garden and other GDS work.

The Tadhimboko's request to increase the membership of the managing committee was not entirely satisfactory to the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board which regarded the number of directors in whose name the loan had been offered as already too large and unwieldy. This view reflected its experience in the fragmented Western District where it was found difficult to bring together and prosecute all trustees when certain loan-supported, collectively owned organisations collapsed. This is a weak argument which is clearly inapplicable to Tadhimboko West, the only area in the Solomons with a network of roads. However, the Board finally agreed to the increased number of directors, after the field officer responsible for the loan application had emphasised that the Board could not possibly lose on the undertaking: the Tadhimboko were providing 50 per cent of the total cost of the unit while the Board had the power to repossess it if the loan was not repaid.

Although the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board were sympathetic to the needs of the GDS, other organs of Government were less favourable. The Commissioner of Lands apparently thought that Government, by granting a loan to the GDS, was assisting the Tadhimboko in their opposition to Government's interest over Muvia.¹ Reliable informants revealed that a suggestion that the Department of Co-operative Societies take over the responsibility of training the Tadhimboko in record-keeping was not acceptable to that department. It maintained that GDS operations did not conform to co-operative principles. Another reason for the department's opposition was that the Kalitonia Co-operative Society had not yet been dissolved and it preferred to see the people resuscitate the old society rather than form a new group not in accord with its tenets. It would appear, therefore, that policy inflexibility was the main cause of the alienation of the GDS from possible government assistance in accounting and auditing. As a result, responsibility for accounts and general supervision fell informally on the agricultural field officer, East Guadalcanal. In itself, this was

¹ Personal communication: Commissioner of Lands, 21 May 1966.

not a bad result, but an opportunity for interdepartmental collaboration, an approach rarely found in the Solomons and clearly to the advantage of all concerned, was not taken.

Financial position. The GDS tractor and trailer commenced business on 29 November 1966. Data are available on financial aspects of the business from late November 1966 to mid-February 1967. The fare and freight rates levied by the GDS on its customers are generally similar to those charged by other carriers in the transport business outside Honiara. A return fare from any part of the region to Honiara is 30¢ while freight rates for a basket of sweet potato and a bag of copra are 20¢ and 60¢ respectively. If hired by a particular individual or group, the charge for less than twenty-five miles is \$6, and \$2 extra for every additional five miles covered.

From 20 November 1966 to 19 February 1967 the transport business earned a gross income of \$497.96. Total expenses during the same period were \$431.99, giving a net income of \$65.97 (see Table 11.15). More than 60 per cent of the gross income was due to the patronage of members of the organisation. Customers from Visale and Kongga contributed, through regular hiring of the tractor and trailer during market times, 11 and 5 per cent respectively, of

Table 11.15

Income and expenditure of Gaubata Development Society
transport unit, 29 November 1966 to 19 February 1967
 (\$)

Income		Expenditure	
Fare and freight	497.96	Wages of driver and helper	78.50
		Registration of unit	30.00
		Fuel, oil and servicing	160.33
		Interest on loan at 5%	18.50
		Depreciation at 15% for 86 days	144.66
Gross income	497.96	Total expenditure	431.99
Net income	65.97		
Average monthly income	21.99		

the gross income. It was clear during these three months' business that the Tadhimboko, including the small dissenting group, were using their own transport service in preference to the Chinese carriers.

A net income of \$65.97 during the first three months of operation gives an average net monthly income of about \$21.99. Clearly this figure is much lower than was predicted by the agricultural field officer (see Table 11.14) when presenting the loan application, and on which the terms of repayment, \$70 per month, were based. A number of factors are associated with this situation. The GDS commenced its transport business at a most difficult time. The November 1966 floods destroyed all garden produce in the region and reduced copra production considerably. It was more than three months before local food supply returned to normal. Hence the volume of business was much lower than if the floods had not occurred. In addition, running expenses such as tools, spare parts, and registration costs were exceptionally high in the first month of operation. A serious handicap, too, was the limitation of operations to west of the Metepono. These difficulties led the GDS committee to request that loan repayment be deferred for three months, until May 1967. With the support of the District Commissioner, Central Solomons, this request was approved by the Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board.

Prospects. The immediate aim has been fulfilled and the tractor and trailer are now in business. There is clear evidence of support for the transport unit throughout Tadhimboko; this is vital for its operation as an economic proposition. For the future, Saki and other committee members are already thinking of expanding the group's transport business.

Eventually the GDS may enter the copra-buying business. When it does, it is likely to compete very strongly with the local Chinese trader. It would help in this regard if Suagi and Gorabau were to become associated.¹ The margin of profit derived by Saki from the copra trade

¹ Early in November 1966 Gorabau villagers and a group from Suagi commenced clearing a garden in the name of the GDS. The floods interrupted their progress and the garden was never planted. Information received in 1968 indicated that each village group had its own GDS garden.

enterprise indicates that the GDS could afford to buy copra at a price higher than that offered by Hing Mar. At the same time it would be necessary to build proper storage sheds and a hot-air drier, the latter to recondition some of the copra bought.

Villagers are associated with the functioning of the GDS transport business in two ways. Individually, they travel by, and transport their produce through, the group's tractor and trailer, but there is little substantial short-term advantage in this as freight rates are no cheaper than those charged by Chinese transport operators. Village groups also operate gardens of their own. Proceeds from the sale of village garden produce go into the account of the village concerned, but freight charges are paid to the GDS. The money earned by village groups in this way has been small in relation to total membership.¹ At Roroni there was pressure to use the village's earnings after the November 1966 floods had destroyed food gardens but this was successfully resisted. This example raises the vital issue concerning the nature and extent of the reward to members for their continued participation in the GDS. It would seem that the village groups' accounts are too small, and their source of income too irregular and unpredictable, to enable continued support of the scheme. Perhaps a system of revolving benefits paid by the parent group at set intervals to member households might help to retain members' interest at a satisfactory level.²

¹ The Roroni Gaubata Development Society account stood at \$50 at the end of 1966. This money could pay only 41¢ to each man, woman and child for work on the village garden during the year - obviously a low material reward for the labour involved.

² Information in early 1969 indicated that the GDS had become the main supplier of sweet potatoes to Honiara market from its collective gardens, that loan repayment for the tractor and trailer were on schedule, and that an additional loan for an Isuzu truck was under discussion. Arrangements for supervision, however, remained as in 1967: the agricultural field officer was still the effective liaison with the Government.

Chapter 12

Wage employment

The background to paid work

Wage employment was probably the first avenue by which the Tadhimboko participated significantly in the cash economy. The precise number of Tadhimboko who worked in Queensland or Fiji between 1871 and 1912 cannot be definitely established, but since Malaita was the main recruiting ground, Tadhimboko probably comprised only a minor proportion. This assumption tends to be supported by the number of labourers repatriated to Tadhimboko at any one period. Of the 282 Solomon Islanders repatriated from Queensland in January 1907, for instance, only 12 were landed in Tadhimboko; the majority landed in Malaita.¹

When work abroad ceased, Tadhimboko seeking wage employment undertook local and less attractive work,² as boat crews, store hands, and workers on plantations and trading posts established between 1900 and 1920 on the Guadalcanal Plains and beyond. More regular employment was offered particularly after 1917 when the first plantations came into production. Although Malaita supplied the bulk of the labour force, some Tadhimboko were also employed. By 1930 paid work had become a necessity for

¹ Woodford to im Thurn, 6 February 1907 (Western Pacific High Commission 1896-1910). These 12 persons comprised those landed in both Tadhimboko East and West. Because of connections formed while in Queensland, it is probable that some Tadhimboko might have been repatriated elsewhere while some non-Tadhimboko, especially those whose homes lay in the hills behind the plains, were repatriated in the region.

² In comparison with the Australian colonies, particularly Queensland (Scarr 1967:24, Hogbin 1939:161).

Melanesians without any other means of earning cash with which to pay the poll tax.¹

The Melanesian worker was contracted for a maximum of two years, and received a basic wage of \$2 per month plus rations, clothing and accommodation. This wage rate operated throughout the inter-war period, apart from 1934-35 when the minimum wage was reduced to \$1 per month following the drastic fall in copra prices.² This measure was designed to assist economically depressed planters and traders; it also reduced the number of Melanesians in wage employment from 6,115 in 1927 to 3,096 in 1935.³

With World War II came virtually unlimited employment openings in Tadhimboko: in the British-controlled Labour Corps, at the vegetable farm at Ilu, in the building and road construction gangs at the military base, and in laundry work for military personnel. Melanesians in the Labour Corps received \$4 per month plus rations while 'free' labourers earned \$24 to \$32 per month.⁴ Thus the period of military occupation was one of unprecedented wealth for the Tadhimboko. When the civilian administration took control in 1946, and planters resumed control of their estates, wages sank to \$4 per month plus keep. Because of the heavy capital expenditure required for rehabilitation of plantations, the low average value of copra per ton during 1930-40, and the fact that war damage compensation was never distributed to Solomons' residents, such a wage rate was inevitable. But Melanes-

¹ All Melanesian males aged 16 to 60 years paid an annual poll tax which was collected by district officers. The rates varied with what the Government considered was the capacity of the people to pay. The poll tax during the pre-war years for Nggela, Savo, Santo Isabel, Russell Islands, Gizo and Shortland was \$2; for Guadalcanal, \$1; and for Malaita, San Cristobal, and Santa Cruz, 50c. For the year ended 31 March 1931, \$17,394 were collected (BSIP Annual Report 1931:19).

² BSIP Annual Report for 1934 (1935:9).

³ BSIP Annual Report for 1932 (1933) and Annual Report for 1935 (1936).

⁴ Hogbin (1951:19) pointed out that 'in one village in Guadalcanal in 1943... all the men engaged in laundry work, for which they received sixty dollars (£18) [\$A36] per week plus rations for themselves and their families'.

ians were used to higher rates of pay and Marching Rule leaders' demands for a wage rate of \$24 to \$32 per month led to deadlock and a general labour shortage. It was only after the Marching Rule had been discredited, its leaders arrested, and active support for it weakened, that any number of Melanesians offered their services as plantation labourers.

The BSIP Labour Regulation 1947 required that labourers engaged by professional recruiters had to have written contracts witnessed by administrative officers appointed for the purpose. Only those apparently over the age of eighteen years were legally capable of entering into a contract. The few workers who were accompanied by their families could be contracted for a maximum of two years, while unaccompanied workers, who formed the majority, could contract for a maximum of twelve months. This arrangement lasted until 1960 when the Government adopted a recommendation of the Special Labour Commissioner, who made a brief survey of the labour position in the Solomons, for a policy which would 'encourage workers spontaneously to present themselves for employment' (Sykes 1958:21). The contract system was then abolished, and a full cash wage was instituted.

Wage employment on plantations was not a necessity to most Tadhimboko, who had brighter employment prospects available locally through scrap-metal collection from 1950 to 1953. During those years five Tadhimboko were hired as scrap-metal contractors. Each contractor had 15 to 20 labourers, most of whom were Tadhimboko although some were recruited from Paripao and Malango-Vulolo. The contractors were responsible for organising the collection and delivery of the scrap-metal to Honiara and the monthly collection of payments. Reliable sources show that scrap metal was paid for according to the following rates: brass shell cases, \$12 per ton; lead-covered cable, \$8 per ton; battery lead, \$6 per ton; copper radiators, \$6 per ton; and drums, \$4 each. Each contractor was paid about \$800 to \$1,200 per month, particularly during the first six months of 1950. From this money a labourer received \$14 to \$20 in wages. Thus with a maximum labour force of 20 and a wage rate of \$14 to \$20 per month, a contractor could himself earn \$400 to \$920 per month at the peak of the scrap-metal business.

In 1952 Vouza contracted with K.H.D. Hay Pty Ltd to collect marsden matting from Koli and Carney airfields on the basis of a payment of \$5.40 per ton. The 2,800

tons of steel matting collected gave a gross income of \$15,120 over a period of five months. For the 200 labourers, who were mostly Tadhimboko, gross earnings were approximately \$15 per month. However, because rations were issued by the company, and their value deducted from the total value of the contract, each labourer received considerably less than this in cash; and the rations, being obtained wholesale, in fact cost the company significantly less than their book value. The labourers could have provided for their own subsistence and hence were not very satisfied with this arrangement.

When the scrap-metal business ended, local wage labour opportunities lessened although jobs were available at the Solomon Islands Timber Co. at Tenavatu, at Ilu Farm, and at Tetera plantation. The Tadhimboko's intermittent need for cash meant that he occasionally took advantage of these openings, but there was, on the whole, no pressing necessity to sell one's labour. Cash could also be obtained locally through the sale of copra to itinerant traders, and there was an increasing demand for garden produce in Honiara market and government institutions in the capital. Thus since 1953 the Tadhimboko have become increasingly dependent on their land as a means of earning cash and less dependent on prolonged wage labour.

Expatriate work-places in Tadhimboko West

The eight main places of work in the region have been available for different periods of time since World War II. Ilu Farm has offered work continuously since the end of the war while the timber mill at Tenavatu commenced operations in 1950. Tetera Leprosarium was built in 1948 and started accepting patients in mid-1949. Although K.H.D. Hay acquired a ninety-nine-year lease on Tetera plantation (340 acres) in 1955, Guadalcanal Plains Ltd as such did not come into being until 1965.¹ In that year Guadalcanal Plains Ltd started planting mechanised dry land rice at Gavaga and imported 250 head of cattle from Australia. The Commonwealth Development Corporation entered the Solomons' investment field in 1964 with rice, soya bean and oil palm trials at Ilu. Hing Mar, a Honiara trader, briefly operated a store and copra-buying depot

¹ It was backed by Australian capital investment and separated from the lessee's other commercial interests, Mendana Enterprises in particular.

at Karekoka, Tadhimboko East, in 1961, but has concentrated on Tetere since 1963. A.R. Dethridge took over a store business from a Chinese trader at Tenavatu in 1962. The Department of Agriculture's rice trials at Ilu started in 1959. Table 12.1 lists the monthly labour force of these places during 1966, when the total number of persons employed for wages on a permanent basis¹ fluctuated between 114 and 139 per month, with an average of about 127. The Solomon Islands Timber Co. employed more than 37 per cent of persons in permanent wage employment at any one time. During October 1966 these work-places engaged 129 workers, of whom only 6, or about 5 per cent, were Tadhimboko (see Table 12.2). However, throughout 1966, 40 Tadhimboko men and women were employed at the main work-places for periods ranging from 1 to 12 months; these included 25 women from Roroni, Tenahulu and Komuvaolu who worked as weeders in GPL's rice fields. This is likely to become a regular feature of GPL labour since that company has no immediate plans for the mechanised maintenance of rice fields. Moreover, the Government has given GPL the option on a ninety-nine-year lease on the grassed area of Muvia East. When the company's rice-growing programme covers much of the area between Roroni and the Metepono River, wage employment openings for Tadhimboko will increase greatly.

As Table 12.2 shows, few Tadhimboko worked on a permanent basis in the region's major work-places. It did not follow, however, that they would not take employment on a temporary basis for in 1966 this brought them a valuable amount of cash. It is significant that Tadhimboko in permanent employment did not possess sufficient bearing coconuts to give them an income from copra.

As has been usual for the Solomons generally until the 1960s, the Malaitans dominated the labour force in the region, including that employed on a casual basis.

The labour turnover during 1966 was fairly high: more than 43 per cent of those employed on a permanent basis in the main work-places worked for 3 months or less, 25

¹ The most consistent employer of labour on a temporary basis was the Department of Agriculture's rice experiments scheme at Ilu, where casual labour was frequently hired to clean the irrigation canal and harvest the soya beans. Women were also regularly employed on a casual basis at Ilu Farm to slaughter and clean poultry.

Table 12.1

Total monthly labour force in Tadhimboko West, by work-place, 1966

Work-place	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Solomon Islands Timber Co.	45	44	44	44	45	41	41	43	48	48	52	49
Ilu rice experiments (BSIP Dept of Agriculture)	10	10	11	11	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	9
Commonwealth Development Corp.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Ilu Farm	18	28	24	29	31	23	21	23	16	20	15	14
A.R. Dethridge, Tenavatu	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Guadalcanal Plains Ltd	16	18	21	24	29	34	34	35	30	32	26	24
Hing Mar, Tetere	11	11	13	11	10	11	11	12	11	7	6	3
Tetere Leprosarium (BSIP Medical Dept)	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	11
Total	114	124	127	133	139	133	131	137	128	129	122	114

Table 12.2

District of origin and area of the labour force in Tadhimboko West's
main work-places, October 1966

District/ area of origin	Solomon Islands Timber Co.	Ilu rice experiments	Commonwealth Development Corp.	Ilu Farm	A.R. Dethridge	Guadalcanal Plains Ltd	Hing Mar	Tetere Leprosarium	Total	% of Total
<u>Guadalcanal*</u>										
Tadhimboko West	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	4.66
Malango/Vulolo	16	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	21	16.29
Paripao	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.55
Chimiu	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2.33
Talise	2	1	0	0	0	2	1	2	8	6.20
Aola	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.77
Avu Avu	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.77
Bota-Moli	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.77
Veuru-Moli	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.77
Guadalcanal total	24	4	1	1	0	6	3	5	44	34.11
Nggela	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	6.20
Savo	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.55
Malaita	11	1	1	17	2	25	4	4	65	50.39
Reef Island	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	3.10
Rennell	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1.55
Sikaiana	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.77
Santa Isabel	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2.33
Grand total	48	9	2	20	2	32	7	9	129	100.00

*See Fig. 8.2 for the location of the sub-districts in Guadalcanal

per cent for between 4 and 8 months, and 32 per cent for 9 to 12 months (see Table 12.3). Only nine Tadhimboko worked for more than 9 months while the majority were employed for up to 3 months. High labour turnover was particularly marked at Ilu Farm, while the Solomon Islands Timber Co. had the largest number of workers who stayed on the job for 12 months or more. These differences resulted largely from the attitudes of the respective managements towards their Melanesian employees, and prevailing wage rates. The proprietor of Ilu Farm was regarded by Tadhimboko and other Solomon Islanders as arrogant and discriminatory towards Melanesians.¹ During late 1966 the position was aggravated under a relieving manager, a long-term resident of the Solomons who was thought by Melanesians to show a lack of respect when dealing with workers. The relationship between management and workers in the Solomon Islands Timber Co. was vastly better. Basic wages for unskilled labourers at Tenavatu during 1966 did not fall below \$24 per month while at Ilu Farm the highest basic wage, for a carpenter, was only \$21 (see Table 12.4).

The Government has not stipulated a minimum wage, although this is provided for in the BSIP Labour Ordinance 1960.² It supports the view of the Special Labour Commissioner (Sykes 1958) that wages must be related to productivity and the general economy of the Solomons.

¹ K.H.D. Hay owns the only hotel - Mendana Hotel - in the Solomons. Until 1967 Solomon Islanders were barred from drinking in its saloon and lounge bars. The Government would not legislate against such discriminatory practices on the ground that legislation would not solve the problem, which it considered was based largely on people's attitudes. In the December 1967 sitting of the Legislative Council, Mr Willie Betu (Isobel-Russells) asked why the discriminatory practice of the proprietor of the Mendana Hotel was not considered illegal. The Attorney-General replied that no one had in fact lodged a complaint against the hotel: had they done so the court might have found that its actions were illegal (BSIP News Sheet, no.22 of 1967, p.10).

² Section 27, subsections 1 and 2 of the Labour Ordinance 1960, authorise the High Commissioner, Western Pacific High Commission, to set a minimum wage after consultation with representatives of workers and employers.

Table 12.3

Labour turnover in expatriate work-places in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Number of months employed	Solomon Islands Timber Co.	Ilu rice experiments	Commonwealth Development Corp.	Ilu Farm	A.R. Dethridge	Guadalcanal Plains Ltd	Hing Mar	Tetere Leprosarium	Total	% of total
1	6	0	0	40	0	0	1	4	51	19.25
2	6	0	0	18	0	0	2	11	37	13.96
3	8	3	0	4	0	7	2	3	27	10.19
4	9	1	0	4	0	5	1	3	23	8.68
5	4	0	0	4	0	6	0	1	15	5.66
6	3	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	9	3.40
7	2	1	0	3	0	0	2	2	10	3.77
8	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	7	2.64
9	3	2	1	3	0	0	2	1	12	4.53
10	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	6	2.26
11	0	0	0	5	0	2	3	0	10	3.77
12	31	6	2		2	12	2	3	58	21.89
Total employed (on permanent basis)	74	14	3	85	2	42	17	28	265	100.00

Table 12.4

Monthly wage rate by work-place in Tadhimboko West
and total persons in each wage-rate category, October 1966

Monthly wage rate (\$)	Solomon Islands Timber Co.	Ilu rice experiments	Commonwealth Development Corp.	Ilu Farm	A.R. Dethridge	Guadalcanal Plains Ltd	Hing Mar	Tetere Leprosarium	Total	% of Total
14.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
14.70	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
15.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	5 3.88
16.00	0	0	0	10	0	7	0	0	17	
17.00	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
18.00	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	
19.00	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	11	
19.50	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	6	9	
20.00	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	6	52 40.31
21.00	0	4	0	1	0	0	1	1	7	
22.00	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
23.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
24.00	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	30 23.25
26.00	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
28.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
29.00	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
29.50	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
30.00	11	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	13	26 20.15
34.50	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	4 3.10
36.00	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
38.10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
40.00 +	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7 5.43
42.90 +	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
43.50 +	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3 2.33
90.00 +	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
100.00 +	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2 1.55
Total	48	9	2	20	2	32	7	9	129	100.00

+ The high wage rates paid to the few men working for the Solomon Islands Timber Co. are largely in recognition of their long service, their skill as carpenters or mill hands, and their mechanical aptitude. Men working elsewhere who possess similar skills do not receive similar remuneration, or even rewards in recognition of their skills.

Thus, after the new Labour Ordinance came into force on 1 June 1960, the accepted minimum wage of \$4 plus rations per month or \$10 to \$12 without rations continued (BSIP 1959:8) until 1964. Basic wages vary mainly because no minimum wage has been stipulated. Employers, including Government, apparently consider that Solomon Islanders have a narrow range of subsistence requirements and that their level of productivity is still low. The scarcity of job training programmes until 1960 has tended to perpetuate this outlook. Such considerations have influenced employers to opt for a low wage rate policy (Myint 1964:56), even where the economics of their enterprises would allow them to pay much higher.

Only at one place of employment are rations now issued to workers. This is at Tetere Leprosarium where rations account for 34 to 40 per cent of the labourer's monthly wage. Elsewhere in the region wages are paid in full cash value.

In 1966 the Solomon Islands Timber Co. employed the greatest number of workers who were accompanied by their families (see Table 12.5), as a result largely of their satisfactory housing programme and allocation of small blocks of land for gardening (see Plate 12.1). These factors encourage a permanent labour force and it would be to the advantage of other employers in the region to emulate these activities. Housing for GPL's plantation workers does not appear to conform to minimum legal requirements (see Plate 12.2).

Tadhimboko wage employment outside the region

During 1966, 65 Tadhimboko were employed outside the region. Their distribution by work-place, duration of employment, and basic wage is shown in Table 12.6. The largest single group worked for the BSIP Ports Authority on a casual basis from June to August 1966 and December 1966 to January 1967. Most Tadhimboko employed for cash outside the region during 1966, as unskilled labourers, were on basic wages comparable to those earned by more than 44 per cent of workers employed in the region's main work-places (see Table 12.4). But these Tadhimboko, unskilled labourers outside the region, were on wages slightly less than those received by unskilled labourers at the Tenavatu timber mill, including casual labourers there. Only four Tadhimboko employed outside the region during 1966 received basic wages above \$28 per month,

Table 12.5

Marital status of Tadhimboko West's labour force, by work-place,
October 1966

Work-place	Single men	Married, unaccompanied by family	Married, accompanied by family	Total	% of total
Solomon Islands Timber Co.	22	9	17	48	37.21
Ilu rice experiments	6	2	1	9	6.97
Commonwealth Development Corp.	1	1	0	2	1.55
Ilu Farm	17	1	2	20	15.50
A.R. Dethridge	2	0	0	2	1.55
Guadalcanal Plains Ltd	23	0	9	32	24.82
Hing Mar	4	0	3	7	5.43
Tetere Leprosarium	6	1	2	9	6.97
Total	81	14	34	129	100.00

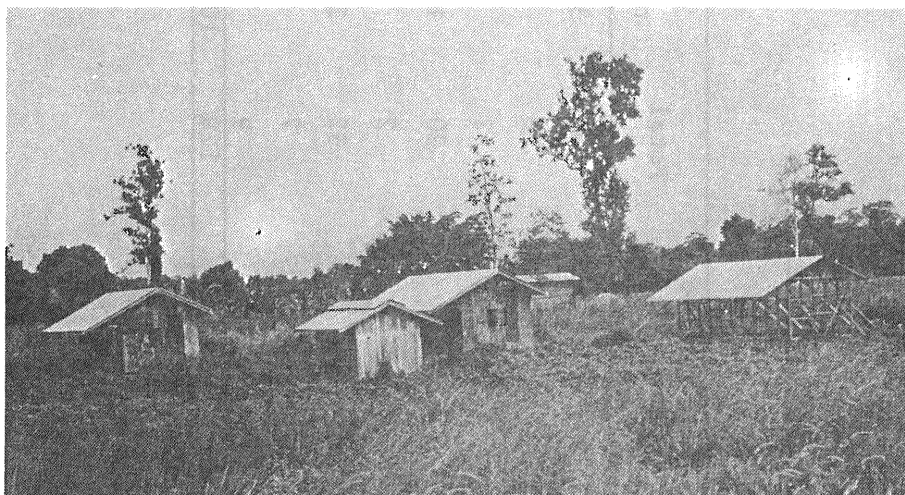


Plate 12.1. Labour lines at the Solomon Islands Timber Co. at Tenavatu



Plate 12.2. A GPL plantation worker and his family in front of their tin shack

Table 12.6

Tadhimboko West people employed outside the region, 1966

Work-place	Number employed	Monthly wage rate (\$)	Marital status	Position	Period employed (months)
<u>Honiara:</u>					
Guadalcanal Council	3	50	2 single	Executive officer	All for 12 months
		16	1 separated	Clerk	
		14		Messenger	
BSIP Government	5	46	2 married	Clerk, Lands Dept	All for 12 months
		42	3 single	Clerk, Police Dept	
		24		Driver, Public Works Dept	
		20		Labourer	
		20		Labourer	
R.C. Symes Ltd	1	18	Single	Bar-tender	9
A & G Blum Ltd	1	19	Separated	Kitchen-hand	6
Other	1	14	Single	Shop assistant	8
BSIP Ports Authority	46	28.20	41 married	Boss boy	Two groups: 30 for 2-3 16 for 1-2
		18.80	5 single	Labourers	
Berande Plantation	3	20	All married	Copra cutters	All for 12 months
<u>Santa Isabel:</u>					
R.C. Symes Ltd	4	Piece rate	2 married 2 single	Copra cutters	All for 3 months
<u>Yandina:</u>					
LPPL	1	24	Single	Garage assistant	12
Total	65				Average period worked: 4.6 months

three of them working on a permanent basis. These were well-educated people in positions of responsibility, with considerable opportunities for promotion.

The numerical significance of the Tadhimboko casually employed by the BSIP Ports Authority in 1966 needs amplification. Stevedoring has always provided some cash earnings for the Tadhimboko. Indeed, it has been a major avenue through which many Tadhimboko were introduced to wage employment and the cash economy generally during the post-war decades. Men were hired on a temporary monthly basis. This arrangement has proved satisfactory to many Tadhimboko who desired a limited amount of money and brief breaks from the village routine. Also the opportunity for work on the wharf may come at a time when cash opportunities at home are not readily available, such as in mid-1966 when almost all the Tadhimboko who came to work did not have copra as a source of cash income. In addition, much of their garden produce, which was later sold at Honiara market, had not matured at the beginning of June. For this group, therefore, work on the wharf was not a vital necessity, although the opportunity to earn some cash was welcomed. However, to those who engaged during December 1966 to January 1967 (among whom were included nearly all the Tadhimboko who worked in mid-1966), wage labour was essential: the mid-November 1966 floods destroyed all food gardens on the Guadalcanal Plains, and emergency rations issued by the Government and the Guadalcanal Council were insufficient for adequate subsistence. Moreover, as is shown by the earnings of workers from Roroni (see Table 12.7), work on the wharf contributed significantly to their cash incomes during 1966.

Wage employment for Tadhimboko entrepreneurs

To some Tadhimboko, particularly non-copra producers, employment for local entrepreneurs gave a valuable supplementary source of cash during 1966. They were engaged to perform specific tasks such as land clearing for food gardens, the sowing of a definite number of sago thatch, house building, and the clearing of coconut and cocoa groves. Contract work of this nature always involved remuneration in cash rather than in kind. During 1966 payments for task work ranged between \$10 and \$20 per job. Contract workers completed their side of the bargain in their own time; there was no compulsion for continuous and regular work. Such an arrangement recognised that

Table 12.7

Net earnings of Roroni men employed by BSIP Ports Authority,
June-August 1966 and December 1966-January 1967
 (\$)

Workers	4-15 June	16-30 June	1-15 July	16-26 July	27 July- 15 August	16-31 August	1-18 December	19-31 December	1-18 January	Total earnings
Volavola	25.08	26.52	21.72	15.05	12.71	36.83	17.70	16.12	32.79	204.52
Tukasara	18.38	18.72	12.99	9.71	9.19	26.80	0	0	0	95.79
Vuliwale	18.38	18.42	14.21	9.56	9.19	28.00	12.17	10.17	29.43	149.53
Vuiyasawa	18.38	18.72	0	0	0	0	12.17	10.17	28.07	87.51
Vuakaca	0	0	17.55	11.71	9.34	28.45	0	0	29.13	96.18
Dara	0	0	12.99	9.71	9.19	28.00	12.17	10.17	29.43	111.66
Takalai	0	0	3.14	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.14
Bogiwa'lu	0	0	0	0	8.41	28.17	12.32	10.17	29.36	88.43
Vatanimoto	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.17	10.17	28.07	50.41
Marama	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.32	10.47	13.19	35.98
Tawayaga	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.17	10.17	29.43	51.77
Naturaka	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.32	10.47	28.07	50.86
Verebutako	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.17	10.17	12.81	35.15
Total for all Roroni workers	80.22	82.38	82.60	55.74	58.03	176.25	127.68	108.25	289.78	1,060.93
Average earning per worker for each period worked	20.06	20.60	13.77	11.15	9.67	29.38	12.77	10.83	26.34	81.61

Source: BSIP Ports Authority pay sheet, Honiara

there are other demands on villagers' time, and that these demands must, of necessity, interrupt the progress of a specific task. Since the agreements were usually between people who were related, cash payments were often made before the tasks were completed if the need for cash by the prospective worker was somewhat pressing. Thus wage employment of this sort is tied up with village life and economy.

Few Tadhimboko are hired by local entrepreneurs on a daily or monthly basis, the exceptions being the four Kema ni Gaubata men who run Saki's launch and copra-buying enterprise. Their wages range from \$14 to \$20 per month plus some rations. These wage rates alone, comparable to wages paid by some expatriates in the region, are sufficient to set them off from the few other workers employed on a daily or monthly basis by local entrepreneurs. The people most commonly employed under the latter arrangement are Malaitans and men from the interior villages of Guadalcanal, the Malaitans usually on their way to or from plantations or other work-places in the region and beyond. Few of them engaged for more than two months in 1966. Wages ranged from 30¢ to 50¢ per day. If rations are issued they are merely token, and normally consist of cooked garden produce. The employer provided accommodation if the worker did not have friends or relatives in the village. Men engaged on this basis were general labourers and performed tasks connected with both the subsistence and cash sectors of the rural economy. Often there was no supervision by the employer and work did not always conform to set hours.

During 1966 the most consistent employers of labour on a task or daily basis were the copra producers of Suagi and Gorabau. Their devotion of a large proportion of their time to copra making made it essential for them to hire labour, with the highest rates of turnover, if their other necessary chores were to be performed. Indeed, some of them hired labour for copra making, particularly those in control of large areas of bearing palms.

Chapter 13

Melanesians' choice

A summary of different means of participating in the cash economy

The Tadhimboko have been in continuous contact with elements of Western material culture for at least 100 years. In this process they have inevitably become more involved in the cash economy because of such factors as the area's proximity and accessibility to the main trading and commercial centre of the Solomons - first Tulagi and later Honiara - its attractive natural endowment which led to land alienation, the establishment of plantations and trading posts, job opportunities at the military base during 1943-46, and official regulations which made it necessary for the people to earn cash in order to pay the head or local government tax.¹ The interaction of these factors and the Tadhimboko's reaction to the cash opportunities they offered have led to the evolution of the present pattern of Melanesian participation in the cash economy. The Tadhimboko now have available a number of avenues by which to become involved in the market economy. In chronological order these choices include occasional wage labour, sale or lease of land, copra making, trade-store and transport operations, sale of garden produce in Honiara, cocoa production, and cattle grazing. Not all have been available at the same time or for the same length of time to all Tadhimboko. Even so, in 1966 no Tadhimboko was a purely subsistence producer.

Paid work for expatriate enterprise has been available as a source of cash to the Tadhimboko, and to Solomon Islanders generally, for the longest time. Before World War II many Tadhimboko worked in the region and outside,

¹ Some of these influences apply to other parts of the Solomons but in few other areas have all been applicable.

despite the low rates of pay. It was one of the two main means (sale of copra was the other) by which they could make money. The war changed conditions dramatically and widened the Tadhimboko's experience of wage earning. Much higher wage rates were paid to Solomon Islanders associated with the military base. The experience vis-a-vis pre-war wage employment and other sources of cash placed paid work in a most favoured position. Through paid work during 1943-46 it seemed to the Tadhimboko that they had unlimited abundance of Western material goods. But the experience was short-lived: wages reverted to pre-war levels when war ended. Political and economic difficulties resulted throughout the Solomons.

It seems that as a source of cash, paid work for expatriate establishments no longer holds the attraction it had until 1946. As already seen, the Tadhimboko comprise a very small proportion of the total permanent labour force in the region's main work-places and few work elsewhere in the Protectorate. Alternative ways of making money in the home region have become available to an increasing number of Tadhimboko, and are regarded as more attractive than the low wages and generally poor housing offered by expatriate employers. This does not mean that the Tadhimboko completely spurn opportunities for paid work but that they accept them only when other means of cash earning cease to be readily available locally or when a specific cash need makes paid work essential for a definite period. These motives lie behind the brief employment of some Tadhimboko in 1966. Occasional wage employment is favoured by the Tadhimboko since in effect it recognises the existence of a village economy and its associated needs. Sojourn at places of work does not necessarily cause excessive strains on the functioning of the village. Men who go away unaccompanied on paid work for brief periods can and do make arrangements for the welfare of their families. Their cash remittances are often used to hire labour to perform essential services. Tadhimboko men who worked in Honiara during 1966 visited their villages frequently at weekends.

Money earned from paid work made up more than 76 per cent of Roroni's total cash income in 1966 (see Table 13.1). Casual work is significant here because of the scarcity of coconuts for copra making, the tendency of Malaitans in GPL's labour force to promptly inform their 'one talk' in Roroni of the company's need for extra labour, the fact that crops for produce marketing were not fully matured by the middle of the year, following floods in July and

Table 13.1

Total cash income from all sources in Tadhimboko West, 1966

Village/ area	Popu- lation	Copra sales			Garden produce sales			Paid work			Cocoa sales			Land rent			Store profit			Total income (\$)	
		Total (\$)	Per capita (\$)	% of total income	Total (\$)	Per capita (\$)	% of total income	Total (\$)	Per capita (\$)	% of total income	Total (\$)	Per capita (\$)	% of total income	Total (\$)	Per capita (\$)	% of total income	Total (\$)	Per capita (\$)	% of total income	For whole sample	Per capita
Roroni	122	144.60	1.19	3.78	468.57	3.84	12.26	2,920.95	23.94	76.43	115.62	0.95	3.02	125.73	1.03	3.29	46.50	0.38	1.22	3,821.97	31.33
Gorabau	67	1,985.64	29.64	71.87	230.35	3.44	8.34	461.02	6.88	16.69	0	0	0	0	0	0	85.90	1.28	3.10	2,762.91	41.24
Nalimbiu	79	134.65	1.70	6.29	1,491.70	18.88	69.74	512.62	6.49	23.97	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,138.97	27.07
Malaitan migrants	87	0	0	0	2,746.97	31.57	89.90	308.55	3.55	10.10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,055.52	35.12
Total	335	2,264.89	6.38	19.22	4,937.59	13.91	41.93	4,203.14	11.84	35.68	115.62	0.32	0.98	125.73	0.35	1.07	132.40	0.37	1.12	11,779.37	33.18

August 1965 in the area between the Balesuna and Bokokimbo rivers, and the emergency situation caused by the mid-November 1966 floods. Elsewhere in the region wage employment is not so dominant a source of cash as in Roroni, although it is the other cash alternative available for the Malaitan migrants. However, paid work is still an important supplementary source of cash to many villagers: it contributed more than 35 per cent of the total cash earning of the 355 persons included in Table 13.1. For the sample, paid work brought an average of \$11.84 per capita in 1966. The range was from \$3.55 among the Malaitan migrants to \$23.94 at Roroni (see Table 13.1). There have been sufficient casual labour openings available to Tadhimboko in need of paid work. Those who availed themselves most frequently of job opportunities are not large copra producers. Until sufficient of the post-war coconut plantings come into bearing to give Tadhimboko a reasonable per capita income, they will probably continue to take advantage of occasional wage openings, especially those close to home.

The first land sales on the plains brought about \$1,000 in cash and trade goods to the Tadhimboko. The lease of native land in Tadhimboko West, however, is a very recent development: Ilu was not leased until 1955, and the lease on Muvia and Okea resulted from the settlement in 1964 of a long-standing dispute. Today rent money brings to the region about \$3,100 per annum or \$2.81 per capita: approximately equal to the amount earned by Roroni in 1966 (see Table 13.1). The other group of Tadhimboko who received money from land rent in 1966 were the owners of Ilu, Okea and Muvia resident at Maluka, Gilutae, Makile, Gaimali, Papagu, Komidi and Kokomu. The way the Muvia dispute was settled, and the Tadhimboko's increased land consciousness, have engendered a general perception of land shortage among the people, although the man-land situation has by no means reached a critical stage. Yet this belief makes it unlikely that the Tadhimboko will agree to further alienation, so income from land rent is not likely to expand in the future.

The value of land, and of rights to its use, increased after European plantations were established on the plains. Both land alienation and plantation establishment led to the reappraisal of the traditional subsistence role of the coconut. It may now be sold or planted as a source of cash. Thus its role in the cash economy of the Tadhimboko, like wage employment and land sales, goes back to

the commencement of continuous European contact and settlement in the Solomons. However, only 37 per cent (487 acres) of the total acreage under palms, or less than half an acre per head, was planted before 1945. Thus for the fifty-two years since the Protectorate was declared in 1893, the Tadhimboko planted coconuts at the rate of approximately nine acres per annum. These early plantings were confined to littoral strips. More than 77 per cent of the total pre-war coconut acreage lies between Suagi and the Metepono area. Individual plantings were highly fragmented, and continued to be so after the war primarily because of the flexible distribution of land-usage rights vis-a-vis land holdings. The long-term nature of the coconut as a cash crop and the alternative cash opportunity afforded by wage employment may have influenced the slow progress of coconut planting in pre-war years.

Since the war the Tadhimboko have been planting coconuts at an average rate of 40 acres per annum, and a rate of almost 90 acres per annum was sustained during the period 1961-66 (see Table 13.2). Clearly the Tadhimboko, and Solomon Islanders generally, see the coconut, which all Tadhimboko grow, as the most valuable long-term cash crop. This attitude was encouraged by high post-war copra prices and the stabilisation of prices by the quasi-official Copra Board of the Solomons.

Table 13.2

Average rates of coconut planting in Tadhimboko, 1946-66

Period of planting	Average acreage planted per annum
1946-50	7.77
1951-55	17.91
1956-60	20.54
1961-64	73.24
1965-66	109.78

Sources: Field officer, East-Central Guadalcanal, 'Report of coconut survey' for pre-1960 plantings; field survey for 1961-66 plantings.

However, only about 100 Tadhimboko, or 10 per cent of the total village population of the plains, earn a regular income from copra. Almost half the regular copra producers

and a similar proportion of the total copra produced in Tadhimboko, come from Suagi and Gorabau. The Tadhimboko who sell copra regularly and depend on it as an important source of cash do so as a result of two factors. Firstly and most commonly, they control large areas of mamata coconuts which they inherited through the traditional matrilineal law of inheritance or in accordance with other tradition-sanctioned practices. Where mamata coconuts have passed outside the owning mamata a certain degree of friction has developed among the opposing kin groups and their supporters. Despite the rule that enables other mamata members to utilise the group's coconuts for copra, the tendency towards exclusive use of mamata coconuts by the present holder is increasing, together with patrilineal inheritance, especially of post-war coconuts. Secondly, a small group of regular copra producers are now reaping the fruits of their coconut planting during the decade 1945-55. Only a small area of palms was planted during that decade: 128 acres or less than 10 per cent of the total coconut acreage in the region.

The importance of copra as a source of cash varies markedly throughout the region. There is also wide variation in copra incomes among regular copra producers. This is due mainly to the area of palms to which a particular producer has access. At Gorabau copra contributed nearly 72 per cent of the village's total cash income in 1966, while for the Nalimbiu area and Roroni it was 6 and 3 per cent respectively (see Table 13.1). There are similar variations in per capita income derived from copra (see Table 13.1) and the acreages of bearing palms per head and per household in the areas concerned (see Table 13.3). However, in terms of acreages of young palms, Roroni and the Nalimbiu area hold a much higher position than Gorabau (see Table 13.3). This results from the flexibility of land-usage rights throughout Tadhimboko, the conflict between copra making and extended coconut planting in Gorabau, and the virtual absence of such conflict in Roroni and the Nalimbiu area.

The choice of operating a tradestore was available, in theory at least, to all adult Tadhimboko. They had accumulated sufficient cash in the past, especially during the affluent period of scrapmetal collection, to purchase initial stock. Yet whether or not a store was started seemed to have depended primarily upon the

Table 13.3

Crop land per capita and per household in Tadhimboko, 1966

	Roroni	Gorabau	Ñalimbiu	Malaitan migrants
Total acreage under food crops	36.87	16.89	56.05	36.29
Total acreage under bearing coconuts	28.49	223.36	73.25	0
Total acreage under young palms	59.03	28.17	123.16	0
Number of cocoa trees	1678	0	0	0
Cocoa trees per capita	14	0	0	0
Acreage of food crops per capita	0.30	0.25	0.71	0.42
Acreage of food crops per household	1.94	1.13	4.67	2.41
Acreage of bearing coconuts per capita	0.23	3.33	0.93	0
Acreage of bearing coconuts per household	1.50	14.89	6.10	0
Acreage of young coconuts per capita	0.48	0.42	1.56	0
Acreage of young coconuts per household	3.11	1.88	10.26	0

villager's other cash commitments and preferences. In many cases, as with small Tolai tradestores (Epstein 1968:73), these ventures did not function as money-making enterprises, but as sources of 'cheap' consumption goods for their owners and other villagers.

Officials attempted to foster co-operative storekeeping in the region, but they understood little about the complex social milieu in which the movement was to function. Thus only a small proportion of the total population, in a restricted part of the region, became involved in the co-operative movement. The Tadhimboko regarded its promoters as representing a significant contradiction in government policy. Moreover, purely economic factors and improved access to Honiara brought about the eventual collapse of the co-operative society. In the light of these experiences, the Tadhimboko are unlikely to choose to revive the co-operative movement in their area.

Profitable store operation is rare: Table 13.1 shows that tradestore operations contribute slightly over one per cent of the total cash earning of the sample. The two successful store-owners operate in villages whose residents regularly earn cash. Thus, given the ability to run and control a store business, the cash-earning capacity of potential customers would appear to be an important requirement for profitable store operations.

Increased cash incomes, as well as the example of Asian traders and the availability of 'cheap' vehicles after the war, encouraged Tadhimboko investment in transport. However, transport operation was limited to people who accumulated substantial capital from other sources or pooled their cash savings. Success depended on how well a transport unit was managed as a commercial concern, the equitable sharing of any profits, the condition of the vehicle when purchased, and the handling of repair and maintenance commitments. Failure in these areas brought collapse to nearly all Tadhimboko transport units. Yet the success of the one Tadhimboko transport operator and main entrepreneur in the region also seems to hinge on such qualities as an astute business mind, a sharp perception of economic advantages, a skilful manipulation of resources, an ability to call on kin groups to serve modern economic ends, and superior organising ability. These qualities seem to be thinly spread in Tadhimboko as, indeed, in most societies.

The improvement of road links with Honiara since 1945 has not led to a Tadhimboko monopoly of transport and

marketing operations but has actually facilitated the transport activities of Chinese traders. The regular appearance of the latter has stimulated local producers. Co-operative marketing was short-lived and the future prospects of the Gaubata Development Society's transport service seem limited, despite official guidance.

Thus transport operation was not a source of cash to individuals in Table 13.1, although it had provided valuable and expensive entrepreneurial experience to some of them in the past. Old jeeps lying idle at Roroni, Gorabau, Oba, Abuabili and Gaimali bear witness to the dismal economic failure of many Tadhimboko attempts to operate transport vehicles.

The development of the road system east of Honiara has stimulated the growth of garden produce sale in the capital since 1946. Honiara provides a ready market for garden produce, although it had not always been available to many Tadhimboko producers. Changes in government policy with regard to vegetable production at Ilu Farm and Kukum station during 1953-56, the payment of wages in cash, and increasing prices in the market itself since 1950, made the sale of garden produce an attractive way of earning cash. At first this opening was utilised only by Tadhimboko west from Koli Point, but after the Nalimbiu and Metepono bridges were constructed in 1962-63, market trade became a regular fortnightly event for most Tadhimboko.

Tadhimboko West is the most important single supplier of produce to Honiara market. The region's fertile alluvial soils and humidity encourage the growth of quick-maturing crops. Market trade also receives stimulus from the short-term nature of capital and labour investment involved in gardening. Moreover, the expansion of gardens, facilitated by a flexible system of land-use rights, is mainly an intensification of traditional agricultural practices. Thus market trade has involved no change in basic agricultural techniques. Neither have customary land tenure principles been affected, unlike what has been apparent in the transfer of numerous Tadhimboko coconut groves.

One notable aspect of market trade in Tadhimboko and the Solomons generally, as it is among the Tolai of New Britain (Epstein 1961:49-66), is that producers are also vendors. The institution of market middleman such as Belshaw described for the Sigatoka Valley, southeast Viti

Levu, Fiji, is as yet non-existent. As Belshaw (1964:109) said, a market middleman must be prepared to be engaged in the trade full time or invest a large amount of capital if he is to successfully expand his enterprise. Only one Tadhimboko is successfully doing this in the copra trade. There seems to be a general uncertainty about market demand, particularly as large-scale marketing is held only fortnightly, coinciding with pay-day. Perhaps if wages were paid more often it might become more expensive for the producer to come frequently to the market, since the more frequent payment of wages means smaller amounts and a staggered buying capacity among consumers. Such a situation might encourage the appearance of entrepreneurial market middlemen.

For the Tadhimboko, then, market trade has grown from a minor appendage of village subsistence production to the stage where it makes a significant contribution to their cash earnings. However, as in the copra industry, market trade is not equally important throughout the region. The Malaitans resident near the Ñalimbiu are the most successful suppliers of produce: their per capita income from produce sales is far above that of the local people (see Table 13.1). They are encouraged in this production by favourable ecological conditions, certain soil-tilling techniques which raise productivity per acre, insecure land tenure arrangements which lead them to make quick profits while they can, and the fact that only one other way of earning cash - wage labour - is open to them. Thus garden produce sales accounted for almost 90 per cent of the Malaitan migrants' total cash income in 1966.

The Tadhimboko are secure in their own land and society. The demands of market trade on their time and energy are not as pressing as for the Malaitan migrants. However, market trade is an important source of cash for a number of Tadhimboko, especially among those at the Ñalimbiu. The 70 per cent contribution of market trade to the cash earnings of locals at the Ñalimbiu must be seen largely in terms of the recency of the settlements in that area. Few of their post-war coconuts are yet bearing and the demands of copra making compete with the strong desire to extend new coconut plantings and the more remunerative sale of whole nuts in the market. The low position which garden produce sale has in the cash-earning activities of Gorabau and Roroni, compared with the Tadhimboko at the Ñalimbiu and the Malaitans in the same area, is clear (see Table 13.1). At Gorabau copra making is the most

time-consuming activity, and its rewards seem satisfactory to the villagers. The ease of transport to Honiara at market times allows them to spend accumulated copra income, and the sale of surplus garden produce on these occasions helps to offset the return fare. Roroni, on the other hand, had at least six sources of cash available in 1966.

Although cocoa has been planted by some Tadhimboko, it brought cash only to a few Roroni residents: an average of \$19.32 per producer or \$0.95 per capita in 1966 (see Table 13.1). The future of cocoa as a major contributor to the cash earnings of the Tadhimboko and the Solomons generally seems doubtful as it has not successfully diversified the village cash economy. To the majority who have planted it, cocoa has not significantly supplemented their cash income. Cocoa contributed less than one per cent of the total cash income of the 355 persons in Table 13.1 and this proportion would certainly be reduced considerably for the whole region. This accords with the place of cocoa in the export economy of the Solomons (see Table 2.1). This situation may be contrasted with cocoa's contribution to Tolai cash earnings: it contributed 30 per cent of the \$2m received by the Tolai from the sale of agricultural produce in 1959 (Epstein 1963:303), or about \$15 per capita. At the Warangoi resettlement project in the Gazelle Peninsula, it was estimated that total cocoa income would increase from about \$2,000 in 1965 to at least \$26,000 in 1973 (Singh 1967:31).

The low position of cocoa in the Tadhimboko cash economy reflects in part the low priority given to areas outside Malaita in the cocoa extension programme and to the general shortage of planting material, especially before 1963. Opportunity to grow cocoa was available at first only to Roroni residents who could obtain seeds for planting from their leader. Elsewhere potential cocoa growers had to wait for seeds from the Department of Agriculture. Those Tadhimboko who have planted cocoa did so at a time when coconuts gave them little or no cash income.

Low prices and the lack of alternative uses for the crop have led to the neglect of a number of cocoa groves. Unless the cocoa price rises considerably, which seems unlikely, this trend could intensify. Tadhimboko cocoa growers would then have to decide whether to lock up fertile land in the face of increasing population and needs or clear away unproductive cocoa groves to make room for a more remunerative crop.

Cattle grazing as a source of cash was not available to the Tadhimboko in Table 13.1. Indeed, the scarcity of breeding animals, the change in the form of government assistance to would-be cattle-owners, the capital-intensive and long-term nature of cattle projects, together with recent land alienation in the region, make it unlikely that it will offer substantial earnings to many Tadhimboko in the foreseeable future. However, minor cattle schemes could be slowly established as adjuncts to the indigenous coconut industry.

Which of the above avenues for making money are actually pursued by the Tadhimboko seems to depend largely on the cash rewards of each choice, the ease of their participation, their preferences, and their relations with fellow villagers. The Gorabau concentrated on copra making, to which garden produce sale was primarily an adjunct. The Malaitan migrants depended almost exclusively on garden produce sale, while wage employment had a minor place. Tadhimboko in the Nalimbiu area are in a similar position to the Malaitan migrants although the former had access to coconuts for copra making. At Roroni occasional paid work nearby was the most significant means of earning money, largely because of the scarcity of bearing palms and the minor role played by other cash possibilities.

The widening of cash sources in Tadhimboko since 1942 is closely associated with the increased accessibility of Honiara which road reconstruction brought. However, distance alone is not the major factor in the level of cash earning at an intervillage level, as Fig. 13.1 attempts to show. Villages farthest away from Honiara had more income per capita from paid work than those nearest to it. This is due chiefly to the availability of work in places near those distant villages, while the distance from Honiara - even as far as Roroni - is insufficient to deter those who wish to find employment in the capital. In terms of sale of garden produce in Honiara, areas nearest to town have a high placing, particularly in the case of the Malaitan migrants. Yet the low position of the distant villages is not the result only of distance. Other sources of cash are available to the local people, and in contrast to the Malaitan migrants, the region is their ancestral home and offers much security. The failure of distance from the urban centre to explain the level of cash earning, and participation in the market economy generally, is illustrated by the fact that the most distant village

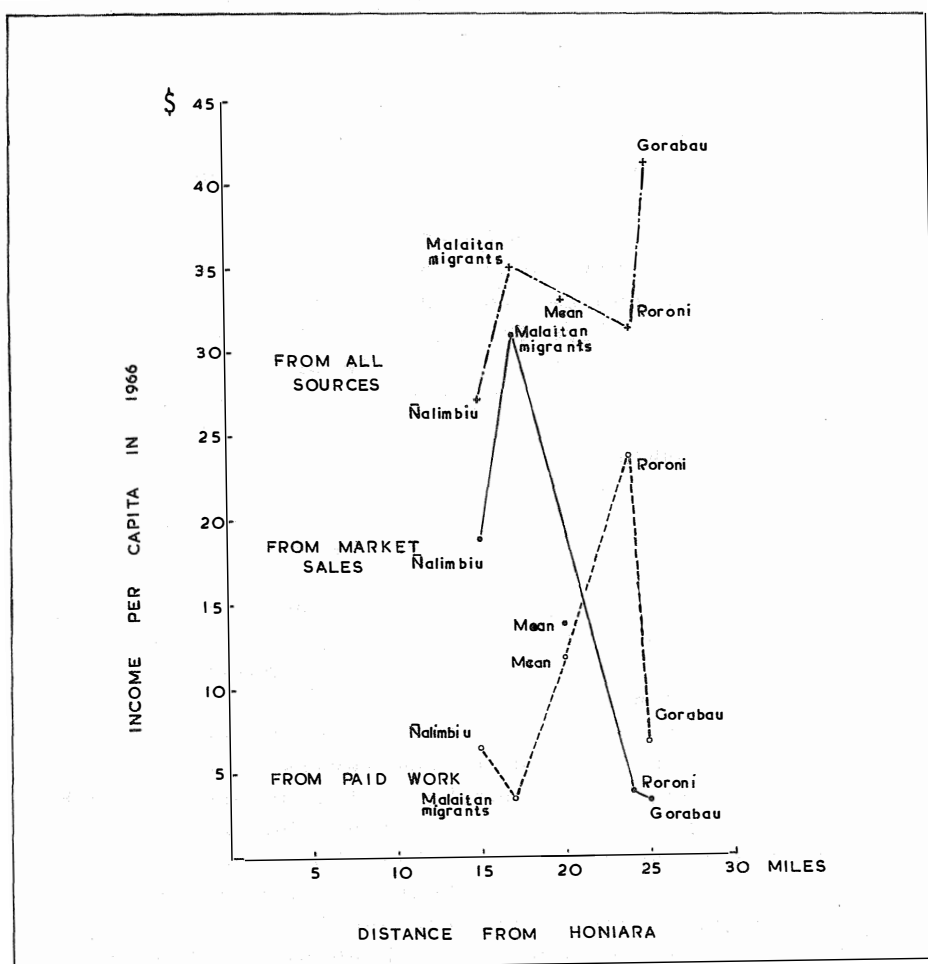


Fig. 13.1. Per capita income and distance from Honiara

had the highest total income per capita. For a balanced explanation of the different levels of cash earning, one must look to factors such as sources of cash available in each location, their levels of remuneration, the marketing arrangements and price structure of each cash source, the producer's place in society, and personal choice.

However, for Tadhimboko as a whole the simple fact of location has unquestionably favoured the widening of available cash openings. Also, Honiara has grown in population from a few hundred in 1946 to 3,534 in 1959, 4,500 in 1964, and about 7,000 or one-third the population of Guadalcanal in 1966. Industrial and commercial roles have been added to its administrative function. Thus urban growth has stimulated economic development and widened economic choices in Tadhimboko. Honiara has become not only a place for paid work but also a market for Tadhimboko garden and exportable produce. In view of the ruggedness of the interior immediately south of Honiara and the limited physical endowment of the area to the west, Tadhimboko has become the capital's most productive local hinterland.

The main result of this widening post-war economic horizon is a relatively high per capita cash income. However, cash income per cash earner and per household varied widely during 1966, as Table 13.4 shows. Average income per cash earner and average income per household in the sample areas did not differ vastly, although there was a wide variation in income per household and per cash earner. The marked differentiation in the levels of cash earning between individuals and households illustrates in cash terms the limited number of effective choices for expansionist profit-making. Yet Tadhimboko per capita cash income is far above not only that of the weather coast people, but also that of the average Solomon Islander (see Table 13.5). However, this high per capita cash income is slightly less than the copra income earned by some Melanesians in Choiseul, Western Solomons.

On an interterritorial basis, Tadhimboko per capita cash income is almost three times the average figure for Papua New Guinea and little less than twice the average for the M'buks of the Admiralty Islands. However, the Tadhimboko figure is just over half the average per capita income of the Rapirok of the Gazelle Peninsula, the Fijian copra producers in Vanua Levu, and the sugarcane farmers in western Viti Levu. In parts of Western Samoa cash incomes are generally similar to those earned by the Tadhimboko.

Table 13.4

Range in income per cash earner and per household in
Tadhimboko West, 1966

	Roroni	Gorabau	Ñalimbiu	Malaitan migrants
Range in total income per cash earner (\$)	607.13 - 3.30	329.64 - 1.85	275.02 - 1.70	610.32 - 2.20
Average total income per cash earner (\$)	81.32	78.94	71.30	78.35
Total cash earners	47	35	30	39
Number of cash earners who earned more than the average	17	10	14	9
Range in total income per household (\$)	610.43 - 40.46	329.69 - 34.65	278.00 - 75.10	660.35 - 35.90
Average income per house- hold (\$)	201.17	184.19	178.24	203.70
Total number of households	19	16	12	15
Number of households which earned more than the average	7	4	4	6
Distance from Honiara (miles)	24	25	15	14

Table 13.5

Comparative Pacific Islands incomes per capita in the 1960s
(\\$)

Village/area	Income per capita from copra	Income per capita from all sources
<u>Sample:</u>		
Roroni	1.19	31.33
Gorabau	29.64	41.24
Ñalimbiu	1.70	27.07
Malaitan migrants	-	35.12
Average for sample	6.38	33.18
<u>Other Solomon Islands:</u>		
Duidui, Weather Coast, Guadalcanal	2.11	15.65
Pichahila, Weather Coast, Guadalcanal	-	22.26
Guadalcanal Melanesians	17.77	?
Choiseul, Western Solomons	38.96	?
All Solomon Islanders	12.25	?
BSIP	?	15.00-20.00
<u>New Guinea:</u>		
Rapitok, Gazelle Peninsula	14.20	60.62
M'Buke, Admiralty Islands	14.74	19.08
All New Guinea	?	12.00
<u>Fiji:</u>		
Savusavu <u>tikina</u> , Vanua Levu	59.85	?
Tunuloa <u>tikina</u> , Vanua Levu	64.60	?
All Fiji	?	210.00
<u>Western Samoa:</u>		
Aleipata, Upolu	24.05	26.05
Safata, Upolu	12.70	35.70
Palualii, Savaa'i	26.25	36.45

Sources: Allan (1957:80) for BSIP figure; BSIP (1966:7-14) for Guadalcanal Melanesians, Choiseul and All Solomon Islanders figures; Chapman (1967:7) for Duidui and Pichahila figures; Crocombe (1965:25-7) for M'Buke figures; T.S. Epstein (1968:56, 98) for Rapitok figures; Fiji Annual Report for 1964 (1965) for All Fiji figure; Fisk (1962:28) for All New Guinea figure; Pirie and Barrett (1962:90) for Western Samoa figures; Ward (1964:71) for Vanua Levu figures.

Some economic factors of growth in
the Tadhimboko cash economy

Although Tadhimboko per capita cash income is greater than the average for the Solomons as a whole, and the range of cash sources has widened, the area is still underdeveloped by Western standards. Like other underdeveloped areas, Tadhimboko post-war economic growth relied heavily on village-based cropping, both for export and urban consumption. The rapid post-war expansion in coconut acreage and garden land beyond the minimum required for subsistence reflects the Tadhimboko's response to the market opportunity attached to cash cropping. However, they have not taken full advantage of this market opportunity since the Chinese middleman is still an important element in the flow of both export and internally marketed commodities. It might be advisable, from the viewpoint of increasing indigenous economic growth, to restrict the renewal of trading and marketing licences in the area to indigenous enterprises. This does not mean a permanent protectionist policy, but that indigenous enterprises would be protected until they are strong enough to compete with foreign investors.¹ Such a development requires considerable adjustment in Government's 'free enterprise' policy.

The growth of cash cropping has been made possible by 'the existence of a considerable margin of surplus productive capacity in the form of both surplus land and surplus labour over and above... minimum subsistence requirements' (Myint 1964:44). Moreover, combinations of land, labour and capital similar to traditional patterns have been made for a new purpose: to earn money. Food cropping has been stimulated by a change in government policy regarding vegetable production and wage payment, and improved access to and expansion of the urban market. Both land and labour are abundant and the capital investment involved in gardening is small. However, land alienation in the region and further increases in population are likely to result, in the long term, in diverging trends in human and land resource availability. This view assumes that the lack of outward migration current since 1945 will continue.

¹ As tax holidays of up to five years from the date on which production commences are granted to new expatriate industries, there is a case for providing some protection from competition to indigenous enterprises.

On the whole, the need to choose between production for export and for subsistence has not yet arisen. The villager is a cash cropper and a subsistence farmer at the same time. He produces the bulk of his own requirements, and any surplus is sold to earn cash. When he trades in export crops, he still produces a substantial proportion of his subsistence needs. Like similar indigenous societies in the Pacific, there is no division of labour on the basis of particular economic activities. This might be a drawback in the long run since the productive efficiency and increased productivity normally associated with specialisation, given technical improvements, are never likely to accrue to village producers under conditions which lack a division of labour. This problem is also bound up with the small-scale nature of Tadhimboko society which is not conducive to specialisation in production. Thus the small range of technical skills currently possessed by the Tadhimboko limits future economic growth. The skills available help to determine the range of economic choices open to the people. This is fairly narrow at present as a result of the lack of job training in the past, lack of general education, and the meagre financial resources of an economically depressed territory.

The expansion so far achieved in the field of agricultural production for cash has utilised internal savings. Agriculture has itself been a main source of capital accumulation and investment. With the decreasing overall importance of wage employment since 1946 and the further likely intensification of coconut planting, agriculture is likely to become the main source of capital accumulation and investment. The role of Government in the supply of credit has been insignificant; indeed, the terms and policy which govern the extension of credit seem onerous.

Price stabilisation in the copra industry seems to have had a major effect on agricultural expansion for export in Tadhimboko. However, price stabilisation is not a feature of the young cocoa industry. Thus the failure of the cocoa market to expand during the last decade has delivered a striking blow to the industry and the chances of recovery are uncertain.

Higgins (1959:5) asked:

Is there really any hope of achieving higher living standards...without fundamental changes in...social institutions, psychological attitudes, perhaps even in...ideologies or religions?

This question springs from the widely held belief that in developing countries generally, contemporary social institutions are incompatible with economic growth. Therefore, institutional arrangements must be modified before any take-off into sustained growth is possible (Rostow 1966:17). Lewis (1961:57) said that:

institutions promote or restrict growth according to the protection they accord to effort, according to the opportunities they provide for specialisation, and according to the freedom of manoeuvre they permit.

This study has demonstrated that traditional social groupings, the links based on marriage, co-residence and obligatory relationships, and the flexibility of land-usage rights have facilitated economic growth. Indigenous institutions encourage and sanction individual effort and the manipulation of resources. Whether traditional institutions will continue to promote and accelerate economic growth in the future is not certain. If further growth is to occur, productive efficiency and increased productivity per acre and per capita are essential. These require rapid capital accumulation and investment in productive assets and some degree of reorganisation in the methods and basis of production (including perhaps the individualisation of holdings to which Government is committed) if cumulative and sustained growth is to occur in the Tadhimboko cash economy.

At this point a brief word on the theory of economic dualism is relevant. Boeke, whose observations were based largely on experience in Indonesia, regarded the juxtaposition of a modern money economy and a traditional subsistence economy in underdeveloped areas as a consequence of differing social and cultural systems (Boeke 1953:3). When capitalism invades the subsistence-oriented traditional society two different social systems clash. The economic status of both capitalism and the subsistence-based society are then socially determined (Boeke 1953:4). The phenomenon of dualism cannot be disputed, but the explanation offered by Boeke seems invalid and is clearly inapplicable to data presented here. Certain elements of traditional society have encouraged the increasing monetisation of the subsistence sector of the village economy.

Higgins challenged Boeke's explanation of economic dualism by declaring that the phenomenon 'is more readily explained in economic and technological terms' (Higgins 1959:281), and questioning the uniqueness of dualism to

underdeveloped countries (Higgins 1959:285). This latter point may underestimate differences in kind to such an extent that they are seen as differences only in degree. The point, however, is that the cash economy has penetrated the Tadhimboko world without any major technological change in the production process. The scale of village-level production has not significantly altered; it is the antithesis of large-scale commercial enterprise on a plantation basis. Prices have proved an effective incentive to production for cash.

Thus it would seem that Boeke and Higgins tended to emphasise dualism as a static phenomenon. The Melanesian situation analysed here points up the dynamic elements making for the increasing commercialisation of the traditional subsistence sector of the village economy. There is no purely subsistence economy in Tadhimboko, nor anywhere in the Solomons or Melanesia generally.

It is true that an important aspect of dual economies is the investment of foreign capital in mining, plantation or other enterprises. Foreign enterprises are not completely independent of the indigenous sector of the economy. Indeed, they rely on indigenous labour and complement the indigenous economy to a certain extent. It is this complementary aspect which needs to be borne in mind in any consideration of dual economies.

Conflicting viewpoints in the widening of economic choice

Although the Tadhimboko enjoy a wider range of possibilities for making money than other Solomon Islanders, effective and profitable choices are somewhat limited. The situation is complicated by the different and often conflicting viewpoints held by the three parties involved in the development of the plains: the Government, private enterprise, and the Tadhimboko themselves.

Government sees its major role as to provide conditions conducive to the development of the plains both by private enterprise and the local people. This is done through the provision of agricultural extension facilities and the necessary infrastructure - roads, bridges, the improvement of conditions generally - the creation of a satisfactory legal and fiscal framework for prospective investors, and liberal land grants where desirable. Private enterprise consists of large European companies and small Chinese traders which the Government considers should receive all encouragement, particularly the former, to harness the

resources of the plains. Yet it seems that private concerns are not completely satisfied with the form and extent of government assistance. Moreover, private companies interested in land development appear impatient with Tadhimboko landowners.

To a considerable degree government encouragement of large-scale enterprises in the region and the interests of these firms are incompatible, if not in open conflict, with indigenous economic growth. Large enterprises are likely to divert much land and labour from the indigenous agricultural sector and in this way limit potential agricultural growth by the Tadhimboko. The success of large companies is likely to narrow down the field in which indigenous capital investment, already limited in success, can operate. While responding successfully to the job openings available from private enterprise, the Tadhimboko also strive to expand their cash cropping and maintain village routine. Here the relationship between the people and Government is reviewed at length, and passing reference only is made to the interests of private enterprise.

The Government view

Government considers the Guadalcanal Plains, the only large piece of fertile lowland in the Solomons, a most valuable natural asset.¹ This outlook greatly influenced the way Government manipulated the Muvia dispute: Government recognised its moral responsibility to take account of the Melanesian claim, but only if the Tadhimboko agreed to give it a long-term lease of the land involved.

Government anticipates that the plains will, when fully developed, supply all the rice needs of the Solomons. Apart from conserving overseas exchange, home-grown rice would be cheaper than imported rice. Soya bean is being produced commercially and it is hoped that oil palm will also become a valuable export crop on the plains.

In Government's view the high value placed on the plains makes it imperative that its development should benefit as many people as possible: the plains must be developed to earn government revenue which will be used to provide social and other services to the people of the Solomons,

¹ Commissioner of Lands and Surveys in reply to a question asked by the Member for Guadalcanal on land on the plains (Legislative Council Debates May 1966).

including the Tadhimboko. The Tadhimboko must sacrifice their land rights for the welfare of the Solomons generally; they do not have the capacity fully to harness the resources of the region. Even Tadhimboko reaction to agricultural extension work has been unsatisfactory. Thus, according to Government, the development of the plains is not assured if left to the Tadhimboko; and if it was developed by them, the benefits would not be wide-ranging.

The Government also lacks the financial resources and expertise to develop the plains even if it were policy to participate in commercial enterprise. However, it could attract large amounts of outside capital and trained personnel to develop the region by granting long-term leases and tax holidays to interested firms.

Government is convinced that it is only by attracting outside capital that the plains can be developed quickly. Large firms provide a valuable source of much-needed revenue to the Solomons. Once entrenched in the development process, they can and will provide other valuable services to the community, either independently or in partnership with Government. Yet large companies will invest in the Solomons only if they are assured a secure title to the land they hold.

The Government sees the Tadhimboko both as partners in, and opponents to, its policy to develop the plains for the benefit of the Solomons generally. Long-term leases of land on the plains by the Government ensure a regular source of cash to the Tadhimboko landowners. Further, company development of the plains means paid work for the Tadhimboko.

It is now likely that development of the plains will incorporate a resettlement scheme involving the Tadhimboko as suppliers of commercial products to a large overseas-controlled processing plant located in the region or in Honiara. In these terms, company development of the plains is seen by the Government as a means of widening the cash opportunities available to the Tadhimboko. At the same time, Government regards Tadhimboko opposition to its development policy as ill-informed and short-sighted obstructionism. The Tadhimboko are considered to be ill-equipped to fulfil the moral responsibility of developing the plains for maximum advantage, not only to themselves but also to the Solomons generally.

The Tadhimboko view

The Tadhimboko consider the region their homeland and the choice of a way to develop it their prerogative. Land alienation in the past has given them a feeling of land shortage, however unwarranted or premature. They consider that past land dealings took advantage of the subsistence-oriented and reciprocity-dominated indigenous society. Occupation by the European alienator brought forcefully home to them the full implications of land 'sales'. They maintain that unused or unoccupied land always has interests attached to it. The flexible nature of indigenous land-usage rights makes land alienation a process that deprives people outside the owning mamata of their planting rights. This explains the involvement of many non-land-owners in the meetings leading to the settlement of the Muvia dispute.

The Tadhimboko assess their land in terms of what they themselves can grow on it and not in the light of what others can grow and sell for the benefit of the Solomons generally. Neither is the land yet seen in terms of possible rent money which may be used to meet subsistence needs. Rent money, although substantial in total, is considered inadequate. As in Fiji, it is likely to lead to the over-dependence on income from rent for the land-owners, with demoralising effects. Leases tend to limit movement in the Tadhimboko's own homeland. Moreover, they consider that boundaries of alienated land have a tendency to move at the expense of native land. Forest land is more than mere garden land: it provides numerous other needs essential to village welfare and organisation. The grassland, too, has a place in Tadhimboko life: it used to be good hunting land and it is also considered the most suitable land for panna cultivation.

In their disagreement with the existence of waste land as such, the Tadhimboko have felt obliged to oppose Government's interest in land on the plains. This stand has been encouraged by what they now consider to have been unfair purchases by European speculators (including Government) in the past.

For too long the Tadhimboko have seen themselves either as observers of development on the plains or involved only at the periphery as earners of low wages. They do not want to remain earners of low wages indefinitely.

The Tadhimboko feel that they can become successful developers and entrepreneurs. They have tried to emulate

the example of European and Asian planters and traders. They see government assistance in this field as being unduly biased towards the expatriate trader; only after much fuss were even small sums of money lent to indigenous borrowers. In fact, Tadhimboko consider that their individual requests for loans are usually refused. Even when a local collective enterprise was able to provide 50 per cent of the cost of a transport unit, Government was not happy about the number of committeemen in whose names the loan was to be given.

Although the Tadhimboko see the Government as their benefactor, they consider that it has done little to help them make money. All the roads in the region were constructed by the Americans. Had not a private company leased Gayaga land and Tetera plantation in 1955-56, perhaps the Nalimbiu and Metepono bridges might not have been built. Also, for a long time Government would not build a bridge across the Balesuna River because it has no legal interest in the land east of it. So runs Tadhimboko thinking.

The Tadhimboko believe that government officers do not appreciate their society and are indeed suspicious of it. They think that expatriate field officers quickly condemn aspects of traditional society without attempting to understand them. Further, certain Tadhimboko moves for advancement, like the purchase of cattle for a grazing enterprise, have been branded by European field officers as 'cargo cultist' in inspiration. Now that the fencing subsidy has ended, the Tadhimboko think that the Government is not ready to help them further in cattle schemes.

Advice by government officers is not regarded as genuine by the Tadhimboko. They suspect government motives in any dealings and find it difficult to reconcile the dual roles often played by certain administration personnel. A district officer will, as magistrate, convict them for an offence, while in another capacity he will advise them on how to start a business. A past District Commissioner had negotiated the alienation of some of their land by Government, while in his role as Registrar of Co-operative Societies he offered advice on co-operative commercial methods. The separation of these functions may be clear in the minds of the government officers but it is not understood by the Tadhimboko. Suspicion of government motives is reinforced by past land alienation and government overtures for the alienation of more land. Tadhimboko think that when government officers surveyed

the soils of the Balesuna-Berande area in 1965, their leading spokesman was purposely taken by Government to Malaita, ostensibly on an agricultural extension visit, so that no opposition would delay the work.

Advice by agricultural officers is politely listened to but not followed. Too often agricultural field officers assume, in the eyes of the Tadhimboko, an authoritarian role. This does not accord with any belief that government officers come to help them. To the Tadhimboko, agricultural extension frequently has complex implications requiring them to make difficult and often undesirable choices. It is this viewpoint that they consider field officers fail to appreciate and take into account in their work among them.

Past experience has shown the Tadhimboko that indigenous employees are usually at the mercy of European managers. There is nothing to assure them that future relationships will not continue to operate on a 'master-boy' basis, which they resent. Private enterprise is seen as powerful, influential, profit-oriented, and in opposition to Melanesian interests. Although wages, working conditions and accommodation offered by private enterprise are poor, circumstances still make it essential for them to take paid work. Expatriate enterprises help to widen the avenues for making money. The Tadhimboko were led to believe that rice growing by a large company on the plains would mean cheaper prices for rice. This has not yet occurred and they feel they have been betrayed by both the company and Government.

Mutual lack of comprehension of each other's views

The Tadhimboko and the Government obviously fail by a wide margin to appreciate each other's motives. The Tadhimboko and other Solomon Islanders do not grasp adequately the workings and problems of the Government, as a result of their lack of general education and the fact that few serious attempts have been made to explain Protectorate-wide problems in terms meaningful to the people. This is particularly so for problems dealing with Solomons' commercial relationships with the outside world and shortage of funds. The Tadhimboko see their slow economic progress since 1945 as a consequence of the paucity of government assistance. Official policy seems to pay little regard to their welfare but favours expatriate enterprises. They do not see that increasing the wealth of the Solomons is

also dependent in part on their full utilisation of their own resources, and that the Government is not a fairy godmother with unlimited capital for development. Also, Government's policy of developing the region to yield the greatest good for the greatest number has not been fully explained in meaningful terms and hence does not influence their thinking.

The way forward

If solid and lasting progress involving the participation and co-operation of the people is to occur in Tadhimboko and the Solomons generally, it is essential that the type of Government-people relationship that has persisted since 1945, of mutual misunderstanding and suspicion of each other's motives, must alter. A serious and genuine attempt to understand the other's viewpoint must be made. It seems that in this regard the first step must be taken by the Government: it must act to end Tadhimboko suspicion of its motives. Exchanges of views are infrequent and occur at the formal level. Field officers might take a more sympathetic attitude in advocating certain development and agricultural extension methods to the Tadhimboko. Their work will not progress far unless they gain the confidence of the people they are to help.

A vital requirement is to involve the people more closely, not only in the running and working of the Government but, more significantly, in decision-making. A retired member of the BSIP Legislative Council, Mr E.V. Lawson, has stated that

Government will never admit they can possibly be wrong and no real effort is being made to give Legco members a real say in the Budget.¹

If this situation prevails in the highest legislative body in the Solomons, then it seems fair to assume that it exists also in the lower echelons of the administrative machine. Like the Provincial Councils in Fiji, local government bodies are not fully autonomous. Their by-laws and budgets must receive the sanction of a higher authority. It is true that they must receive guidance in these matters; it is also true that rejection of council proposals, particularly those touching upon aspects of Melanesian society, is not usually explained adequately

¹ Pacific Islands Monthly (December 1967:73).

to the councils concerned. It might be possible to bring not only local council members but also local big-men and representatives of the Tadhimboko West Sub-District Committee into the deliberations of bodies such as the District Team.¹ In this way the Tadhimboko and other Solomon Islanders will begin to be fully exposed to, and participate in finding solutions to, problems facing their own country and its destiny.

Conclusion: Tadhimboko in
the changing Pacific

All that has been described here of the Tadhimboko, their choices, their attitudes, and the mutual misunderstanding that exists between people, Government and private enterprise, could be written also of countless other societies in the Pacific and in other colonial or developing areas.

Two examples are the villager's concept of a Lutheran-sponsored development company, Namasu, in New Guinea, and the relationship between the village Fijian and his native administration. Sankoff (1969) showed that misconceptions about Namasu, a commercial organisation containing a substantial body of New Guinean shareholders, abound at the village level. Many investors in Namasu are dissatisfied with the small dividends they receive from their original investments. Although Namasu is not a lending institution, villagers consider that it should take up this function. Clearly there is much confusion in the communication chain. This had led to dissatisfaction about the benefits accruing from involvement in Namasu, both as shareholder and customer.

A similar situation exists in the relationship between the Fijian people and the Fijian Administration. Although substantial changes are being introduced into the machinery of native administration, some of those in authority at the provincial level, all of whom are Fijians, seem to

¹ The District Team is an official body, although not created by statute, which attempts to co-ordinate the development and other work of government agencies at the District level. Its meetings are usually presided over by the District Commissioner, who heads the Team, with representatives from the various government departments in the district, such as agriculture, forestry and education.

continue to view both old and new problems within a traditional mould. Fijian villagers expect effective leadership with quick results from Fijian Administration decision-makers. This is not always forthcoming. In the remote interior villages and outlying islands, the gap between the villager and central authority is wide, not only in the obvious physical sense, but also, and more significantly, in the perception of village problems, aspirations and choices for economic betterment. Detailed knowledge of widely different local conditions, vital for the long-term progress of village welfare, is not at the command of many policy-makers.

Despite all this, however, the range of choice open to Melanesians is widening under the impact of development, fostered in part by the spread of commercial enterprise, in part by the major financial inputs now being made by the metropolitan powers, in part by the colonial people's changing appreciation of their total environment. Tadhimboko in the 1970s will begin to reap the solid benefits of their extensive coconut plantings in recent years, of the further growth of Honiara, of the general widening of economic opportunity. Greater wealth, and greater diversity in opportunities for making wealth, will affect Tadhimboko society internally by bringing about greater differentiation. It is likely to affect their attitudes to the outside world by making them more determined to retain their land. The conflict of interests is likely to sharpen rather than diminish, at least in the short run, but if this conflict leads to a diminution in the rate of development from external sources, it is likely to be to the long-term disadvantage of the Tadhimboko. The pace of social and economic change will certainly increase in this near-urban area, and closer study of the Tadhimboko in the years to come might have much to offer not only in the context of the Solomons, but in the wider contexts of urbanisation and development in the Pacific.

Appendix A

The problem of population source material

The data on the population of the Guadalcanal Plains presented in this Bulletin are drawn from four main sources: 1931 population census of the Solomons; head counts conducted by the Tadhimboko sub-district clerk in February 1955; yaws eradication campaign statistics of 1953 and 1956-58; and my own field survey data.

The 1931 population census

The 1931 population census of the Solomons claims to refer to the population as at April that year, although figures were collected by district officers, with the assistance of district headmen, over a period of months before that date because of transport difficulties.

Doubts about the accuracy of the data cannot be dismissed completely. For instance, it is not clear from the records whether plantation labourers were recorded under their home villages. One would expect concentrations of population on estates such as Kukum, Lunga, Tenaru, Tetere, Berande and Ruavatu, yet none of these places are mentioned in the population schedule for the Guadalcanal enumeration. There is no certainty that the entire population of the Guadalcanal Plains was enumerated. The vast stretch of land behind the coast from Tumubosa to Tabunimane is shown to be uninhabited. Signs of past human occupation in that area are provided by old coconut groves and bamboo thickets. Perhaps residents of that area were summoned to gather in one or several of the coastal villages for the purposes of the census. If that was the case, then the inland villages were not enumerated separately from the coastal villages in that locality.

The 1931 census classified the population into three age groups: 0-6 years, 6-16 years, and over 16 years. The choice of 16 years as a convenient dividing point between young and adult is a possible drawback from the viewpoint of a complete enumeration. Sixteen years (however that was determined) was the legal age at which males could be recruited for plantation labour. It was also the age at which males were liable to pay the annual head tax of five shillings per annum. Tax evasion is known everywhere, but in the pre-war Solomons, the low basic wage of \$24 per annum was an incentive to avoid what was, after all, a tax from which the Melanesians received little, if any, direct benefits. Under these circumstances, one should not place too much weight on the complete accuracy of the 1931 census figures. However, in the absence of more reliable figures, they are presented as a general basis from which the analysis of population changes on the Guadalcanal Plains can be examined.

1955 head count

The primary purpose of this population count was to determine the taxable population of Tadhimboko. The village population only was enumerated.

The count was incomplete since the villages east of and inland from Bokoagau were not covered. I estimate that it covered about 85 per cent of the village population of the Guadalcanal Plains. In many cases, small settlements close together were grouped under one head. Thus, Tutumu, Begotathi and Salevana - settlements in Tadhimboko East - were grouped under Salevana.

Lati Gasile, who conducted the head count, is a young man from Makile village, Tadhimboko West. He once represented that ward in the Guadalcanal Council. He grew up at the time his father was village catechist in various villages in Tadhimboko West. He is likely to know his area well, but one can be reasonably confident of the reliability of the results only as they apply to Tadhimboko West since he had no detailed knowledge about people living in Tadhimboko East. His results are a useful indicator of changes in the past decade.

Yaws campaign

Two sets of data come under this category. The first set refers to November-December 1953, when the Medical Department conducted a pilot survey of yaws in a triangular area the vertices of which were Gorabau, Bokoagau and Veragano villages. Thus it excluded much of Tadhimboko West and concentrated on Tadhimboko East. Only the total population of each village is given, with no sex differentiation or age divisions. It grouped many large villages together; the best example of this is Tadhimboko in which the villages of Bebe, Tau, Legalau, Kaio and Babala are included.

The second set of data refers to September 1957. This set is part of the Protectorate-wide survey and treatment of yaws conducted between 1956 and 1958. Although all the villages of the plains were surveyed and yaws treatments administered, almost all the data concerning Tadhimboko West were not located during my fieldwork in 1966-67. The records pertaining to the mass treatment of yaws, together with other old documents of the Medical Department, are today stored in a very old ex-Army shed following many office changes during the last decade. The figures given here were extracted from original records which were in a very poor state indeed. They apply almost entirely to Tadhimboko East.

The 1957 yaws survey divided the population of each village into the following age groups: 0-3 years, 3-10 years, 11-18 years and over 18 years. Valuable as far as it goes, this division is not fine enough for purposes of comparison. It does not distinguish the women aged 15-44 from the remainder of the female population; this is a necessary division in any analysis of population data. As in the 1953 survey, many village totals include at least two villages. Thus the Kaio total includes Kaio and Babala, while Taivu includes the village by that name and Sakevolo.

Field survey, 1966

During my fieldwork all villages and settlements within Tadhimboko West and East were visited, as well as plantations and other places of employment, and schools. Village population refers only to those actually resident in the village; absentees were noted but not included in the village household totals. The nature of the information collected is indicated by the specimen form in Table A.1. Age was determined as accurately as possible with the assistance of the table of important events relevant to Tadhimboko (see Table A.2.).

Specimen form of population data sought during fieldwork, 1966-67

WARD :

[illegible]

** Married/single/widow(er)/divorced, respectively.

*** At Nggela, Honiara, Visale, Other place, respectively.
Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, South Seas Evangelical Mission, Seventh Day Adventist, Other religion, respectively.

Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, South Seas Evangelical Mission, Seventh Day Adventist, Other religion, respectively.

Table A.1 (cont'd)

Name of School	Standard reached	Village birth and ward	<u>Kema</u>	Year left village	Employment				Language spoken	Any other information
					By	As	Monthly wage	Previous jobs held, wage rate		
1.....										
2.....										
3.....										
4.....										
5.....										
6.....										
7.....										
8.....										
9.....										
10.....										
11.....										
12.....										
13.....										

No. of persons in this household:

M.....

F.....

Total.....

Table A.2

Important events in Tadhimboko

Years	Age group	Important events
1962-66	0-4	Legislative Council election, April 1965
1957-61	5-9	Visit of H.R.H. Prince Philip, March 1959
1952-56	10-14	LPPL returned to Lunga 1951-52; cyclone, January 1952
1947-51	15-19	Jacob Vouza visited Fiji, 1947-48
1942-46	20-4	Fighting on Guadalcanal, 1942-43
1937-41	25-9	Vouza retired from police force, 1941
1932-36	30-4	South Seas Evangelical Mission's first Europeans arrived in BSIP, 1933
1927-31	35-9	Big earthquake, 1931; census by Mr Wright D.O. Aola, 1931; Mr Bell killed, 1927
1922-26	40-4	Native tax started, 1923; Visale Mission destroyed, 1925
1917-21	45-9	Ruavatu Roman Catholic Mission started, 1920
1912-16	50-4	Aola Government Station started, 1915
1907-11	55-9	Mr Sprott, Melanesian Missionary, arrived in Tadhimboko, 1908
1902-06	60-4	Tetere Beach Memorial to Austrian Expedition erected, 1906; Marau Mission started, 1904
Before 1902	Over 65	Austrian Expedition attacked, 1896

Appendix B

A summary of land alienation on the Guadalcanal Plains, 1886-1964

Name of land and registration no.	Title holder	Nature of transaction	Acreage	Date	Cost or rental
Kukum, Lunga and Tenaru (LR 83)	T.G. Kelly	Purchased	19,740	7.11.1886	£60 in trade goods
	Kelly, Williams and Woodhouse	Partnership	19,740	1890	n.a.
	T.G. Kelly	Dissolution of partnership	19,740	26.6.1892	n.a.
	Oscar Svenson	Purchased with other lands	19,740	8.6.1905	£200
	LPPL	Purchased with other lands	19,740	14.2.1907	£40,000
Kukum	BSIP Government	Purchased	5,620	12.2.1947	\$4,348
Tenaru	RC Mission	Purchased	1,420	12.2.1947	\$4,000
Betikama	SDA Mission	Purchased	1,650	24.8.1949	\$1,650
Henderson Field	BSIP Government	Purchased	195	7.5.1958	\$1,354.40

Ilu Estate (LR 395/5)	Pacific Islands Company	Occupation licence for 99 years, deemed to be waste land; later extended to 999 years	16,390	1.6.1903	Part of Certificate of Occupation over 200,000 acres. Rent of £1 for first 2 years, £100 for third year, £ 440 per annum for next 7 years, £ 880 per annum for next 20 years, £1,000 per annum for next 69 years £1,910 per annum for next 99 years, £3,000 per annum for remainder of term
	LPPL	Occupation licence, 999 years	16,390	1.1.1906	Part of Certificate of Occupation over 200,000 acres. Rent of £1 for first 2 years, £100 for third year £ 440 per annum for next 7 years, £ 880 per annum for next 20 years, £1,000 per annum for next 69 years, £1,910 per annum for next 99 years, £3,000 per annum for remainder of term
Tenavatu (LR 184)	Maggie Dumphy	Leased	518	12.1.1912	1/- per annum
	William and Maggie Dumphy	Purchased	518	9.1.1918	£5
	Maggie Dumphy (husband died)	Transfer of title	518	1922	n.a.
	I. Threlfall	Bequeathed (will)	518	1930	n.a.
	BSIP Government	Compulsory acquisition	518	1946	n.a.
	A.M. Kuper	Crown lease, 99 years	323	1.7.1958	\$80.75 per annum
	K.H.D. Hay	Crown lease, 99 years	186	1.7.1959	\$46.40 per annum
	H.M. Davies	Transfer of lease	323	28.5.1960	\$80.75 per annum

Appendix B (continued)

Name of land and registration no.	Title holder	Nature of transaction	Acreage	Date	Cost or rental
Ilu Farm (LR 289)	BSIP Government	Native lease, 99 years	163	1.1.1955	\$16.30 for first 11 years, \$97.80 for second 11 years, \$114.10 for third 11 years, then reassessment
	R.A. Dethridge	Sub-lease, 99 years	163	1.5.1957	\$81.50 per annum for first 11 years, then reassessment
	K.H.D. Hay	Transfer of lease, 99 years	163	3.12.1959	\$81.50 per annum for first 11 years, then reassessment
Muvia (LR 394)	Burns Philp & Co.	Occupation licence, 999 years	9,660	1908	n.a.
	Solomon Islands Development Company (SIDC)	Occupation licence, 999 years	9,660	1908	Instrument of occupation actually made on 29 January 1918. Rental 1908-36, £ 44 per annum 1937-2005, £ 55 per annum, 2006-2104, £ 95 per annum 2105-, £105 per annum
Ñalimbiu (LR 302)	SIDC	Occupation licence, 999 years	1,502	1918	1918, £0.17.0 per annum 1919-25, £ 3. 8.0 per annum 1926-45, £ 6.16.0 per annum 1946-2014, £ 8.10.0 per annum 2015-2113, £14.14.0 per annum 2114-, £23. 4.0 per annum

Muvia and Ñalimbiu (LR 394 and 302)	BSIP Government	Purchased	11,162	20.5.1948	\$10,000
Muvia West and Ñalimbiu (LR 394 and 302)	Native customary land	Transfer of title	7,312	1964	n.a.
	BSIP Government	Lease, 99 years	7,312	1964	22¢ per acre per annum
Muvia East (LR 394)	BSIP Government	Purchased from SIDC	3,850	20.5.1948	As part of Muvia West and Ñalimbiu
	F.W. Badart	Lease, 99 years	146	1.1.1959	\$36.50 per annum for 33 years, then reassessment
	Quan Hong	Transfer of lease	146	20.11.1962	Paid \$800 to Badart
Okea (LR 192-006-1/1)	BSIP Government	Lease, 99 years	2,079	1964	22¢ per acre per annum
Tetere Beach (a) (LR 172) (LR 196) (b)	SIDC	Purchased	2	n.a.	n.a.
	BSIP Government	Purchased	2	20.5.1948	With Muvia estate
	Malayta Company	Purchased	1	n.a.	n.a.
	BSI Trading	Purchased	1	10.4.1958	n.a.
Tetere Plantation (LR 394/1)	SIDC	Part of Muvia	340	1908	Part of Muvia land
	BSIP Government	Purchased	340	1948	Part of Muvia land
(LR 394/1)	K.H.D. Hay	Lease, 99 years	340	17.1.1955	25¢ per acre per annum for 33 years, then reassessment

Appendix B (continued)

Name of land and registration no.	Title holder	Nature of transaction	Acreage	Date	Cost or rental
Gavaga (LR 219)	BSIP Government	Purchased	3,860	1912-16	£361
	SIDC	Occupation licence, 999 years	3,860	From 1 January 1918	1918, £ 2. 5.0 per annum 1919-25, £ 9. 0.0 per annum 1926-45, £18. 0.0 per annum 1946-2014, £22.10.0 per annum 2015-2113, £38.18.0 per annum 2114-, £61. 8.0 per annum
	BSIP Government	Reverted to Crown	Resurveyed, found to contain 4,055 acres	1948	n.a.
	K.H.D. Hay	Lease, 99 years	2,530	1.1.1956	25¢ per acre per annum
Berande (LR 166)	Oscar Svenson	Purchased	2,446	26.12.1902	3,000 porpoise teeth, 5 cases tobacco each of 200 lb, calico, pipes and matches valued at £5
	George Darbyshire	Purchased	2,446	1.12.1903	£400
	Darbyshire & Harding	Partnership	2,446	21.11.1904	n.a.
	B. Lane	Trustee for partnership	2,446	11.1.1905	n.a.
	J. Scharff	Trustee for partnership	2,446	19.2.1909	n.a.
	SIDC	Purchase	2,446	16.4.1909	£5,550
	J.C.C. Williamson	Private lease	2,446	1.7.1946	\$800 per annum
	J.C.C. Williamson	Purchase	2,446	27.9.1951	\$12,000

Bebe (LR 467)	SDA Mission	Native lease for 20 years altered to 10 years from 1.1.1960	2	1.1.1951	\$3.33 per annum
Laso, Tadhimboko Bay (LR 413)	Melanesian Mission	Native lease, 99 years	1	1.7.1950 surrendered 14.9.1959	\$1.11 to 20th year, then \$4.44 per annum
Taganaga (LR 107)	A.A. Fitzgerald	Purchased	3	24.10.1910	£10
	S.C. Ashley	Purchased	3	7.9.1916	£40
	RC Mission	Purchased	3	8.8.1922	n.a.
Vono, Tadhimboko (LR 228/R)	BSIP Government	Purchased	1,000	3.7.1920	£100
	A.M. Anderson	Lease, 99 years	1,000	1920	(a) 982 acres, 3d per acre for first 10 years, 3/- per acre 11th to 20th year, 6/- per acre 21st to 33rd year, then reassessment (b) 18 acres, 6/- per acre for first 33 years, then reassessment
	Rere Plantation Ltd	Transfer of lease	1,000	24.4.1931	Paid \$1,200 to A.M. Anderson
	Burns Philp (SS) Co. Ltd	Transfer of lease	1,000	25.8.1933	Purchased lease for \$20,000
	BSIP Government	Reversion of lease	1,000	2.1.1935	n.a.
	Native owners	Transferred by Crown	1,000	1964	\$10
Aro Aro (LR 228/1)	BSIP Government	Purchased	35	8.9.1914	£30

Appendix B (continued)

Name of land and registration no.	Title holder	Nature of transaction	Acreage	Date	Cost or rental
Taivu (LR 92)	Oscar Svenson	Purchased	19	1.12.1905	£40
	LPPL	Purchased	19	3.2.1907	With other estates
	Corry & Stirling	Lease, 10 years	19	1.7.1920	£72 per annum
	LPPL	Reversion of lease	19	19.12.1929	n.a.
Benuta (LR 231)	BSIP Government	Purchased	300	25.11.1912	£50
	Boucher Brothers	Lease, 99 years	300	29.1.1913	3d per acre per annum 1st 5 years, 6d per acre 2nd 5 years, 1/- per acre 11th to 20th year, 6/- per acre 21st to 33rd year, 5% of unimproved capital value of the land 34th to 99th year
	S.C. Ashley	Transfer of lease	300	9.9.1916	Paid £100 for the transfer of lease
	RC Mission	Transfer of lease	300	18.7.1923	Paid £400 for the transfer of lease
Tabunimane (LR 445)	A.L. Kam	Native lease, 50 years	0.5	1.7.1939, cancelled 1.7.1952	\$7 per annum to 20th year, then reassessment

Ruavatu (a) (LR 113)	W.H. Boucher	Purchased	13	17.3.1911	£25
	S.C. Ashley	Purchased	13	8.8.1922	n.a.
	RC Mission	Purchased	13	18.7.1923	With Benuta land
Ruavatu (b) (LR 106)	Malayta Co.	Purchased	1.75	5.3.1912	£10
	RC Mission	Purchased	1.75	4.5.1923	£50
Ruavatu (c) (LR 105)	RC Mission	Purchased	136	21.10.1911	£50
Ruavatu (d) (LR 90)	LPPL	Purchased	982	5.4.1907	10,000 porpoise teeth, 10 cases of tobacco
Vulu (LR 362)	BSIP Government	Purchased	216	1.7.1919	£40
	R.A. Stirling	Lease, 99 years	216	6.10.1927	3d per acre 1st 5 years, 6d per acre 2nd 5 years, 1/- per acre 11th-33rd year, 2/- per acre 34th-66th year, 3/- per acre 67th-99th year
	LPPL	Transfer of lease	216	1.6.1931	Paid \$4,492.59 for residue of lease. Reassessed at \$43.20 per annum for 33 years with effect from 1.7.1952

Sources: BSIP Department of Lands and Surveys (n.d.), Land Registers; (a) Conveyances to Crown, (b) Conveyances to other than Crown.

Appendix C

The offer of a loan to the
Gaubata Development Society

9 May 1966

Mr Samuel Saki of Koli
Mr Amani Waqa of Gilutae
Mr Orisi Vakaoti of Roroni
Mr Epi Ratudara of Papagu
Mr Apisai Ratu of Ñalimera
Mr Leone Sevusevudredre of Tumorora
c/- Agricultural Officer, Central Solomons,
HONIARA

Dear Sirs,

I am directed by the Board to refer to your application for a loan of \$1,500 to assist the Gaubata Development Society to purchase a tractor and trailer. The Board considered this application at a recent meeting, and I am pleased to inform you that it is prepared to offer a loan on the following terms:

- 1) The loan will be for \$1,500 and will be used to assist with the purchase of a new tractor and trailer and for no other purpose whatsoever.
- 2) The loan will bear interest at the rate of 7 per cent per annum, reducible to 5 per cent if all commitments are met within 14 days of due dates, payable half yearly, to commence six months after date of advance.
- 3) The loan will be repayable by monthly instalments of \$70, to commence three months after the date of advance of the loan, the final payment being \$100, giving a term of two years.
- 4) That you will give a stamped and registered Bill of Sale over the tractor and trailer to be purchased as security for the loan. In this regard, it is noted that there are about 145 people involved in the venture, and it will be necessary for all of these people to assign their interests to the six persons to whom this letter is addressed, for the purpose of executing a Bill of Sale and obtaining the loan. A form of assignment has been forwarded to the Agricultural Officer, Central, with a copy of this letter, so that he may deal with it.
- 5) The tractor and trailer are to be insured for the total amount of the loan from time to time outstanding, in the names of the borrowers and the Board for their respective rights and interests.

Appendix C (continued)

I should be grateful to know if a loan on the terms outlined above is acceptable to you, and if so, I shall require to have full details of the tractor and trailer for inclusion in the Bill of Sale, i.e. registered numbers, engine and chassis number of the tractor, make and model, etc.

Upon approval of the loan, a Procuration Fee of \$15 is payable and I should be grateful to receive this amount in due course.

Yours faithfully,
Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board

(sgd) for Secretary

c.c. D.C. Central
A.O. Central - encl.

4 July 1966

Mr Samuel Saki
Mr Orisi Vakaoti of Roroni
Mr Isoa Vuce of Kokomu
Mr Vonivate Vuiyasawa of Roroni
Mr Lagi Nabaro of Sopapera
Mr Amani Waqa of Gilutae
Mr Poasa Qalo
Mr Peni Kua of Bebe
Mr Lita Dovo of Tumurora
Mr Josua Jaqali of Gaimali
Mr Lagisoa Deladelamasi of Tatau
c/- Agricultural Officer, Central

Dear Sirs,

I am directed by the Board to refer to a letter received from the Agricultural Officer, Central, on your behalf, dated 8 June, in which the Board's permission is sought for approval of a loan offer of \$1,500, to assist with the purchase of a tractor and trailer, made to Messrs Samuel Saki, Amani Waqa, Orisi Vakaoti, Epi Ratudara, Apisai Ratu and Leone Sevusevudredre representing the Gaubata Development Society be transferred to yourselves as representatives of the Gaubata Development Society.

I am to say that the Board is willing to make the loan offer on the same terms and conditions as set out in my letter of the 9 May, that is:

- 1) The loan will be for \$1,500 and will be used to assist with the purchase of a new tractor and trailer and for no other purpose whatsoever.

- 2) The loan will bear interest at the rate of 7 per cent per annum, reducible to 5 per cent if all commitments are met within 14 days of due dates, payable half yearly, to commence six months after date of advance.
- 3) The loan will be repayable by monthly instalments of \$70, to commence three months after the date of advance of the loan, the final payment being \$100, giving a term of two years.
- 4) That you will give a stamped and registered Bill of Sale over the tractor and trailer to be purchased as security for the loan. In this regard, it is noted that there are about 145 people involved in the venture, and it will be necessary for all of these people to assign their interests to the eleven people to whom this letter is addressed, for the purpose of executing a Bill of Sale and obtaining the loan. A form of assignment has been forwarded to the Agricultural Officer, Central, with a copy of this letter, so that he may deal with it.
- 5) The tractor and trailer are to be insured for the total amount of the loan from time to time outstanding, in the names of the borrowers and the Board for their respective interests.

I should be grateful to know if a loan on the terms outlined above is acceptable to you, and if so, I shall require to have full details of the tractor and trailer for inclusion in the Bill of Sale, i.e. registered numbers, engine and chassis number of the tractor, make and model etc.

The loan offer made to the persons mentioned at paragraph 1 above as representing the Gaubata Development Society, is withdrawn.

Upon approval of the loan, a Procuration Fee of \$15 is payable, and I should be grateful to receive this amount at your early convenience.

Yours faithfully,
Agricultural and Industrial Loans Board

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Abstract

New Guinea Research Bulletin

No.46, 1972

The Tadhimboko people of the northern plain of Guadalcanal in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate can participate in the modern cash economy in a variety of ways. These include wage employment, sale or lease of land, copra sales, tradestore and transport operations, sale of garden produce in Honiara market, cocoa production, and cattle grazing. Which avenue particular villagers choose in order to earn money depends on such factors as the cash rewards of each opportunity, their ease of participation, their personal preferences, and their relations with fellow villagers.

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