TIE HOKARA, TIE VAKA

Black Man, White Man

A study of the New Georgia Group to 1925

by

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hokara, true, real.  tie hokara, a native.

vaka, a vessel - used distinctively of non-native craft.  tie vaka, a white man.

This thesis is based on original research by the author while a Research Scholar at the Department of History, Faculty of Arts at the Australian National University from 1973 to 1978.

K.B. Jackson
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The late Professor J.W. Davidson wrote that the preponderant concern of historians of the Pacific was the study of multi-cultural situations. Davidson believed that such studies could not be satisfactorily undertaken 'from the western point of view alone', and that the focus of inquiry should be directed at the islands themselves. It was on this basis that this study was conceived: it is an examination of the nature and consequences of the interaction between an island society and the culture of the European. The centre of interest is the behaviour of Melanesians and Europeans in the islands of the New Georgia Group.

The New Georgia Group has not received much attention from historians. Most who have touched upon it have done so as part of a broader field or subject. In this category is the work of Jack-Hinton, Scarr and Hilliard. The work of the first is an invaluable guide to the discovery and exploration of the Solomon Islands. To Scarr's study of the Western Pacific High Commission I owe much of my understanding of the operations of that organisation, and of the background to the creation of the protectorate administration. Hilliard's thesis covers in detail the development of Protestant missions in the Solomons, and I have not attempted to duplicate his work with regard to the Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist Missions in the New Georgia Group. Rather, this thesis deals with the missions when their activities come into view as part of the interrelations of the various groups of Europeans and islanders. Of more recent date is McKinnon's work on the
Mbilua region of Vella Lavella. I have taken issue with his interpretation of nineteenth century developments in the Group, but on the whole our work is complementary. McKinnon's approach is that of a microcosmic study of an island culture experiencing social change, and his work deals largely with rural change and development in a period outside the purview of this thesis.

The source material on which this study is based is extensive rather than comprehensive. While pieces of information can be gleaned from a wide range of sources, there is a sad lack of any consistent and intensive records. For the first hundred years of European contact - a period of momentous development - only fragmentary and sporadic evidence is available. The sources improve for the concluding forty or so years of the period under study, with reasonably detailed material available from the archives of the Royal Navy, the various missions, and the colonial government. Unfortunately, these sources all too often limit themselves to the affairs and interests of their European authors, paying scant attention to the islanders; this imbalance has been reflected, to an extent, in this work.

The first two chapters deal with island society and early European contact. They argue that the New Georgian islanders were able to exploit and control the circumstances created by the coming of the European, and that head-hunting, a practice of great religious, political and economic importance, was the major vehicle of this exploitation. Chapter Three examines the second phase of European contact - the years of the copra traders and the intervention of the Royal Navy in the
affairs of the islands, and argues that the islanders' ability to exploit the European connection on their own terms remained undiminished.

The fourth chapter investigates the early years of the Protectorate, during which the forcible pacification of the islands was accompanied by an acceleration of economic exploitation, with a corresponding loss of the islanders' capacity to dictate the terms of their relationship with the white man. The chief avenues of exploitation were the alienation of large amounts of land and adoption of extortionate trading methods. The colonial administration, in dealing with these matters and their consequences, was both irresponsible and inept.

Chapter Five examines the world of the European settlers in the Group - their lives, attitudes and political and economic ambitions, and their relationship with the administration which supported many of their demands without thought for the welfare or future of the islanders. The sixth and seventh chapters investigate the acceleration of land problems and the intensification of conflict between the various European interests in the islands, both culminating in the Land Commission, which is the subject of the eighth chapter. This chapter argues that the Commission was almost submerged in the struggle amongst Europeans for power, prestige and wealth. The final chapter looks at the state of the islands in the mid 1920s, and concludes that this period marked a turning point, with the subsidence of inter-European squabbling.
and the adoption of a more responsible attitude towards the islanders by the administration.

I have many acknowledgement to make. In Suva, Mr P.D. MacDonald and Mr B.R. Smith of the Western Pacific Archives, Martin and Helen Brady and Graham Jackson for their hospitality and assistance. In the Solomon Islands, B. Gina, J. Roni, K. Wheatley, R. Bato, T. Hughes, J. Tedder, the late A.E. Palmer, Agnes Kera and the crew of the El Torito. Many other people offered me hospitality and advice in the New Georgia Group, and I thank them all. In Canberra my debt is equally heavy; the staff and students of the History Department, in particular, Campbell MacKnight, Bill Mandle and Richard Geeves. Robert Langdon, of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, was unfailingly helpful and kind.

Lastly, my supervisor Dorothy Shineberg, who made many valuable comments; Ian Hancock, who read the typescript; Pam Millwood, who drew the maps; Carole Lambert, who typed the thesis; and Kathryn Horadam, without whose encouragement the thesis would never have been completed.
NOTE ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Unless otherwise stated, all Solomon Island place names have been spelt in accordance with the Solomon Islands Gazetteer (Honiara, 1969). However, the names of European stations and plantations (usually the same as the area in which they were located) have been spelt as they were originally.

Note that Ghizo refers to the island of that name, whereas Gizo is the name of the station/town on that island.

The term 'New Georgia Group', or simply 'Group', has been used throughout to distinguish it from New Georgia Island, which as been referred to as 'New Georgia'. However, the word 'New Georgian' refers to the Group as a whole, not New Georgia Island.
ABBREVIATIONS

MFP On microfilm in the Department of Pacific History, Australian National University.

MFN On microfilm in the National Library, Canberra.


AR Australasian Record.

CO 255 Colonial Office, Western Pacific, General Correspondence. Public Records Office, London. MFN.

C.O. Colonial Office.

DLS Department of Lands and Surveys, Honiara, Solomon Islands.

FO 58 Foreign Office, General Correspondence, Pacific Islands. Public Records Office, London. MFN.

GBPP Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers.

H.C. High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.


JAI Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

JPH Journal of Pacific History.


MCN Methodist Church of New Zealand, Overseas Missions Department. Foreign Mission Executive Minutes, 1920-33. Methodist Church of New Zealand, Auckland. MFN.

ML Mitchell Library.

NGSI Australian Station New Guinea and Solomon Islands Correspondence respecting Outrages by Natives on British Subjects, and other matters. (Annual printed series, 1885-90).


SI Australian Station Solomon Islands Correspondence respecting Outrages by Natives on British Subjects, and other matters. (Annual printed series, 1891-95).

WPHC Records of the Office of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. Inwards Correspondence - General, 1875-1940. Western Pacific Archives.
This thesis is a study of the behaviour of Melanesians and Europeans in the New Georgia Group, Solomon Islands, from the beginning of European contact to the mid 1920s.

For the first century of contact the islanders of the Group were able to exploit the opportunities created by European intrusion within the framework of their own culture, and to dictate largely the terms of their relationship with the white man.

The imposition of colonial rule radically altered the situation. The forcible pacification of the islands destroyed the Melanesians' capacity to constrain the conduct of the Europeans in the Group and in consequence the European exploitation of the islands rapidly accelerated, particularly with regard to the alienation of land, which the colonial administration did much to encourage.

The first two decades of colonial rule saw the interests and welfare of the islanders neglected as European commercial, missionary and official factions struggled amongst themselves for status and authority. These conflicts, and the mounting land problems, culminated in the Land Commission of the early 1920s.

The Commission, although it too was almost submerged in inter-European rivalries, marked the adoption by the administration of a more responsible attitude towards the islanders. Other administrative reforms followed, and by the mid 1920s the turbulence and disorder that had accompanied colonial rule began to subside.
INTRODUCTION

Five hundred miles to the east of Papua New Guinea lie the 'Islands of Solomon', as they were called after the Spanish expedition of Mendana in the sixteenth century. In pre-colonial times the name referred to an archipelago some five hundred and fifty miles in length, composed of thousands of islets, rocks and reefs, and dominated by six major islands and one large island cluster, the New Georgia Group.²

The New Georgia Group stretches some one hundred and fifty miles in length, and in parts is about fifty miles wide. Yet it is quite compact: the most isolated island within it is but six miles from its nearest neighbour. In comparison, the channels which separate the Group from the other Solomon Islands vary in width from thirty to sixty-five miles. The Group is comprised of about one thousand islands which together encompass a land area of two thousand square miles. The bulk of this figure is contributed by the five largest islands: New Georgia, Vella Lavella, Kolombangara, Vangunu and Rendova. These islands are of volcanic origin and all have mountains rising in height to at least three thousand feet. The tallest is Kolombangara, an extinct volcano whose


² The six islands are Bougainville, Choiseul, Santa Isabel, Malaita, Guadalcanal and San Cristobal. They vary in size from Choiseul (981 square miles) to Bougainville (3,500 square miles). The features of the Solomon Islands are described on Map I; those of the New Georgia Group are given on Map II.
name appropriately means 'King of the Waters': its peak is 5,450 feet above sea level.

Apart from the areas that have been cleared for village and garden sites, all the islands are completely covered with dense tropical forest. The vegetation, combined with the rugged terrain of many of the islands, made overland travel exhausting and difficult. This was particularly the case for Europeans who were unfamiliar with the forest and were more likely to be ignorant of the few paths and tracks that did exist. A preferable means of travel was the sea, although this too had its difficulties. Most of the larger islands are bordered by coral reefs, the major exception being the 'weather' coasts of the more westerly islands such as Ranongga and Rendova. In the latter cases, breakers from the Solomon Sea crash directly on to the steep open beaches, with little or no protection offered for landing or mooring. In the other coastal areas the numerous lagoons formed by the barrier reefs and islets facilitated travel in canoes and other shallow-draughted boats but were a nightmare to Europeans navigating larger vessels.

The New Georgia Group has a typically equatorial maritime climate with consistent high temperatures and high humidity at sea level. These conditions are moderated somewhat by the southeast trade winds which blow almost continuously between April and November. Rainfall is heavy, averaging between 100 and 200 inches a year, the wettest months usually being January, February and March. As well as the pervasive

malaria, this environment also encouraged such diseases as hookworm, dysentery and tropical ulcers or yaws. The latter could develop from a tiny scratch or blister into a gaping sore exposing the bone. The islanders bore these complaints as a necessary part of their lives, though their suffering was in no way diminished by the fact. For Europeans fresh from a friendlier climate, and unfamiliar with such illnesses, the transition from health to debility could have psychological as well as physical effects. Hope and happiness could deteriorate into disillusionment and melancholy. To the European, the islands were often a hostile environment: his ships were blown on to reefs and grounded on the intricate shoals; he sweated and stumbled through the bush; his cumbrous clothing became wet, uncomfortable and unhealthy; his goods and possessions rotted and rusted.

The history of the New Georgia Group from the arrival of Europeans in the late eighteenth century to the 1920s falls broadly into two periods: the pre-colonial era, and the

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4 A survey taken in the early 1920s indicated that between 60 and 80% of the indigenous population was infected with hookworm, and that yaws was practically universal. H.B. Hétherington & K.R. Steenson, 'A Year's Hookworm and Yaws Work in the Solomon Islands', The Medical Journal of Australia (June, 1929), p. 856.

years of the Protectorate administration. In the former period the Melanesians of the Group largely dictated the terms of their relationship with the white man. The Europeans had no 'fatal impact' upon island society: the opportunities created by the coming of the European were exploited by islanders to enhance their status and prestige in indigenous terms. While the role of Europeans as suppliers of goods and services was crucial to developments in island society, the white man remained, in a sense, peripheral to the basic concerns and aspirations of the islanders which continued to be firmly rooted in the traditional faith and values of their culture. The practice of head-hunting, which was the most basic expression of the religious, political and economic values of island society, was the most important vehicle for the islanders' exploitation of their connections with the European.

Some historians have tended to see so-called 'primitive' societies as particularly susceptible to collapse in the face of European intrusion. D.K. Fieldhouse has argued that:

In many parts of Africa and the Pacific, where political units were small and religions primitive, the presence of small numbers of European traders, planters, missionaries and beachcombers could erode indigenous institutions and social cohesion. Matters were made worse by rivalry between Europeans and by intermittent intervention by European military or naval forces. In the end such places, particularly in the Pacific, frequently reached a state of domestic disintegration which can be described as a 'crack-up'.

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This study of the New Georgia Group offers an alternative view. The coming of Europeans to the Group did not result in 'disintegration'. For over a century the New Georgians retained control of both their own society and their relationship with the white man.

The source material for the pre-colonial period is sketchy and irregular. The only consistent and detailed records are those of the Royal Navy, and these are limited to the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Despite their limited range, the sources contain a reasonable amount of information on the islanders, their society, and their role in the contact process. This is because the interests of the Europeans who visited and resided in the Group in the pre-colonial years revolved principally around the behaviour and attitudes of the islanders. The traders were dependent upon the islanders for their livelihoods (and often their lives), and the object of the Navy's visits to the Group was primarily the investigation of the conduct of the islanders.

The establishment of a Protectorate in 1896 marked the beginning of the end of the islanders' capacity to determine the nature of their relationship with the European, and to act in accordance with their traditional beliefs and customs. According to Fieldhouse, the extension of 'formal European protection' was the only remedy for the disorder that had been created by European intrusion. In the New Georgia Group, the imposition of colonial rule was, in many ways, a

\[\text{ibid., p. 83, 239, 437.}\]
prelude to disorder. The forcible pacification of the islands removed the constraints on the behaviour of Europeans. The retaliatory capacity of the islanders, which had restricted abuses by Europeans in previous years, was destroyed. Exploitation quickly followed: traders adopted extortionate methods, and large amounts of land were alienated without consultation with the islanders. The Protectorate administration offered little protection from these abuses; indeed, in the matter of land alienation it was the architect of much of the injustice that occurred.

In the years after 1900 the interests and welfare of the islanders were increasingly submerged in the fierce competition between European missionaries, settlers and officials for power and prestige. In the same period, the difficulties and problems resulting from the irresponsible alienation of land continued to grow. The land question culminated in the Land Commission of the 1920s. The Commission was also the climax of much of the inter-European conflicts in the Group; conflicts which at one stage threatened seriously to impair its operation. The Commission, despite its shortcomings, was at least a belated recognition of the rights of the islanders, and the first of a number of reforms and changes that were to improve the situation in the Group. By the latter half of the 1920s peace and, to a lesser extent, justice, at last came to the islands.

The sources for the colonial period are much more profuse than those for the earlier years. However, they are in many ways more disappointing. The records of the administration, the missions and the settlers tend to concentrate on
the affairs of the Europeans in the Group. There is surprisingly little detailed information concerning the islanders. This is a consequence of the changed status of the Europeans in the islands: the settlers were no longer dependent upon the islanders for their livings; their security was assured, and in their aspirations and vision of the future there was little room for the indigenous population. The missions and administration, whose activities were supposedly directed towards the betterment of the islanders, were largely pre-occupied with the squabbling amongst themselves, and this is reflected in their records. In consequence, that part of this study concerned with the colonial period has a greater concentration on the affairs of Europeans than that dealing with the earlier years of contact.
Islands and Districts

MAP II  The New Georgia Group - Islands and Districts
CHAPTER ONE
ISLAND SOCIETY BEFORE THE COMING OF THE EUROPEAN

From 1787 to the 1860s Europeans regularly visited and resided in the New Georgia Group, yet very little remains as a record of their observations and experiences. As a result, an account of pre-European island society must be based on later anthropological and ethnological studies and the oral traditions of the islanders, with some small assistance from the few morsels of information that survive from the early days of contact. Consequently, assumption and hypothesis loom rather large in the following discussion which first briefly surveys the little that is known of the prehistory of the Group, and then looks in more detail at the people of the islands, their relations with each other and the structure of their society. The roles of religion and leadership in island society are examined, and it is argued that both found common expression in the practice of head-hunting.

There is a tendency amongst European observers of so-called 'primitive' societies to assume that they were somehow locked in time, or 'timeless', until the arrival of the white man triggered a fundamental transition. The coming of the European may have quickened the pace of change, but it did not originate it. Although the pre-history of the New Georgia Group is largely unknown, the scattered evidence that has been uncovered does indicate that the societies of the islands had experienced considerable upheaval and development.

It is possible that as early as 25000 BC 'Old Melanesians' from Sahulland, the late Pleistocene land mass
comprising both Australia and New Guinea, migrated along the island chain stretching eastward of what is now New Guinea and reached the Solomon Islands. Whatever the time of their arrival, it seems certain that these people were Non-Austronesian speakers. A number of languages of this type survive today in the Solomons: Mbilua and Mbania in the New Georgia Group, Savosavo and Lavukaleve on Savo and Pavuvu respectively. These four languages share very little common vocabulary but are remarkably homogenous in their phonemic and phonetic patterns. Such indications of unity are possible evidence that they originated in one early general migration with subsequent millennia of geographical isolation within the Solomons resulting in the divergencies that now exist.\(^1\) A similar pattern can be detected for the other linguistic group found in the New Georgia Group — the Austronesian speakers.

Between 4000 BC (possibly earlier) and 1500 BC Austronesian speakers from Indonesia spread to parts of New Guinea and island Melanesia.\(^2\) The eleven Austronesian vernaculars found in the New Georgia Group are closely related; united not only by the high proportions of their shared vocabularies, but also by their common 'idiosyncratic'


character when compared with 'typical' Austronesian. Again, this is possible evidence of an original common migration, with following local isolation resulting in the development of further linguistic sub-families and dialects.

It may have been that the Non-Austronesian communities which existed at the time of the Austronesian migrations were mostly small and dispersed, and that some did not survive the intrusion of numerically stronger Austronesian speakers. Those that did survive may have done so because of their isolation: Lavukaleve, Savosavo and Mbilua are all found on single islands which they do not share with any other linguistic group. The other remaining Non-Austronesian language, Mbaniata, is located on the southwest end of Rendova, a region shielded by a rugged mountain range and the open sea. It is known that one Non-Austronesian speaking group, the Kazakuru, were absorbed by their more powerful and numerous neighbours, the Roviana people. It would appear that the Kazakuru were relatively few in numbers and were afflicted with disease, possibly due to inbreeding. Without the protection of any

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natural barriers, they seem to have been drawn into the conflicts of the inhabitants of the Roviana Lagoon, and were unable to prevent the expansion of these people into the Munda region. The absorption of the Kazukuru by the various Roviana clans is well documented in the genealogies preserved by their descendants, which seem to indicate that those that survived the ravages of sickness and warfare were mostly female, who became the wives of men of Nusa Roviana and Munda.\(^5\)

While the course of island society in the pre-contact era remains largely unknown, it is apparent that it underwent considerable upheaval. On the island of Kolombangara and in the Mase River basin on New Georgia there are indications that an established culture of significant difference to that observed in historic times existed many years ago. At these places are the remains of extensive terraces, once used for the cultivation of the *Colocasia esculenta*, or true taro. The Mase site has been described as 'well established farmland with an irrigation system for a settled agriculture',\(^6\) and another observer has estimated that there are approximately four square miles of terracing in the area.\(^7\) It is not known whether this intensive system of cultivation was introduced with the

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\(^7\) Interview with B. Barrus, 29/9/1974, Munda.
Austronesian migrations, or whether it evolved independently in the islands. It is equally difficult to draw any conclusions about the forces operating in a society which employed, and then abandoned, this agricultural system. One possible factor in the adoption of intensive methods of cultivation is population pressure. However, this appears unlikely in the New Georgia Group, where the terraced areas are minute when compared with the total land available for cultivation. A more tenable hypothesis is that intensive agricultural methods were introduced by settlers who had come from an area where they were necessary because of the high population density (perhaps this pressure was a cause of their migration). The system could then have been abandoned as it became apparent that in their new environment the construction of irrigated terracing was not essential for the production of an adequate food supply, and that less strenuous methods would suffice. H.C. Brookfield has pointed out that intensive systems are more 'brittle' in the face of major disruptions: a large-scale conflict, epidemic or blight might equally have been responsible for the transition to the swidden or 'shifting' type of cultivation practised in more recent times.\(^8\) Whatever its cause, this development was fundamental to island society, as it involved the basic question of subsistence. In the absence of any archeological investigations, little else can be concluded about the prehistory of the Group. Fortunately, there is more

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information on which to base a description of pre-European island society, although the source material must be treated with caution, as most of it dates from a period many years after initial European contact with the islands.

In general, the basis of social and political organisation was the clan: the clan in this case being a cognatic group tracing their descent from a common ancestral figure. Each clan was associated with certain tracts of land on which they lived and cultivated. The nature of this association, and the form of the clan, varied throughout the Group. The speakers of a particular language generally had a common understanding of kinship structure and land tenure, although the linguistic group itself had limited political significance. There are thirteen languages spoken in the New Georgia Group today, though in the late eighteenth century there were more.\(^9\) Eleven of the thirteen languages are of Austronesian origin and are closely related, sharing a high proportion of their vocabularies.\(^{10}\) The kinship systems of their speakers

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\(^9\) The extinct language Kazakuru, with its dialects Guliguli and Doriri, has already been mentioned. In addition, there is a reference to a language that was possibly once spoken on Nggatokae; this was called Chipuru, but no vocabulary of it has survived. A. Capell, 'Notes on the Islands of Choiseul and New Georgia, Solomon Islands', *Oceania*, XIV (1943), p. 26.

\(^{10}\) The term 'language' has been used rather loosely above, as some of the eleven are in fact dialects. Dyen divides the New Georgian Austronesian languages into three subfamilies: Rovianic, Marovan, and Lunggic. Rovianic is comprised of two languages: Roviana and Kusaghean. The Kusaghean language has as dialects Kusaghe and Hoava. The Marovan subfamily is comprised of two languages: Lunggan and Nduke. Lunggan consists of three dialects: Lungga, Ghanongga (or Kumbokota), and Simbo (or Mandeghughusu). Dyen overlooks Ughele, which would appear to belong to the Rovianic subfamily. See Dyen, 'A lexicostatistical classification of the Austronesian languages', pp. 36-41.
also appear to have been similar, whereas those of the speakers of the two Non-Austronesian languages, Mbilua and Mbaniata, were more idiosyncratic.

The Mbilua language was spoken on the island of Vella Lavella; each Vella Lavellan was a member of a toutou - an exogamous matrilineal descent group that traced its origin to an apical female ancestor. The size of the toutou varied, but it is stated by modern informants that in the past there were fewer, but much larger, toutou. These primary toutou appear to have lost their cohesion because of their size, and to have fragmented into smaller toutou. The members of a toutou lived together in a village or cluster of hamlets in the bush, although they kept canoes and huts on the coast for temporary use. A toutou claimed the land on which it lived and cultivated as its own, but it seems that such claims could lapse if the land was deserted or unused. A toutou could allow another toutou the use of its land after the payment of gifts and ceremonial feasts, but it appears that once permission of this sort was given reclamation of the land was difficult. This may have accounted for the break-up of the large primary toutou estates: as sub-groups within the original large clan began to assert their autonomy, the primary toutou's integrity weakened. A toutou was presided over by a lekasa who had to be a cognatic member of the toutou with enough wealth and spiritual prestige to assist his kinsmen, propitiate...
the ancestors and enforce the sanctions of the toutou.\footnote{11}

The traditions of the people of Vella Lavella give the impression that the occupation of land, and the status of the toutou, were by no means static. The disappearance and emergence of toutou, conflict amongst them, and their migration about the island, do not appear to have been unusual. However, it is possible to make some general comments on the nature of the relationship between the various groups that inhabited the island. The islanders distinguish between two forms of the Mbilua language - Mbilua and Ndovele. The former is found on the southeastern half of the island, and the latter on the northwestern.\footnote{12} This division has a geographical basis: a broad valley running across the island separates the rugged hilly regions of the northwest and southeast. This valley does not seem to have been much occupied in the past, possibly due to the lack of naturally defensive sites in the area. In the northwestern half of the island there are three regions - Ndovele, Iringgila and Njorio; in the southeastern half there are five - Njava, Sirumbai, Mbilua, Supato and Varese. While the toutou that occupied each of these regions did not constitute political units, it would appear that there was some significance in this regional division. The toutou of each individual region were unlikely to indulge in serious conflict


\footnote{12 Interview with D. Rariqeto, 5/11/1974, Mbilua.
amongst themselves. The impracticality of being at war with close neighbours and relations, as well as the need to preserve some unity in the face of possible attacks from outside groups, would have acted as pressures against the escalation of domestic squabbling into large scale warfare. The same con­strains would probably operate, though with less force, between the toutou of neighbouring regions. However, between the northwest and southeast ends of the island there may have been a long-term emnity. Modern informants state that there was regular raiding between Mbilua and Ndovele. A possible factor in this situation was the origin of some of the Ndovele toutou, which had migrated to Vella Lavella from Choiseul. The tension between Mbilua and Ndovele was exacerbated in the twentieth century with the establishment of rival missions in the two regions, and it is difficult to know exactly when the conflict began; it may not have existed in pre-European times.

The other Non-Austronesian speaking people in the New Georgia Group were the Mbaniata of southern Rendova. Like the Mbilua speakers, the clan system of the Mbaniata was matrilineal, but there the similarity ends. The Mbaniata people have seven named, matrilineal, non-local, non-exogamous clans or rana. Each rana is associated with one or more tracts of land, however, these tracts have long been divided into lesser estates allocated to branches of the clan. While

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13 ibid.

14 LC I. Claim No.48, 'A statement made at Dobeli by the tribe whose antecedents came from Choiseul', dated 20 June 1919.
children of male clan members have rights of usufruct over clan or branch land, the right to 'look after' the land passed through the mother. The rana do not seem to have ever been local groups or to have had much political or economic significance. The basic political unit was residential: a branch of a clan living together on a particular piece of clan land. One level above this was their regional loyalty: the Mbaniata speakers divide themselves into two regions – Mbaniata and Lokuru. The two areas are on different sides of the island and are separated by a steep range. There would appear to have been occasional conflict between these two regions, although intermarriage between the clans of the two areas would probably have helped to avoid the intensification of fighting.

Apart from the Mbilua and Mbaniata speakers, island society throughout the New Georgia Group was reasonably homogeneous. The commonest term for the clan was mbutu mbutu; however, the word 'mbutu mbutu' was used to refer to both a cognatic descent group, and to a residential group that was part of the former. In some cases the residential mbutu mbutu could in fact comprise all or nearly all members of the

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17 H.W. Scheffler, 'Kindred and Kin Groups in Simbo Island Social Structure', Ethnology, I (1962), p. 139. The word mbutu mbutu is found in the languages of Roviana, Simbo, Ranongga, Nduke and Ughele (mbu' mbutu in the latter).
descent group *mbutu mbutu*. Today, membership of a descent
group is not determined exclusively through the father nor the
mother, but rather a combination of both, or what has been
called a 'more general principle of filiative kin right'.

This descent system has been subject to investigation by two
land commissions this century. Both concluded that bilateral
descent was a relatively recent development from what was
originally a matrilineal system. This conclusion was based on
the continuing existence of matrilineages in some parts of the
Group, and on the statements of some older witnesses before
the commissions which asserted that in earlier times the
female 'line' had been stronger than the male. The commission­
ers also pointed out that if followed logically over a number
of generations, the bilateral system would lead to an enormously
confusing multiplicity of lineage connections. They discerned
a number of factors responsible for the supposed breakdown
of the matrilineal system: that big-men were able to have
their sons recognised as landholders in their own line; that
the usufruct of trees could be passed from the father to the
son; that men did the negotiating in land matters; and the
influence of the colonial government and the missions.

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18 Quoted in Scheffler, ibid.
19 The B.S.I.P. Land Commission 1920–1924, and the Special
Lands Commission whose report was published in 1957, as C.H.
Allan, *Customary Land Tenure in the British Solomon Islands
Protectorate* (Honiara, 1957).
20 LC I. Land Commissioner's Report on Claim Nos. 30–37, 55
(21 April 1925), pp. 45–61 (hereafter referred to as 'Lever
The land commissions were of course concerned with the relation of descent systems to land tenure, and their conclusions were based on conditions that were not necessarily applicable to pre-European society. Without the existence of a market in land, the need to justify 'ownership' as a basis for selling would not have arisen. Occupation could possibly have been as great a determinant as lineage, and the need to precisely define lineage connections with regard to land would not have been pressing. In fact, the system may well have worked the other way round, with interest in land determining lineage. A man who married and then resided in the village of his parents would consider his children to be of that mbutu mbutu. If he moved to the village of his wife's parents, his children might then take the mbutu mbutu of the mother. Thus descent could be both matrilineal and patrilineal in turn, depending on the circumstances. The land commissioners were confronted with a situation where individuals, anxious to establish extensive land interests, were claiming rights through both parents simultaneously. Anticipating the confusion that would arise if such rights were granted over more than one generation, the commissioners concluded that matrilineal/patrilineal descent was an 'unnatural' introduction. In pre-European society, if residence was the primary determinant of lineage and the value of land lay in its use and not on a cash market, such simultaneous claims would not necessarily arise. An individual's major concern would be land on which he lived and cultivated.
The evidence for this hypothesis lies in the genealogies of the people of the Roviana Lagoon. These consistently show that the descent lines of the various mbutu mbutu pass indiscriminately through both male and female. For example, the mbutu mbutu Sosolo of Lodumaho, Munda is of Kazakuru origin and begins with the apical female, Vakoriqe. It then progresses through one female, three males, two females, and three males to the present day. This pattern is quite typical: clan membership could apparently be taken from the father or mother, and this situation seems to have existed for many generations. On this basis it would seem that the bilateral descent system observed by the land commissions was not so much a corruption of an original matrilineal system, but rather a modern development of what could be called an ambilateral form of descent. It is of course possible that this ambilateralism was itself a development from a matrilineal form which was eventually diluted through convenience. As the land commissioners noted, there is some evidence of the islanders belief that the female line was 'stronger' than the male; however, in practice it would seem that in many cases the convenience of taking the line of the father triumphed over

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21 The author collected the genealogies of many of the mbutu mbutu existing in the Roviana Lagoon area in 1974. There are also a considerable number of Roviana, Simbo and Nduke genealogies in the A.M. Hocart Papers, MS. Papers 60, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Item No.43.
The line of the mbutu mbutu Sosolo was given by B. Gina, 30 August 1974, Munda.

22 LC I., ibid.
this belief.

The relations between the various Austronesian speaking groups, and between the clans that comprised those groups, seem to have been of a similar type to those already described on Vella Lavella and Mbaniata. Namely, neighbouring clans inhabiting a certain area would be unlikely to engage in long-term, large scale warfare. Quarrelling over such matters as petty crime, adultery and sorcery would be unlikely to develop into serious conflict, as all parties would realise the impracticality of being in a state of war with their immediate neighbours. Peace keeping was ensured through the exchange of traditional wealth objects such as the bakiha, which were ornaments fashioned from clam shell.\(^{23}\) Intermarriage between neighbouring clans would also act as a deterrent to the assumption of hostilities before an attempt was made to seek an alternative solution. It seems probable that in areas of high population density the likelihood of internal conflict was even further diminished, with extensive intermarriage between clans settled in close proximity to each other. The strength of numbers and internal unity of such areas would make them more powerful than the more dispersed and fragmented settlements of other areas.

The prime examples of such a situation would appear to be the people of the islands of Simbo and Nusa Roviana. Both of these island had strong natural defences: Simbo

\(^{23}\) Interview with Leunga, Hite, Bamu, Navoko, Beti, Jonga and Mulasai, 24/9/1974 at Ughele. Interview with Doni, Bambara, Elana and Mamupio, 17/10/1974 at Nusa Simbo.
was isolated from its nearest neighbour by five miles of ocean and its steep rugged hills were natural bastions. Nusa Roviana, one of the barrier islands of the Roviana Lagoon, was less isolated but it too had the elevation to enable its inhabitants to look over its surroundings and withstand attack. According to Roviana traditions, it was settled for precisely this reason. Both islands appear to have been well populated: a number of early European visitors to Simbo commented that it was populous, and Nusa Roviana had the numbers to enable it to serve as a focus of emigration to other parts of the Roviana Lagoon over a number of generations, apparently without adversely affecting its own powerful position. The strength of Simbo and Nusa Roviana was reflected in the nature of their settlements: the two seem to have been the only areas in the New Georgia Group with unfortified villages adjacent to the sea. Elsewhere villages were sited inland, concealed in the bush, or else heavily fortified, such as those of Marovo Island.

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24 Interview with J. Roni, J. Zinihite and B. Gina, 14/9/1974 at Munda.

25 People from Nusa Roviana settled on the mainland opposite (Munda) and on the other islands in the Lagoon. Some of these migrations are dated back to six generations. Interview with N. Kera, 9/10/1974 at Munda. Nusa Roviana also acted as a refuge, with people from Parara, Kazakuru and Kalikonggu settling there. Interview with J. Roni etc., 14/9/1974.

The strong position of Simbo and Nusa Roviana was further reinforced by their good relations with each other. The people of the two islands intermarried frequently and regularly traded with each other: Simbo would provide ngali nuts and megapode eggs in exchange for taro and clamshell ornaments. 

The one other area which may have been in a position to challenge the power of Simbo and Nusa Roviana could have been Mbilua, the southeastern corner of Vella Lavella. Roviana traditions tell of massive attacks on Nusa Roviana by Mbilua men, and the enmity between the two regions continued throughout the nineteenth century. There are some indications that Mbilua was also a centre of concentrated and substantial population. The Roviana traditions emphasise the numerical strength of the Mbilua attackers, and in the nineteenth century the area seems to have been heavily settled.

The position of other communities throughout the

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27 Interview with Doni, Bambara, Elana, and Mamupio, 17/10/1974.


29 Interview with J. Roni, 11/9/1974. One tradition tells of 1000 attackers from Mbilua. L. Foanaota, 'Burial Sites on Vella Lavella Island', The Journal of the Solomon Islands Museum Association, 2 (1974), pp. 22-33. There are many burial sites in Mbilua; some contained the remains of up to 160 men - and these were said to have been from a single clan.
Group seems to have been less secure. On Ranongga the people lived amongst the steep hills of the range that runs down the spine of the island. On the northern half of the island were settled the Kumbokota people (eastern side) and the Ghanongga people (western side) who both spoke the Kumbokota dialect. The southern half of the island was the region of the Lungga people, whose dialect was closely related to Kumbokota. Despite these linguistic affinities, the three regions appear to have been in conflict with each other on many occasions.\(^\text{30}\)

To the east, a small community lived on the island of Ghizo. These people seem to have had good relations with Mbilua, but this connection did not compensate them for the weakness of their position. Ghizo is small and flat, offering little protection, and its inhabitants were decimated by raids in the mid-nineteenth century. The few survivors eventually deserted the island.\(^\text{31}\)

The people of Kolombangara (or Nduke) were more fortunate. Kolombangara, a large extinct volcano, appears to have had few inhabitants. Only the southwestern sector of the island was populated; this is the one area where the smooth slopes of the volcanic cone give way to broken ranges, providing some natural defences against attackers. Disputes amongst the clans inhabiting this region were not uncommon, though their scale was probably small. They appear to have been able to adopt a common front against hostile outsiders.\(^\text{32}\)

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\(^{30}\) Interviews with Torebule 16/10/1974 and Panakera, 17/10/1974 at Kumbokota.


\(^{32}\) LG I. Lever Report, pp. 93-112.
similar situation existed in Ughele (northern Rendova), which was inhabited by a small number of clans. The Ughele people seem to have been regularly at war with the two other groups on Rendova, Lokuru and Mbaniata, but amongst the Ughele clans themselves conflict was limited.\textsuperscript{33}

The remainder of the New Georgia Group - New Georgia Island, the Marovo Lagoon, Vangunu and Nggatokae - was inhabited by scattered and warring groups living deep in the mountainous bush or in fortified coastal settlements. The nature of these groups is largely unknown: writing in the 1940s, Capell and Russell described between twelve and fourteen 'clans' that were found in the area.\textsuperscript{34} By that time, the material and social life of the islanders had been radically altered from that of the nineteenth century, let alone pre-European times. Moreover, their use of the term 'clan' was somewhat confusing, as no attempt was made to define what was meant. It would appear that the term was used to mean a broad cognatic group with not necessarily direct lineal connections between its members. Rather, it was a group which may have generally accepted a common origin and ancestry but had since long subdivided into smaller and more explicit 'lines'. For example, the Kazakuru people all traced their origin to one apical

\textsuperscript{33} Interview with Leunga etc., 24/9/1974.

\textsuperscript{34} T. Russell, 'The Culture of the Marovo, British Solomon Islands', Journal of the Polynesian Society, 57 (1948), pp. 307-8 and A. Capell, 'Notes on the Islands', pp. 26-7 both list these clans (with some differences).
female, but were nevertheless sub-divided into a number of separate mbutu mbutu. The evidence given before the first Land Commission makes it apparent that the people of the Marovo Lagoon saw the basic social organisation to be a 'line' of descent of which the living representatives generally occupied the one village or hamlet and cultivated specific tracts of land. The 'clans' described by Capell and Russell were not well-defined descent groups, but agglomerations of related 'lines' occupying particular regions, and generally having the same name as those regions. Nevertheless, it is quite apparent these 'clans' could function effectively as units, particularly under an able leader and in reaction to external threats, and that such regional groups could be spoken of as operating with a cohesive 'foreign policy' in relation to the other groups.

While there were around a dozen regional groups inhabiting New Georgia Island and the islands to the east in the twentieth century, in earlier years there were more. The one group known to have lost their independent identity were the Kazakuru, who dwelt in the Tiriokiamba area of southwestern New Georgia. The Kazakuru were eventually absorbed by the

35 Interview with P. Siga, 17/9/1974 at Munda. P. Siga, MS. notes entitled 'Buka tututi pa Kazakuru'. This contains the genealogies of the various mbutu mbutu Kazakuru.

36 LC I. Claim No.26, 'Notes of Proceedings'.

37 Witnesses before the first Land Commission frequently spoke of the attitudes or relations of the 'Kusaghe' people etc. as a single entity.
Roviana clans which expanded from Nusa Roviana into the Munda region five generations ago. The Kazakuru may have been forced to seek the protection of the Roviana people, for apparently they were at enmity with the Nduke clans on Kolombangara and the Kusaghe people to their north. One traditional account describes a fierce battle between Kusaghe and Kazakuru in which the latter lost eight hundred men.\(^\text{38}\) The absorption of the Kazakuru would seem to have been completed during the second half of the nineteenth century, when Nusa Roviana and Munda became a focus for refugees from head-hunting raids.\(^\text{39}\)

The Kusaghe people appear to have inhabited the region between the Hanggorana and Mase Rivers. To their northeast, between the Mase and Lever Harbour, was the territory of the Lupa people. Both of these groups lived deep in the hills but maintained contact with the coast, having groves of coconuts on the foreshore and keeping canoes for fishing and raiding. The Kusaghe and Lupa were not on good terms with each other and apparently feuded until the late 1800s when the statesmenlike policy of the big-man Vilingi brought them together. Both Kusaghe and Lupa were also in conflict with other groups to the south.\(^\text{40}\)

The Marovo Lagoon extends from Lever Harbour to the island of Nggatokae, running adjacent to the northern coasts of


\(^{39}\) ibid., pp. 112-22.

\(^{40}\) ibid., pp. 137-54.
New Georgia and Vangunu. The Lagoon is dotted with hundreds of islets, though it would appear that only a few were occupied, probably because of the lack of protection they offered. Those that were settled, namely Ramata and Marovo Islands, had stockades for defence. The Ramata and Marovo people, together with a number of groups that lived close to the coast on the major islands, regarded themselves as 'beach' or 'salt-water' people, in opposition to the 'bush' people who dwelt deeper inland on New Georgia and Vangunu. The salt-water groups included the Pondokana people of north Vangunu, the inhabitants of Nggatokae, and the people of Nggerasi, Nono, Ramata and Marovo. Amongst the bush groups were Vangunu people (southern half of the island), the Kalivarana and Limbo people (southern side of New Georgia), and the Mbareke people (central eastern Vangunu). The conflict between the bush and salt-water people seems to have been long-standing and bitter, with the former the weaker of the two.

While the people of the various islands and regions of the New Georgia Group differed in language and circumstances, they had at least one powerful common interest - the practice of head-hunting. The term 'head-hunting' has been used somewhat indiscriminately in the past to refer to the decapitation of those killed in warfare. In this thesis it is used more narrowly to describe the regular organisation of expeditions whose principal purpose was the acquisition of heads. Although

41 ibid., pp. 155-63.
Tedder, op.cit.
42 LC I. Claim No.26 'Notes of Proceedings'.
the decapitation of deceased kinfolk and slain enemies was common in the Solomon Islands, the systematic mounting of large expeditions to 'hunt' for heads was restricted to the western islands: principally Santa Isabel, Choiseul and the New Georgia Group. Of these, the inhabitants of the New Georgia Group were by far the most active in their head-hunting operations, which were of a greater intensity, scale and effect than those of the other islands.

When the trader Andrew Cheyne was on Simbo in 1844 he was horrified to see the walls of a large canoe house strung with human heads. He was informed that a few days prior to his arrival an expedition had returned to the island with ninety three heads, and that it was the 'universal custom' throughout the Group to display these trophies in canoe houses. This was the first of many European observations on the practice of head-hunting in the Group. Such nineteenth century observers seldom inquired too deeply into the function of head-hunting within island society, often being content to assume that it was yet another manifestation of the inherently brutal and treacherous character of the islanders. Modern historians, however, have tended to see head-hunting and 'slave raiding' as crucial to an understanding of island society. In the words of Peter Corris, they were 'the foundations of the

45 For example, see A.R. Tippett, Solomon Islands Christianity A Study in Growth and Obstruction (London, 1967), pp. 147-51.
vigorous military, economic and ceremonial life enjoyed by the people of the western islands'.

In the late 1880s an anonymous reviewer in *The Westminster Review* wrote of head-hunting in the Solomon Islands:

> It seems, however, as if the desire for skulls has become hereditary, and that, quite irrespective of their special value to their possessor, they are hunted for owing to the force of a blind, instinctive impulse, the origin of which the hunter himself does not understand.

This explanation of head-hunting adroitly transferred the Europeans' lack of understanding of the phenomenon to the islanders themselves. More recently, head-hunting has been seen to have developed from the practice of acquiring skulls for ritual purposes into a 'mania', in which the only object was to enhance the prestige of the slayer. Such an explanation rests too much on what Peter Lawrence has called 'the general anthropological prejudice against accepting belief as sociological fact, and predeliction to examine religious phenomena almost exclusively as indices of human social relationships'. Head-hunting was a practical expression of the religious beliefs of the islanders; or, to paraphrase Lawrence,

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their behaviour was intellectually directed: they held certain religious beliefs and acted on them to achieve their ends.

There has been little investigation into the religious beliefs of the islanders of the New Georgia Group in the period before the introduction of Christianity. The most extensive work was undertaken by A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers on the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the Solomon Islands in 1908, which concentrated on the island of Simbo. The ensuing discussion relies mainly on this material.

The Simboese believed in the existence of 'ghosts' (tomate) and 'spirits' or 'gods' (tamasa). Generally, tomate referred to a dead man, his skull or corpse, and his ghost or spirit, though there were a number of tomate not connected with any deceased human being. The tamasa were distinguished from tomate: they were gods or sacred being unconnected with any recently living man, though they may have sprung from some long dead ancestral figure. There were two main classes of tamasa: the 'gods of crops' (tamasa vuvua) and the 'weather gods' (tamasa vambule). The tomate and tamasa, while supernatural beings in the European sense, were a matter-of-fact part of all facets of the islanders' lives. They could be responsible for accidents, sickness and death; the state of the weather and the condition of the crops depended upon them.  

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The power of the tomate and tamasa could be employed for one's benefit and to harm others by performing various ceremonies or rites. The site for these ceremonies was usually a tambuna or sacred place (called hope in Roviana and Marovo). The tambuna were small structures containing skulls, 'charms' (potana iama) and valued ornaments.\(^{51}\)

When a man died his head was removed and left to bleach. After a period of time which involved the performing of a number of ceremonies it was placed in a tambuna. The tambuna and the skull were material representatives of the tomate. Food and valuables were placed in the tambuna, and prayers offered to the tomate so that it would assist the islanders in their earthly activities. The gods or tamasa were also represented by tambuna in which skulls were kept. These were also offered prayers, food and valuables. The power of a tomate and the scale of ceremonies attached to it were a reflection of the status of the man when he had lived. For a big-man (mbangara) pigs would be killed, food and goods distributed, and feasts organised. The dead mbangara would also be honoured with the sacrifice of a captured enemy or the organisation of an expedition to obtain heads.\(^{52}\)

The power and influence of a tomate which was the object of propitiation has been called mana by some writers. It has also been stated that in taking heads the slayer increased his mana, and that the offering of heads on inaugural occasions

\(^{51}\) Hocart, 'Cult of the Dead', pp. 103-11.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., pp. 80-98.
added to the mana of a new canoe or building. Similarly, the mana of a tornate of a deceased big-man, already strong, would be increased and propitiated by the presentation of heads at its tambuna.53

The popularity of the word mana dates back to R.H. Codrington, who wrote that 'The Melanesian mind is entirely possessed by the belief in a supernatural power or influence called almost universally mana'.54 Other anthropologists have developed on this, and there has been much controversy over the nature and meaning of mana. It has been defined as a non-physical force that shows itself in any power or excellence a man or object has. Melanesian religion has been seen as consisting mainly of getting mana for oneself or used for one's benefit.55 With increasing use, the word mana has become, in Raymond Firth's phrase, 'something of a technical term' which may have little in common with the same term as used by the natives of the societies under investigation.56 J.H.L. Waterhouse's Roviana dictionary defines mana as 'potent, effectual', and Hocart's notes on its use on Simbo indicate similar meaning. Mana was used in connection with ghosts and spirits (tomate)

53 Tippett, op.cit. p. 7.
E.A. Salisbury, 'A Napoleon of the Solomons', Asia, XXII (1922), p. 710.
54 Codrington, op.cit., pp. 118-20.
55 H.I. Hogbin, 'Mana', Oceania, VI (1936), pp. 266-7.
and had the meaning 'you speak true'. Used in prayers and invocations it could be translated as 'put forth your power' or 'be effective'. Hocart gives a number of examples of the invocations made to tornate after the return of a head-hunting expedition. Heads, and pieces of the bodies of the slain, were offered to tornate with the the words, 'This is the share of the killed for you the spirits, be efficacious (mana tu)'. More specifically, 'Be efficacious and club men. Depart here-after and kill men. Be efficacious; anoint the war canoe. Be efficacious; let this village strike down the men'. In this sense, the use of the word mana reflects the essential pragmatism of the Simboese religion. The power of the tornate and tamasa were seen as being directly related to human interests and could be supplicated for specific ends. Mana expressed the efficacy of the power and influence of the 'spirits' when applied to earthly objectives. To get and keep this force on one's side were necessary considerations for the islanders. Head-hunting was a practical expression of that necessity.

Heads were required for specific occasions: to inaugurate new war canoes (ngeto in Simbo, tomako in Roviana), new canoe and communal houses (paele), and new tambuna or hope and on the death of a big-man. The inaugurations were called vapenja, which according to Hocart means "to moisten, to wet", presumably with blood. These occasions and the preparation

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A.M. Hocart, 'Mana', Man, 26 (1914), pp. 97-8.


59 ibid., p. 303.
of the head-hunting expedition itself involved many ceremonial and religious obligations. Before their departure, the headhunters would visit various tambuna to make offerings and invocations to ensure that the 'spirit' would mana tu on their behalf. On Nusa Roviana there was a series of hope to be visited before an expedition got underway. Each hope offered some form of practical assistance to the head-hunters: the tiola to guide and protect them; mama helo, to lighten their burdens and increase their speed; doma, to mesmerise their enemies; tutulotana, to increase the deadliness of their weapons.

On the day of departure a further ceremony took place in which the vovoso was placed in the war canoe. The vovoso was an object made of clam shells and wood; it guided and added strength to the fighters. After an invocation to the vovoso and tomate to be 'efficacious' (mana) on the behalf of the head-hunters, the men set out in their tomako. The tomako, or war canoes, were extremely specialised and revered craft. Beautifully constructed and ornamented, they appear to have been used solely for head-hunting expeditions. These vessels could be up to fifty feet in length, with a depth of about two and a half feet and a beam of five feet. Their

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60 ibid., pp. 308-12. Hocart gives the Simbo text and English translations of these invocations. All call on the spirits to be 'efficacious' (mana tu).

61 Interview with J. Roni, 13/9/74.

62 Hocart, op.cit., pp. 309-11. I have used the Roviana tomako in preference to the Simboese ngeto throughout, as it is the term most commonly found in the literature.
curved bows and sterns, decorated with carvings, ornaments and inlaid pearl, could reach a height of ten feet. A tomako could carry thirty to forty men with their weapons, and could reach a speed of approximately seven knots. The tomako were planked vessels: their construction involved the binding and cementing of numerous pieces of wood cut perfectly to size, and could take two years to complete. Each tomako had its own name, personality, and spiritual value. To ensure the latter, heads were taken for the inauguration of a new canoe, and various ceremonies observed before a voyage was undertaken. The tomako were kept in paele, large canoe houses which also served as communal club houses where men and older boys would sleep and eat. Heads were required for a new paele, and the skulls of the victims of successful expeditions were kept in them.

On the return of an expedition there were further ceremonies. The voyoso was removed and placed in its tambuna. Hair from the head of one of the victims would be burnt as an offering to the tomate so that they would mana tu, and the heads would be placed in the paele. In addition there were feasts and festivals in honour of a successful man-slayer (the tundu) and successful expeditions (the vavolo).

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G. Hendy-Pooley, 'Among the Solomon Islands', The Australian Magazine, 8 (1908), p. 739.


Modern Europeans, accepting a dichotomy of faith and reason, have described head-hunting as a 'mania'. The islanders did not subscribe to such dualism: their lives were constantly subject to the interaction of the physical and the spiritual. Head-hunting and its associated ceremonialism were the logical outcome of this perception. Rooted in the religious beliefs of the islanders, the practice of head-hunting had broad ramifications - particularly in relation to the nature of leadership and authority.

When Hocart was on Simbo, he noted that the activities of the 'chiefs' had mostly ceased with the ending of head-hunting. He was told by an islander:

No one is mighty now: they are all alike, they have no money; they cannot go head-hunting; they all 'stop nothing'.

This statement effectively condenses the basis of leadership in the New Georgia Group: the use of wealth in conjunction with the practice of head-hunting. The construction of the tomako and paele, the preparation and celebration of expeditions, with their attendant ceremonies and feasts, required men with entrepreneurial skills and a high level of organisational or managerial ability. The men who were successful in this work were the 'chiefs' and 'Kings' so often mentioned by visiting Europeans. The use of these terms was unfortunate, for it implied a degree of authority which did not necessarily exist. As Codrington noted, European visitors carried with them the


67 Hocart, 'Cult of the Dead', p. 79.
persuasion that savage people are always ruled by chiefs.\textsuperscript{68} The desire to find and utilise such 'chiefs' could often result in enhancing the importance of an individual above the level of his status within island society. An illustration of this comes from a midshipman in the Royal Navy, who visited Savo in the 1870s:

We had two chiefs on board, who although they did not seem to have much authority over their own subjects, who jostled them about indiscriminately, appeared to presume on their rank with their dealings with us; but as we had information to gain from them, of course they had to be humoured.\textsuperscript{69}

This foible of the white man was soon exploited, and men such as Bera of Isabel, Taki of San Cristobal, Kwaisulia of Malaita, and Ingava of New Georgia increased their political and social influence through adroit manipulation of their European contacts. Of course, the prominence of such men only served to reinforce European assumptions with regard to 'chiefs' and 'Kings'.

In recent years, the term 'big-man' has been used to describe Melanesian leaders. In his analysis of 'political types' in Oceania, M.D. Sahlins has described the modern Melanesian big-man as 'thoroughly bourgeois', combining 'an ostensible interest in the general welfare' with 'a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation'. The attainment of big-man status, according to Sahlins, is the outcome of a series of acts which elevate him above the

\textsuperscript{68} Codrington, op. cit., p. 46.

common herd and attract a following of lesser men. Thus big-man leadership is a 'creation of followership'. The prospective big-man can build up renown and prestige through oratory, gardening ability, bravery in war, and especially the accumulation of wealth. This wealth is distributed through bride prices, feasts, his club house, and the payment of subsidies and indemnities. The big-man must establish personal relations of loyalty and obligation so that he can mobilise production to accumulate wealth, and must maintain these relationships by ensuring that distribution does not fall too short of production. Although big-man status is open to all who have the necessary ability, in practice the son of a big-man, or of a rich matrilineage, could aspire more easily to such a position. In this sense it could be called 'hereditary', but not formally so.

Most of the detailed anthropological work on Melanesian leadership has been done in an age of relative peace and Christian missions. This may account for the emphasis on the 'bourgeois' and materialistic aspects of big-man leadership. It would appear that in less peaceful, pagan times there were other equally important factors. In the New Georgia Group it would seem that wealth and influence were expressed largely through the practice of head-hunting and its attendant ceremonies-and rituals. The big-man would mobilise his followers

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for the construction of paele which they would then use as their club house; he would pay specialists to build the tomako; organise head-hunting expeditions, and distribute wealth through festivals and feasts such as the tundu and vavolo. The more successful he was in these activities, the greater his prestige and following. His worldly status had its spiritual parallel: for like those Christian capitalists who believed that their prosperity was proof that God looked upon them favourably, the big-man's success was an indication that his propitiations of the tomate had had their desired result, and that they had been 'efficacious' on his behalf. Wealth and prowess in warfare were seen as evidence of a man's good relations with the spirit world and this in turn enhanced a big-man's status and authority. This religious aspect of leadership may have been one reason why the power of nineteenth century big-men was greater than those of modern times: affronting a big-man who had the tomate on his side could bring calamity and sickness upon the offender. Of course, the efficacy of this type of authority was limited to those who believed that the big-man's influence with the spirit world was great. The exercise of power was also curbed by the need to preserve popularity: unduly tyrannical actions could alienate a big-man from his followers, and eventually destroy the basis of his status. Leadership and authority were ultimately dependent upon the initiative of the individual. While a man

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72 Hocart, 'Cult of the Dead', pp. 77-80.
Hocart, 'Warfare in Eddystone', p. 308.

73 Codrington, op.cit., p. 52.
might inherit wealth and respect from his father; parsimony, stupidity and indolence could erode this position.

The followers of a New Georgian big-man were largely his relatives - members of his clan living in the same neighbourhood. However, it does not seem that a big-man's following was necessarily restricted to those with whom he had close cognatic connections. Material and spiritual status could attract the support of others who may have been more distant relatives, or who established a connection with the clan of the big-man through marriage. The authority of a big-man was not static or defined, it could develop or decline in accordance with his actions and abilities. Thus the status of various big-men could vary greatly, with some achieving considerable authority and attracting the support not only of their immediate followers but also of lesser big-men and their followers. Island leaders, usually men who owed their position to their own initiative and ability, were to be particularly responsive to the arrival of the European: here was another avenue for the talented and ambitious to exploit.

The society encountered by Europeans in the late eighteenth century was not 'timeless' or static. The scattered evidence of its pre-European history indicates that it had experienced considerable upheaval and development. The coming of the white man was to result in further change. The nature of this change, and the extent to which it was moulded by the response and initiative of the islanders, is the subject of the next chapter.
The first seventy years of European contact are very poorly documented, yet it is possible to obtain some insight into the methods employed by the islanders in confronting this new situation. From the start it is apparent that the islanders were eager to make the most of the benefits of European goods. The Simboese, who were to be the main beneficiaries of early European contact, became noted for their willingness to cooperate with Europeans for their mutual benefit. At the same time they attempted to ensure that this advantage was not extended to other islanders in the Group. They endeavoured, quite successfully, to monopolise relations with visiting Europeans, and to act as middlemen for the rest of the Group. In this manner they cemented their power within the Group and established a basis of authority that was to last until the end of the century. This authority was to be expressed in traditionally indigenous terms - its medium was head-hunting. Head-hunting was the most powerful dynamic operating in island society, uniting the forces of leadership and religion under the banner of warfare. Head-hunting has already been described as a practical expression of the religious beliefs of the islanders, providing a vehicle for the ambitions and aspirations of big-men and their followers. The coming of the European did not alter this, but it did provide an opportunity for the islanders to pursue their interests more intensely.

The first Europeans to enter the Solomons were the men of Alvaro de Mendana's expedition, who landed on Santa Isabel in February 1568. Although they did not visit the New
Georgia Group, they observed it from a distance. Two hundred years later, the French navigators Bougainville and Surville also glimpsed the islands, but it was not until November 1787 that a European vessel came in close proximity to the Group. This ship was the Alliance, out of Philadelphia and bound for Canton to trade for tea. On the 12 November it passed between Simbo and Ranongga: two hundred and fifty islanders in canoes approached the ship, and were described by the logkeeper, Richard Dale, as friendly in appearance. This impression was to remain unconfirmed, as squally weather and the onset of night prevented any meeting. The Alliance’s route was something in the nature of an experimental short-cut, but with the establishment of the penal colony at Port Jackson it was to be used with increasing frequency. Ships under charter to the East India Company,


4 The frontispiece of the Log of the Alliance, op.cit., states 'Bound for China Round New Holland and New Guinea, to save the passage to China'.
having landed their cargoes of convicts and goods at Sydney, would then sail north to China to pick up tea for the English market. Before the use of Torres Straits became common, vessels bound for India from New South Wales could also travel by a route which took them north of New Guinea. In making such journeys, navigators had the choice of a number of passages. They could take the 'Outer Passage' to the east of the Santa Cruz Islands; the 'Great Eastern Passage' between Santa Cruz and San Cristobal; or, the 'Inner Passage' which could take them through or just to the west of the Solomon Islands. A vessel taking the 'Inner Passage' could use any of a number of channels through the islands: Indispensable Strait, Manning Strait, Bougainville Strait, St. George's Channel, or the strait between Buka and New Ireland. The latter three passages would bring a ship immediately to the west of the New Georgia Group, with a good chance of sighting the distinctively shaped island of Simbo. This was to have profound consequences for the subsequent history of the Group.

It was not long after their brief glimpse of the Alliance that the islanders of Simbo first came in contact with the European: on the 6 August 1788 the Alexander appeared off their shores. This ship had been part of the First Fleet taking convicts to New South Wales and was now returning to

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England by way of Batavia under the command of Lieutenant John Shortland. The ship was several miles off Simbo when it was approached by four canoes; the islanders were unwilling to come on board but they consented to be towed along by the Alexander and were willing to exchange their shell armlets and other ornaments for nails, beads and other 'trifles', although they displayed a distinct preference for any object made of iron. The islanders also expressed their desire for the ship to stop at Simbo by indicating that they had fruit and meat available. Shortland regretfully declined this invitation because 'the length and uncertainty of his passage seemed to forbid the least delay'. Like the logkeeper of the Alliance before him, Shortland was impressed by the friendliness of the islanders, and also noted that they traded very fairly with no attempt to defraud. A similar experience was recorded by George Bowen, captain of the Albemarle, which passed by the coasts of 'New Georgia' in December 1791 when on a voyage from Port Jackson to Bombay. Bowen states that he was off Cape Deception which, if correct, would place him off the southwest coast of Rendova. The islanders that came on board the Albemarle were familiar with the use of iron and curious to know more about it. Bowen also claimed that they had English fishing nets in their possession: this was by no means impossible as the islanders indicated by signs that they had seen several other ships and that one had actually been wrecked upon the coast, the remains of which Bowen himself later observed. Bowen reported that there were many huts along the coast and that the

people were of a 'mild disposition'.

For the next ten to fifteen years East Indiamen from Port Jackson to China continued to pass through the Solomons. In 1792 Captain Manning took the Pitt between Mborukua and the Russell Islands, then north through the strait that now bears his name. On the way he sighted Nggatokae, which he named Cape Traverse. In the following year the Bellona, under the command of Matthew Boyd, took the same route as Shortland: south of the New Georgia Group then turning north through Bougainville Strait. On the 8 and 9 March islanders came on board the ship and Boyd was impressed by their friendly manner. It would seem that these people were from either Simbo, Ranongga or northern Vella Lavella. In June 1793 the official French expedition of D'Entrecasteaux passed south of the Group, however their investigation was confined to charting the southern coasts of Nggatokae, Vangunu, Tetipari and Rendova. They had no contact with the local people.

The amicable on-board trading which had characterised relations between the islanders and the passing Europeans was interrupted in 1795 when the Young William, another East

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7 J.F.G. de La Perouse, A Voyage Round the World in the years 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788, (3 vols., London, 1798), I, pp. 51-4. Bowen's record comes from 'Extracts from the minutes of the justice of peace of the town and commune of Morlaix'. Bowen was giving information as to the possible whereabouts of La Perouse.


9 MS. Log of the Bellona, 24/7/1792-29/9/1794. Commander M. Boyd.
IOL. MFP. Entries for 7-9 March, 1793.

Indiaman, was off Simbo and Ranongga. On the 14th November a number of canoes came off one of these islands with the intention of coming on board. As a number of 'war' canoes were amongst them the captain, James Mortlock, prevented the islanders from approaching by firing a shot over their heads. With the increasing shipping passing through the Solomon Islands, more acts of violence occurred. In March 1802 while the Minorca, Nile and Canada were sailing in convoy through the islands, a ship's boat from the Nile was attacked and several men were wounded. The log of the Canada states that the ships were near New Georgia or 'Cape Bennet', but the descriptions of the land and the positions given make it clear that they were in fact in Indispensable Strait, between Malaita and Guadalcanal. In August of the same year the Coromandel passed to the south of Simbo and Ranongga; about fifty canoes were sighted but no contact with the islanders was made. In the early years of the twentieth century, the anthropologist A.M. Hocart transcribed the stories of the people of Simbo dealing with the coming of the white man to their island:

(\textit{the white men}) gave tobacco in exchange, but they did not like the smell; they gave them tins of beef, but they did not want them; gave biscuits, but they would not have them; they offered iron used to bind cases of meat, & they took it.\footnote{Hocart Papers. Item 18, 'Notes on White Men, Mandegusu', p.1.}

\footnote{MS. Log of the Young William, 11/9/1794-4/8/1796. Commander J. Mortlock. IOL. MFP. Entries for 12-14 November 1795.}

\footnote{MS. Log of the Canada, 16/5/1801-25/3/1803. Commander W. Wilkinson. IOL. MFP. Entries for 3-7 March, 1802.}

\footnote{MS. Log of the Coromandel, 3/11/1801-4/7/1803. Commander A. Sterling. IOL. MFP. Entry for 4 August, 1802.}
The Simboese demand for iron soon became more refined, as did their methods of fulfilling it, both in trading and in less legitimate forms. The islanders' respect for European goods did not necessarily extend to the white man himself, whom they were quick to exploit whenever possible. At the same time, the Simboese considered that they had a special relationship with the European:

The white men came to Mandegusu (Simbo) first, then to Lungga, Vella Lavella & Ysabel; Simbo men went with them to pilot them round. This island...cannot kill white men because a ship came here first, so that this is, as it were, a white man's land. In Mbilua they can kill white men.¹⁵

While this declaration of amity may have been exaggerated, it is nevertheless true that the people of Simbo did have a pre-eminent role in dealing with the early European visitors to the New Georgia Group. Their sophistication in such matters, when compared with the islanders from other parts of the Group, is apparent from a number of more detailed records of Europeans in the islands in 1803 and after.

On the 28 June 1803 H.M.S. Buffalo anchored a quarter of a mile off Simbo. A canoe carrying three men came out to the ship with breadfruit, coconuts, tortoiseshell and pearl ornaments to trade for hatchets and hammers. The Buffalo had none of these on board, but the islanders were willing to accept nails, knives and old iron. Soon the ship was surrounded by canoes containing about one hundred men and two women. The men distinguished themselves by their amazing dexterity in

¹⁵ ibid., p. 2.
stealing some bayonets. The next day the Buffalo was again surrounded; this time by sixty canoes and several hundred men. Thieves broke into the officers' cabins stealing glasses, bells and dirks. Iron works were wrenched off the boats, and an attempt was made to abduct a ten year old boy. The captain, William Kent, seems to have been a patient man for, unlike many others after him, he decided not to act against the islanders.

According to Mrs Kent, who kept a journal of the voyage, the island of Simbo looked like a garden in high cultivation, covered with coconuts, breadfruit and banana trees with the people's houses just discernible in the midst of them. The inhabitants were obviously populous, intensely active and well-organised. She observed what must have been a tomako, or head-hunting canoe: it carried fifty men, had high curving prows decorated with pearl, shell and carvings of fish, birds and heads. In the centre of this canoe was an elevated seat for a 'Chief'. Unless Mrs Kent failed to mention it, the ubiquitous trade hatchet had not yet become common, for the weapons of the men were spears, bows and arrows. The Buffalo left Simbo on the 29 June and sailed past Ranongga and Vella Lavella. Canoes also came off these islands, but the people seemed of a milder disposition to those of Simbo.16

It is obvious that the Simboese had lost any shyness or wariness in dealing with Europeans, and perhaps it was

because the people of Vella Lavella and Ranongga had less experience with passing ships that they seemed 'milder' in their behaviour. It is equally evident that the Simbo people were well experienced in trading with Europeans, knowing that they would prefer pearl and tortoiseshell ornaments to what the Simboese would regard as their most valuable possessions - the clam shell armlets, bakiha and poata. Throughout Mrs Kent's narrative there is no hint of any possibility of violent confrontation, despite the audacity of the islanders. This may have been due to a feeling of security prompted by the fact that the ship was a man-o-war, but another account from the same year gives a similar impression.

The Patterson under Captain Jonathon Aborn, on a voyage from Port Jackson to Canton, stopped off Simbo in December 1803. The ship was soon surrounded by several hundred unarmed men who were 'quite sharp in trading' as well as being a 'very thieving set', to the extent of stealing the hats off the heads of the sailors. On the following day the islanders' behaviour was 'much better' and Crawford Carter, the keeper of the ship's journal, 'could not but consider them as quite a hospitable ingenious people'. Once again the islanders displayed a great eagerness for iron, though more particularly for cutting instruments. The Patterson sailed on past the northern end of Ranongga where it encountered more islanders in canoes. These people were much more timorous than the Simboese:

17 These ornaments took a great deal of time and effort to make, and were thus highly prized. See C.M. Woodford, 'Life in the Solomon Islands', Popular Science Monthly XXXV (1889), p. 484 and Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd., Handbook of Information for Western Pacific Islands (Sydney, 1899), p. 52.
they would not come alongside until satisfied that the strangers were of a peaceful disposition, and then refused to come on board. They traded from one canoe at a time and made no attempt to steal anything. 18

It appears that the Simboese' familiarity with Europeans had, to some degree, bred contempt and that their irreverent attitude towards the possessions of the white man would sooner or later result in conflict. Equally responsible, however, for the creation of situations of confrontation was the increasing apprehension of the crews of European vessels. In April 1811 the Union, bound for Penang under Captain John Nichols, was becalmed off Simbo. The first officer, James Hobbs, took a boat to the island thinking it would be uninhabited. The boat was soon surrounded by canoes, and the apparently friendly islanders invited them to land. Hobbs would have done so except his crew of four 'lascars' was terrified, believing they would be killed and eaten. The boat rowed back to the Union which was by now crowded with islanders, which led Hobbs to believe that the ship's destruction was inevitable. However, most of the men were unarmed and were devoting themselves to the theft of any iron objects which could be obtained. Hobbs cleared the decks with some violence, cutting the arms of one thief. 19


Hobbs also claimed that he saw the remains of a wrecked European vessel at Simbo: what would have happened to the crew of such a ship? To seafarers at that time this question would have appeared ridiculous; they would have assumed that the sailors would have been massacred and, in all probability, eaten. This need not have been the case: Europeans were soon to be living quite happily on Simbo, despite the reputation of the people of the New Georgia Group as the most bloodthirsty and treacherous savages in the South Seas. The traditions of the Simboese also include a number of instances of white men settling amongst them without difficulty, yet the contemporary European records constantly reiterate the extreme dangers of the area. This change in reputation, from friendly thieves to murderous cannibals and the anomalous position of Simbo in this transfiguration, can be explained in the transition that occurred in the nature of contact between Europeans and islanders in the years shortly after Hobbs' visit to the islands.

On 15 May 1812 Simbo and Ranongga were visited by Captain Abraham Bristow in the Thames. This episode adds nothing new to our knowledge of Simbo and its environs, but it does mark a turning point in the relationship between European and islander. Unlike the previous ships that had

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passed by the New Georgia Group on voyages to China or the East Indies, the Thames had cruised for some months in the waters northeast of New Guinea. Captain Bristow was one of the first whalers to exploit these grounds.

From the 1820s through to the 1860s whalers were to be found in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands. The most popular grounds were first the waters to the east of Isabel and Malaita, and then later in the neighbourhood of Buka and north Bougainville. The arrival of the whalers meant a basic change in the islanders' relationship with Europeans. Whalers were in the area for protracted periods, frequently trading for provisions and occasionally coming ashore for water, careening and copulation. In this way many European tools, weapons and goods were introduced to the island society, increasing both the demand of the islanders and their expectation of a regular supply. This was particularly true of tobacco, which became an article of currency for the next century. With increasing contact also came increasing conflict: islanders might resort to drastic action to obtain the goods they wanted, or might seek retributive justice for some action of the whalers, who were not renowned for genteel diplomacy. In some areas a relatively stable situation existed: trade was organised and peacefully conducted, with both sides realising that it was to their mutual benefit that harmonious relations be preserved. Simbo, Treasury Island and Makira Bay on San Cristobal were such places; but even in these localities confrontation could easily flare into violence. On Treasury Island in 1842 seventeen of the crew of the whaler Offley were killed by the islanders after the captain of the ship shot
a local big-man. Simbo seems to have been recognised as the 'safe' port in the New Georgia Group, for Europeans regularly resided there and ships often used it as a stop-over point. For the rest of the Group, and other islands in the Solomons, relations were not so pleasant.

By the late 1820s large numbers of whalers from Sydney, Hobart and England were using the grounds off Malaita and Isabel. The nature of relations between these men and the islanders is sensationally described by T.W. Smith, who claimed that at one stage the whaler Hibernian was surrounded by two or three thousand islanders and then attacked. In the ensuing fight fifteen large canoes were destroyed and some two hundred islanders killed. A more reliable source on the period is Edward Cattlin who whaled regularly in these waters between 1828 and 1835. Cattlin seems to have been able to trade peaceably on a number of occasions but adopted the practice of 'scaring off' any canoes that looked hostile by firing over their heads. Both Smith and Cattlin heard that Europeans from wrecked ships were or had been living on the islands. In the 1830s whalers from New England entered the area. In 1830 Morrell was off Bougainville and Buka and recommended the grounds

22 Sydney Morning Herald, 5 January 1843.


in his book published in 1832.25

In 1836 the Marshall Bennett, Captain R.L. Hunter, was off New Georgia and Treasury Island. Hunter advised the readers of the Nautical Magazine that they should be on guard when dealing with the natives of this area. Although it was safe to trade alongside, going ashore was particularly hazardous. Crews landing on islands that appeared to be uninhabited could be rushed by 'hundreds' of men concealed in the bush. Hunter states that this had happened to one or two vessels at 'New Georgia', and that the crews had with difficulty regained the boats with some killed and wounded.26 Despite these acts of violence, numbers of Europeans were voluntarily living in the New Georgia Group, particularly on Simbo. The Duke of York left three men there at their own request in July 1837.27

In February 1839 when HMS Larne was at Ponape her commander was informed that there were Europeans on 'New Georgia'.28 In November of the same year the whaler William Hamilton took a white man off Simbo. This man had deserted a ship at Sikaiana and had later been taken from there to Simbo by the Carnavon of London. The William Hamilton had been whaling in the


northern Solomons since October 1839 and had bartered for tortoiseshell off New Georgia in that month. On 22 November, when off Simbo, they had been chased by canoes. After initially attempting to elude them the whaler allowed the canoes to come alongside. In one was a European who asked to be taken on board. From this it is apparent that the Simbo people were hospitable to the point of going to lengths to oblige an uninvited guest. The contradiction between this behaviour, and the increasingly evil reputation that the Group was acquiring, is more understandable in the light of the first detailed description of the area; this is provided by Andrew Cheyne, who spent almost two months there in 1844.

Andrew Cheyne, captain of the Naiad, was out from China on a beche de mer collecting expedition. His intention was to establish curing points at a number of islands throughout the Western Pacific, manned by an officer and a party of men, which would collect and process the sea slug. Cheyne would then call back at each place on his return to China. Cheyne arrived at Simbo on 1 February 1844; he was met by three Europeans living on the island and the 'two principal chiefs', Meno and Lobie. He asked for permission to establish a station on the island; this request was granted with an assurance that the establishment would be under the chiefs' protection. Cheyne remained in the New Georgia Group until 21 March, spending most of that period on Simbo. His description of this


30 Shineberg, op.cit., p. 224.

31 ibid., pp. 303-14.
visit throws much light on two important questions: the role of Simbo within the Group, and the deterioration of islander-European relations.

By the 1840s Simbo was easily the most sophisticated island within the New Georgia Group, having had fifty years of regular contact with Europeans. This was partly the result of its geographical position: the island is well clear of the rest of the Group, with its approach unencumbered by shoals and reefs. It has, in Cheyne's words, 'a snug little harbour', and was an obvious stop-over point for any ship passing to the southwest of the New Georgia Group in an attempt to avoid the unknown waters of the New Georgia Sound or the extremely dangerous reefs and lagoons within the Group. Moreover, it is completely distinctive in appearance: it would be difficult, almost impossible, to confuse it with any other island. As well as these factors, the island had received favourable publicity in the account of Shortland's voyage, and its position had been given in the 1816 edition of the *Oriental Navigator*.

With a steady parade of visiting ships in their waters the Simbo people gained both wealth and strength. They could trade foodstuffs, tortoiseshell and sexual favours for

32 *ibid.*, p. 303.

33 From a distance Simbo appears as two, almost identical blocks rising from the sea. For this reason Shortland named it 'Two Brothers'. Another aid to identification was Eddystone Rock, off the southwest tip of the island – a pinnacle that remarkably resembles a ship under sail.

European goods, particularly iron axeheads. The latter were highly valued by islanders throughout the Group, who on occasion would withhold trade from a ship if they were not available in the hope of obtaining them elsewhere. By the 1840s the Simboese had acquired a surplus of axeheads and were able to trade this surplus with islanders from elsewhere in the Group for tortoiseshell and traditional objects of wealth. As well as being middlemen traders, the Simboese also acted as a channel of communication between traders and other islanders. They guided Cheyne to their allies on the larger islands, and showed him watering places and safe passages for his ship. The Simboese actively sought to monopolise this role, warning traders that other islanders were not to be trusted.

The Simbo people were also able to enlist the support of Europeans in their conflicts with other communities in the Group. Cheyne had difficulty in restraining them from using his men and guns in attacking their enemies, and the traditions of Simbo tell of Europeans accompanying them on raids to Rendova and the Marovo. By Cheyne's time the Simboese had certainly learnt the use of firearms, though to

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35 Shineberg, op.cit., p. 305. The islanders fitted their own handles to the axeheads, which would fetch between 1½ - 3 lbs. of shell in Cheyne’s time.

36 Ibid., p. 309.

37 Ibid., pp. 304-5. See also G.F. Angas, Polynesia The Islands of the Pacific (London, 1866?), p. 365.

what degree they possessed them is not known. While it is easy to overestimate the importance of European assistance and firepower, it does seem that in areas where firearms had not been widely distributed the psychological, if not the physical, advantage could be considerable. Cheyne's description of a fight that occurred while he was there supports this view.39

The position of Simbo was reinforced by the actions and reputations of the people from other parts of New Georgia, which the Simboese were not reluctant to emphasise to their European partners. The big-man Lobie told Cheyne that he considered it unsafe for any European to land on any part of the Group, as the people were totally untrustworthy and treacherous. He pointed out to Cheyne several places where whale boats had been cut out and the crews massacred. Lobie stated that they were so 'covetous and rapacious' in their desire for European axes and other goods that they had turned on one Simbo trading party and murdered forty of them for the goods they carried. The location of this incident, and of the murder of the whalers, appears to have been Ughele on Rendova.40 This area was to become notorious for its attacks on Europeans. For such islanders, frustrated by the Simboese monopoly, direct action was probably the best method of obtaining European goods.

Cheyne left the Solomons with the impression that they were the 'most treacherous and bloodthirsty race in the

39 Shineberg, op.cit.
40 ibid.
Western Pacific', and this was to remain their reputation throughout the century. It was common amongst Europeans to assume that treachery and savagery were inherent characteristics of the islanders, and that the earlier descriptions of the people as amiable were the result of attempts to lure sailors ashore where they could be easily massacred. This frequently did happen, but the available evidence for the first twenty or so years of contact with the New Georgia Group indicates that relations were quite good and it was not until the whaling boom that the situation deteriorated seriously. Considering the behavior of some Europeans this was not surprising. Not all captains had the discretion of Cheyne who realised that good relations were essential for successful trading, and in one instance had to restrain his crew from firing a carronade at point blank range into a number of canoes that were said to contain men who had murdered Europeans.

Cheyne left Simbo on 21 March 1844, leaving four Europeans on the island to run his beche de mer and trading station until he returned, which he does not seem to have done. From Cheyne's record of his stay it is quite apparent that the Simboese had fully converted their society to an iron technology, as they had sufficient supplies of iron goods to export to other parts of the Group. It is also obvious that the people of Simbo had established themselves as formidable

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41 A. Cheyne, Sailing Directions from New South Wales, to China & Japan (London, 1855), p. 77.
43 ibid., pp. 311-14.
head-hunters: in one raid alone they were able to net ninety three heads. These two things were not unconnected.

It has been generally accepted that the introduction of iron tools to the New Georgia Group was responsible for an intensification of head-hunting: that as steel axes reduced the time necessary for such essential tasks as clearing gardens, the men 'found time hanging heavy and employed it in head taking'.\(^{44}\) In a recent article J.M. McKinnon has enlarged this hypothesis and produced a detailed analysis of the development of head-hunting in the nineteenth century. McKinnon's thesis is that prior to European contact 'raiding was based on small-scale inter-family disputes' which resulted in few deaths.\(^{45}\) With the introduction of iron and the advent of trade this situation changed. The increased leisure time made available by the introduction of iron tools was employed in the organisation of large-scale raiding, altering the scale of social organisation and leadership and destroying the balance of conflict that had existed in the past. However, McKinnon expresses his dissatisfaction with the argument that 'any people would risk intensifying the level of violence to satisfy some transient desire to demonstrate their superiority', and so concludes that there must have been other reasons why this escalation occurred.\(^{46}\) McKinnon finds the answer in the

\(^{44}\) Howells, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 17.  
\(^{45}\) McKinnon, 'Tomahawks, Turtles and Traders', p. 301.  
\(^{46}\) \textit{ibid.}, p. 295.
relationship between trading turtle shell and raiding:

taken together trading and raiding formed part of a single interlocking system that built up its own momentum and led to an ever increasing level of violence....Just as trader and big man were linked in a type of symbiotic relationship, so it appears that indigenous trading and large scale raiding were also mutually dependent. The relationship of the two is so close that they can be viewed as interlocking parts in a system of circular causation.47

He concludes that 'raiding was basically dependent on trade in shell controlled by big men'.48 McKinnon's arguments are attractive, but they overstep the evidence. What begins as a 'qualitative speculation' finishes as an assertion of fact. While much of McKinnon's thesis is perceptive, in particular his comments with regard to the monopolising role of big-men in trade with Europeans, his basic proposition concerning the relationship of the trade in turtle shell and head-hunting is speculative - and must remain so while equally tenable hypotheses can be drawn from the available evidence. The following pages present an alternative view, dealing where necessary with McKinnon's points as they arise.

When Europeans first came to the New Georgia Group in the late eighteenth century, it would appear that large scale raiding was already being undertaken by the islanders of Simbo. There are a number of reasons for believing that head-hunting pre-dated European contact, rather than developing from 'small-scale inter-family disputes' as a result of that contact. As has been seen, head-hunting and its associated

47 ibid., p. 296, 300.
48 ibid., p. 304.
ritual and ceremony were a fundamental aspect of the religious lives of the islanders; it would seem unlikely that such an intricate pattern of belief and behaviour would evolve in a few years as a result of the introduction of iron. Moreover, it seems that the Simboese quite clearly distinguished between external raiding or head-hunting and internal disputes as forms of conflict. Fighting within Simbo could be forestalled and ended by the exchange of custom money; it is also said by modern informants that when such fighting did occur, traditional stone axes rather than iron hatchets were used. The 'ghosts' of men murdered by their fellow Simboese were classified as separate from others, and their heads were not kept. The positive evidence for the existence of pre-European large scale raiding is to be found in a description of a tomako at Simbo in 1803. These vessels would have no relevance in small scale internal conflict: they were expressly designed and constructed for long distance mass raiding. What distances these large war canoes travelled at that time is unknown, though it is interesting to note that contact between New Georgia and Isabel appears to have existed from at least the mid sixteenth century.

49 Interview with Doni, Bambara, Elana and Mamupio, 17/10/1974.
50 Hocart, 'Cult of the Dead', p. 263.
51 Kent Family Papers, loc.cit. Eliza Kent describes a canoe carrying fifty men, with high prows and decorated with inlaid pearl and 'devices' of fish, birds and human faces. This was unmistakably a tomako. See Woodford, 'Canoes of the British Solomon Islands', pp. 510-13.
52 Amherst & Thomson, op.cit., I, pp. 33-4.
If head-hunting existed prior to the coming of the white man, what then was the effect of the introduction of iron? Much has been made of Salisbury's research amongst the Siane of the eastern Highlands of New Guinea in which he estimated that a man's time spent on subsistence activities was reduced by about half through the replacement of stone tools with iron. Although Salisbury's conclusions have been applied widely, it would be dangerous to use them in relation to the New Georgia Group. For example, fencing of gardens does not seem to have occurred in the Group as it did amongst the Siane; fishing and its associated activities were also variable factors. However, it would seem logical to conclude that the time spent in clearing gardens, and shaping posts for houses was reduced, thus increasing leisure time to be spent in other activities. More importantly, iron tools would have accelerated the production of tomako and paele. The large war canoes were constructed from numerous pieces of precisely shaped wood, and could take up to two years to build using iron tools. The labour spent on them using a stone technology must have been enormous. Where before only the most affluent of big men could afford the mobilisation of resources and labour necessary to build a tomako, now lesser big-men could also aspire to their ownership.

53 R.F. Salisbury, From Stone to Steel Economic Consequences of a Technological Change in New Guinea (Melbourne, 1982), pp. 107-9. Salisbury estimated that in a stone technology 'clan' and 'lineage' work (mainly clearing and fencing gardens) took 79% of a man's time. In a steel technology this was reduced to 38%.

54 Brookfield, op.cit., pp. 120-1 makes some pertinent remarks regarding the application of Salisbury's conclusions.
and the resulting prestige it would bring them and their followers. While it is not possible to prove that this did occur, there are some indications that the numbers of tomako increased, though the evidence is tenuous. Eliza Kent in 1803 noted one tomako amongst about sixty canoes and 'some hundreds of men'. In 1908 Hocart was told that formerly each of the four districts on Simbo had several war canoes, and was able to enumerate eighteen individual tomako. The entire population of the island at that time was estimated by Hocart to be about four hundred, though it would seem to have declined in the years prior to 1908. However, it is unlikely that the population of the island ever exceeded one thousand. If Kent's observation was an accurate reflection of the proportion of tomako to adult men, then it would seem that their numbers increased considerably. The more detailed records that are available for the later decades of the nineteenth century indicate that large numbers of tomako were used by the islanders. Ingava, a big man from Sisieta at Munda, owned five himself and once organised an expedition involving twenty tomako and five hundred men. In 1881 the Royal Navy destroyed

56 Scheffler, 'Kindred and Kin Groups', p. 137. W.H.R. Rivers (ed.), Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 97-101 deals with the decline in the population of Simbo. Scheffler states that Simbo supported a population of about 800 'with difficulty', and this in an age when the diet is partly comprised of imported foodstuffs. It is also worth noting that in the nineteenth century Simbo was exporting food to visiting Europeans.
ten tomako in one village on Vella Lavella. If one village possessed ten tomako, the number of war canoes on all of Vella Lavella must have been considerable.\(^58\)

As numbers of tomako increased, so would the level of raiding escalate. New war canoes and club houses would require heads for their inauguration; big-men with newly acquired tomako would seek to inflate their religious and social prestige; more men could now hope to aspire to the tundu, or festival in honour of the man-slayers. Opportunities for the propitiation of the tomate, so important in the lives of the islanders, had now been multiplied, and men would not be slow to take advantage of them. In short, it is not necessary to posit some introduced socio-economic factor (in McKinnon's case, the trade in turtle shell) to explain an increase in raiding: it is entirely understandable within the context of indigenous belief and custom. This is not to say that head-hunting and turtle catching did not occur in conjunction with each other: quite clearly they did, but it is a quantum leap from the evidence to assert that raiding was dependent on the trade in turtle shell. There is no hard evidence for this. McKinnon states that the incidence and extent of head-hunting observed by Cheyne on Simbo in 1844, coupled with the presence of large quantities of turtle shell on the island, is 'sufficient evidence that large scale raiding occurred in close association with turtle hunting'.\(^59\) However Cheyne's records also indicate

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\(^58\) RNAS 16. 'Proceedings of HMS Miranda, 1881', p. 7. In 1930 there were 25 villages on Vella Lavella; in the 1880s there were more, as after the introduction of Christianity the people congregated in larger villages adjacent to mission stations.

\(^59\) McKinnon, 'Tomahawks, Turtles and Traders', p. 302.
that the people of Simbo at that time were obtaining shell from other islanders by trading iron goods; that is, they were acting as middlemen between the Europeans and the less experienced islanders. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that there was a large quantity of shell on Simbo. The other evidence for McKinnon's hypothesis come from the last few decades of the nineteenth century, when it was observed that the head-hunting expeditions from the New Georgia Group would stop over at the islands of the Manning Straits to collect shell on their way to raid the people of Isabel and Choiseul. The fact that this did occur is insufficient evidence to justify the assertion that the two were 'interlocking parts in a system of circular causation'. Rather, it simply indicates that in some circumstances, head-hunting and turtle shell collecting were undertaken on the same expedition.

McKinnon describes another fundamental development in island society that can be ascribed to the coming of the European. He discerns a change in the direction and scope of raiding during the nineteenth century. He hypothesises that raiding in association with turtle shell collecting was initially concentrated within the New Georgia Group, and that as the local turtle grounds became depleted, expeditions were organised to seek shell further afield - principally, the islands of the Manning Straits. Thus raiding (and shell collecting) were redirected outside the Group: conflict within the

Group subsided and inter-island cooperation for the purpose of forming larger, more effective expeditions replaced it. This reconstruction cannot be reconciled with the available evidence, which indicates that head-hunting within the Group continued throughout the entire century. While it does appear that New Georgian head-hunters did intensify their raids on Choiseul and Isabel during and after the 1860s, this does not seem to have been accompanied by the cessation of conflict within the Group. It seems probable that raiding continued to be directed on the pattern of traditional emnities and alliances, and that this pattern underwent no radical change during the century. For example, Simbo and Roviana continued to exchange raids with their 'ancient foes' on Vella Lavella till late in the 1800s; they also continued raiding the scattered communities of northern New Georgia and the Marovo Lagoon, who persisted in fighting amongst themselves. The people of Rendova, Ranongga and Kolombangara likewise continued to raid and be raided for heads. In fact, as late as 1900

62 ibid., pp. 301-3.
63 LC I. Lever Report, pp. 112-22. Roviana witnesses before the Land Commission stated that certain areas were unoccupied because they were considered too vulnerable in the face of raids from Vella Lavella. In the late 1880s Mbilua head-hunters raided Roviana, killing fourteen people. See RNAS 23, 'New Guinea and Solomon Islands, 1889', p. 20.
people in the New Georgia Group were still living concealed in the mountainous bush, or in fortified settlements - their fear of being attacked by fellow New Georgians in no way diminished.  

In summary, it would seem that the coming of Europeans to the New Georgia Group, the commencement of trade and the introduction of ironware, did not radically alter the islanders' conception of themselves and their society. The opportunities provided by European contact were exploited by the Simboese to enhance their status in indigenous terms. The value of the new iron technology lay in its utilisation for specific objectives within the traditional framework of individual and social relations. This pattern was to continue during the next forty years of European contact with the Group, with big-men throughout the Group utilising their contacts with Europeans to further their power and prestige, not through the acceptance of the spiritual and material values of the tie vaka, but through the exploitation of those values in the satisfaction of the objectives and aspirations of the tie hokara.

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66 Somerville, op.cit., p. 358.
LC I. Lever Report, passim.
CHAPTER THREE
ISLANDERS AND EUROPEANS, 1860-1896

In the second half of the nineteenth century the European presence in the islands began to take on a different form. The scattered population of beachcombers and castaways gave way to a more permanent contingent of traders who lived and worked in the islands for most of the year. Missionaries began to enter the Solomons, although they were not to become entrenched in the New Georgia Group until the turn of the century. Labour recruiters from Fiji and Queensland also came increasingly to the Solomon Islands, although they too were to have little to do with the Group. The newcomers had an economic or moral stake in the islands, and soon they were to seek protection for these interests and to call for European law and order to be imposed. Thus the Royal Navy entered the islands in the unenviable role of policeman. This function of the Royal Navy reflected the changing nature of relations between white and black: it mirrored the European's increasing dependence on the islander for his economic and physical well-being. This was a state of affairs in which few Europeans felt comfortable, and many believed that the big guns of Her Majesty's ships would somehow reinforce their rather precarious position. This hope was largely unfulfilled, for it was not until the 1890s that the activities of the senior service began to be effective.

By the late 1860s the number of whalers working in the vicinity of the Solomons had declined to a trickle. Unlike the later Europeans who came to the islands, the whalers did
not depend on the islanders for their livelihood and although collectively the whalers represented a regular source of goods to the islanders, individually they were dispensable. There was little in the way of constraints on the behaviour of both sides. As noted in the previous chapter, violence was not uncommon, and this state of affairs continued through to the 1860s. In November 1858 the James Arnold traded off Simbo, and reported that the islanders were frightened to come on board because a month earlier an English cutter had killed several of their countrymen on Simbo.¹ In approximately June of the same year the Pearl was cut out at Rendova; this was reported by Captain Mair of the Ariel who had been in the islands in November 1859.² In September 1867 the crew of the Marion Rennie were massacred, also at Rendova. The man behind both attacks, which resulted in a total of twenty-two European fatalities, was Londo, a big-man of Ughele.³

The declining number of whalers was compensated by Europeans from other sources. In the 1850s the demands of New Hebrideans for old pre-European trade items such as tortoiseshell resulted in sandalwood traders entering the Solomons to obtain these goods,⁴ but like the East Indiamen and whalers

² Sydney Morning Herald, 3 January 1861.
³ RNAS 13 'Pacific Islands 1857-76'. Ferguson to Stirling, 2/11/72.
that had preceded them, they were temporary visitors. A more enduring incursion was that of the missionaries, although their first essay was a tragic affair. In December 1845 a Marist mission under the leadership of Bishop Jean-Baptiste Epalle entered the Solomons. The Bishop was killed by the islanders of Isabel ten days after his arrival and the remainder retreated to San Cristobal. After years of suffering, death and futility the mission finally left the islands in 1847. Not quite so unsuccessful were the Anglicans, who conceived an interest in Melanesia in 1849. Throughout the 1850s the New Zealand Anglican Church made annual voyages amongst the islands recruiting young men to take to the central mission college in New Zealand (later Norfolk Island) for a Christian education. They would then be returned to their island homes in the hope that they would establish schools and churches to spread the Gospel. In the Solomons this policy proved to be a sensational failure: from 1856 to 1860 about fifty scholars were taken but none, apparently, embarked upon the evangelisation of his people on his return. The policy was amended in the 1860s, with a more discriminate selection of recruits and the requirement that English missionaries were to remain in the islands for protracted periods to 'officer' the native teachers.

and to undertake mission work themselves. As a result, the 1870s saw English missionaries residing in the islands regularly. These developments did not affect the New Georgia Group directly, as the Anglicans had confined their activities to Isabel and the islands south of it: although they visited Marovo Island briefly in 1866, the scattered nature of the population had discouraged them from extending their efforts into the area. However, indirectly their impact was considerable, for they encouraged further involvement by the Royal Navy in the area. The missionaries were assiduous watchdogs of the activities of labour recruiters and traders, and their allegations of transgressions could pressure the Admiralty into pursuing investigations. For example, in 1871 the Reverend C. Brooke reported (quite erroneously) that traders were transporting New Georgian head-hunters to the southerly islands and helping them take heads in return for turtle shell. This necessitated an investigation by Captain Simpson of HMS Blanche, which took him to the Roviana Lagoon.

The 1870s also saw the blossoming of the labour trade

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7 ibid., p. 188. Isles of the Pacific Account of the Melanesian Mission... with a Letter from the Missionary Bishop (Melbourne, 1861), p. 23.

8 Journal of the Mission Voyage to the Melanesian Islands of the Schooner 'Southern Cross' Made in May - October 1866 (Auckland, 1866), pp. 12-3.

9 GBPP, XLIII (1872). 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Deportation of South Sea Islanders', pp. 32-9. GBPP, L (1873). 'South Sea Islands: Communications respecting Outrages committed upon Natives of the South Sea Islands', pp. 210-11. There is a map of the Roviana Lagoon (Map IV) at the end of this chapter.
in the Solomon Islands although this, too, was to have little direct effect on the New Georgia Group as the western islands were poor recruiting grounds. The Group was sparsely populated in comparison with Malaita and Guadalcanal, which were the source of most of the recruits. The New Georgians' consuming interest in head-hunting was probably another factor in their disinclination to work in Queensland and Fiji, as was the growing number of traders operating in the area offering the islanders an alternative source of European goods. During the 1870s a boom in trading occurred in the Solomons. In 1872 Captain Simpson of HMS Blanche reported that there were four vessels operating as traders in the islands; by 1879 there were eighteen British vessels alone. Ten of these ships were run by one concern, Cowlishaw Bros. & Ferguson: the largest were the barques Avoca (380 tons) and Gazelle (360 tons) which made four and three trips to Sydney annually to deliver the copra and shell collected by the smaller boats. The smaller vessels were employed continuously amongst the islands collecting and trading; and they varied in size from the steamship Emu (130 tons) to the cutters Gitana and Iris (both 8 tons). The eight other ships were all schooners varying in size from 20 to 130 tons which made on average two trips to Sydney each year. Five of them were owned or part-owned by their masters. Approximately 124 Europeans and

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11 GBPP, L (1873), op.cit., p. 209. RNAS 15 'Pacific Islands, 1879-1881 (Vol.3)'. Purvis to Commodore, 30 September 1879. Encl. No.10, 'List of merchant vessels'.
182 islanders were employed on these vessels, and in addition there were 20 Europeans employed as station hands at trading depots throughout the Solomons. In the New Georgia Group during the 1870s stations seem to have been mainly in the Roviana Lagoon, although there may have been one on Ghizo for several years. The number of Europeans in the Solomons would have varied with the seasons as it was generally the practice of trading vessels to leave the islands in January and return in May or June with the south-east monsoons, thus avoiding the wetter months. In 1879 these traders shipped some £145,000 worth of produce to 'English markets', and some £27,000 to China in the form of beche de mer. The principal exports were copra, 'vegetable ivory' or ivory nuts (fruit of the *Metroxylon Americarum*), turtleshell and beche de mer.

The increasingly permanent British commercial and evangelical presence in the Western Pacific was a spur to the establishment of some form of official interest in the islands. This eventually took the form of the Western Pacific Order in Council in 1877. The Order in Council established the office of High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, with jurisdiction over British subjects in the area. This jurisdiction did not extend to the islanders: the investigation and punishment of

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12 *RNAS 15 op.cit.*
13 *RNAS 13 Rendell to Stirling, 14 September 1873.*
14 *RNAS 13 Challis to Goodenough, 16 February 1874.*
15 *RNAS 14 'Pacific Islands, 1877-1879 (Vol.2)', Wilson to Admiralty, 29 October 1879.*
offences against British subjects committed by the islanders was to remain the task of the Royal Navy. The Navy had been undertaking punitive expeditions in the Solomon Islands for quite some time; in 1854 HMS Herald had unsuccessfully attempted to capture the murderers of Benjamin Boyd on Guadalcanal, and in the process had burnt a village and fired upon the islanders. The Royal Navy's Australian Squadron expanded its activities in the region during the 1870s, as the incidence of 'outrages' increased with the growing number of Europeans resident in the islands. Between 1867 and 1879 some thirty four Europeans and thirty five islanders employed by Europeans were known to have been killed in the Solomons with the loss of an estimated £24,000 in property. These losses were incurred in four attacks on ships and five on trading stations. Only one of these incidents occurred in the New Georgia Group: this was the cutting out of the Marion Rennie at Rendova in 1867.

The European reaction to the Marion Rennie affair was to be fairly typical of later punitive actions in its misdirection and ineptitude. A year after the attack HMS

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16 I have not examined in detail the establishment of the W.P.H.C., its relationship to the Royal Navy, and the legal questions involved, as these subjects have already been exhaustively covered by D. Scarr, Fragments of Empire A History of the Western Pacific High Commission 1877-1914 (Canberra, 1967), pp. 25-52.


18 RNAS 15 Purvis to Commodore, 30 September 1879. Enclosure No.12.
Blanche under Captain John Montgomerie visited the area and shelled the islets of the Roviana Lagoon. As the organiser of the attack, Londo, was a Rendova big-man, the bombardment was considerably off target. Montgomerie also imposed a fine of three tons of turtleshell on Londo, and secured an agreement to that effect from the three 'chiefs', Tepalla, George and Heggarty. It would have required a superhuman effort indeed to collect such a quantity of shell, and in any event it transpired that the three 'chiefs' who had undertaken to force the agreement on Londo were no more than 'underlings' with some knowledge of pidgin English. In August 1872 the Blanche revisited the Roviana Lagoon, this time under the command of Captain Simpson. Simpson recognised the absurdity of the fine and the true status of the 'chiefs' and thus arranged a new agreement. This took the form of a 'treaty' between Simpson and the 'chiefs' Izomo and Mbitia, by which they agreed to deliver up Londo or execute him themselves. Simpson obtained the islanders' concurrence by threatening to destroy their villages. Izomo and Mbitia were both from Munda, and were not without authority: Mbitia was the mbangara Sosolo, and Izomo was the brother of Pengguvovoso, the mbangara Sisieta. Within a month they had succeeded in killing

19 RNAS 13 Extract of letter: Montgomerie to Rowley, 4 October 1868. 'Copy of agreement between Montgomerie and the Chiefs Tepalla, George, Heggarty', dated 11 September 1868.

20 RNAS 13 Simpson to Stirling, 16 August 1872.
Londo. Unfortunately for the Royal Navy, this effective method of inflicting punishment was later criticised by the Law Officers of the Crown, and the Admiralty was forced to instruct its officers that they were 'on no account to enter into illegal treaties of such a nature in future'.

The Londo affair was an indication of the new focus of European interest in the New Georgia Group. Between the 1850s and the 1870s the centre of European activity had moved from Simbo to Munda, in the Roviana Lagoon. Although the details of this change are undocumented, it is easily explained. In these years turtle shell was gradually replaced by copra as the principal trade item in the islands. In the 1850s machinery was developed which enabled the large-scale extraction of the oil from the dried meat of the coconut or copra. Copra is easily made and its transportation is without difficulties, whereas in previous years the oil had to be extracted in the islands and then shipped out in barrels. Traders could either collect the coconuts and dry the meat themselves, or simply pick up the copra produced by the islanders. For these purposes Munda was a more suitable base than Simbo: it was central to the Group whereas Simbo was relatively

21 RNAS 13 Stirling to Admiralty, 27 December 1872. Encl. Ferguson to Stirling, 2 November 1872. J. Roni, 'Buka pa tututi'. Lines of the mbutu mbutu Sisieta and Lodumaho. The Roviana word mbangara has generally been translated as 'chief', a more appropriate term is 'manager' or 'big-man'. See Scheffler, 'Kindred and Kin Groups', p. 145.

22 RNAS 13 Lushington to Stirling, 19 August 1873.

isolated, and the foreshore and islets of the Roviana Lagoon were rich in coconut groves. Although the entrance to the Lagoon was shallow it was sufficient to allow the passage of the ketches that toured the group collecting copra; moreover, there was a safe anchorage for large vessels nearby, in the Hathorn Sound. In addition, the Munda area had a substantial and stable coastal population, providing the trader with a ready market for his goods. The Roviana people had probably become familiar with the European and his merchandise through the medium of their friends on Simbo, and when the opportunity to establish a more direct economic relationship arose, they were not slow to exploit it.

After the bombardment of the Lagoon in 1868, an action resulting from the ignorance of the naval officer concerned rather than from the deeds of the Munda people, the Munda region was to remain free of such conflict for twenty years. Despite this, the traders at Munda were far from secure. Their position was dependent upon the goodwill of the local people and they were liable to attacks from other islanders. On one occasion a trader narrowly escaped death after being warned by the Munda islanders.24 With such a precarious footing in the district, traders were understandably anxious to avoid antagonising their customers: credit was often given, and bad debts were not unusual.25 The fact that the traders were in

RNAS 23 NGST 1882, p. 6.

25 Woodford Papers. Item No. 30 'Diary from 4th August 1886 to November 10th 1886'. Entry for 28 September.
competition with each other further undermined their position, as they were generally unable to adopt a united front on any matter. One visitor to the Roviana Lagoon in the mid 1880s was told that the traders rejoiced when ever a fellow trader was murdered.  

The first trader to regularly visit the Roviana Lagoon appears to have been Alexander Ferguson, the partner of Cowlishaw Bros. of Sydney. Ferguson was the biggest trader operating in the Solomons during the 1870s; he had a dozen stations scattered throughout the islands, one of the largest being at Munda. The station was generally occupied by a European agent: in the mid 1870s this was a Mr Stephens, although Ferguson regularly visited the Roviana Lagoon himself. Ferguson appears to have been well acquainted with the Munda area by at least the early 1870s: in 1872 he acted as an adviser and interpreter for the Royal Navy during their investigations of the Marion Rennie affair. He recommended that the turtle shell fine be dropped (perhaps with the thought that it might severely affect his own supplies of shell), and urged that Izomo and Mbitia be given rifles as rewards after they had succeeded in killing Londo.

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26 ibid., entry for 1 September.
27 WHPC No.4 of 1878. Report on the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands by Mr R. Beckwith Leefe (Fiji). Dated 10th March 1878.
28 RNAS 13 Sanders to Goodenough, 11 January 1875.
29 RNAS 13 Simpson to Stirling, 16 August 1872; Stirling to Admiralty, 27 December 1872. Encl. Ferguson to Stirling, 2 November 1872.
Ferguson was killed on Bougainville in August 1880 and in the following year Cowlishaw Bros. interests in the islands were bought out by Kelly and Williams of Sydney. This firm, in association with the trader Thomas Woodhouse, maintained the Munda station through to the end of the century. It was situated on the islet of Nuza Zonga, a few hundred yards off the Munda foreshore. Kelly, Williams and Woodhouse bought this islet in October 1881 for £7 (presumably in trade goods) from one 'Condo'; the transaction was witnessed by the big-men Mengo and Ingava. This was the first recorded land sale in the New Georgia Group, although there were probably a number of undocumented deals preceding it. Frank Wickham, who arrived in the Solomons around 1875, apparently purchased the island of Hombupeka, situated about half a mile offshore of Munda. While details of this transaction are unknown, it seems to have been concluded to the satisfaction of all concerned as the title was never challenged and Wickham and his descendants continued to reside there for a century.

A third permanent station was established in the Munda area in the mid 1880s. Like those of Wickham on Hombupeka and Kelly and Williams on Nusa Zonga, this station was sited on an offshore islet. The proprietor was Edmund Pratt, who had come to the islands in 1883 and in March 1886 purchased

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30 Corris, op.cit., p. 100.

31 DLS 'The Red Book (Book of Certified Copies of Entries Affecting Land)', p. 5 (Claim No.82). A list of the land transactions that occurred in the Group, together with a map locating the land involved (Map VI) can be found in Appendix I.
the islet of Hombuhombu in the Roviana Lagoon. In addition to these three stations with their resident agents and traders, the Munda area was also a base for trading schooners that toured the Group, and was to remain so through to the next century. Elsewhere in the New Georgia Group stations were intermittently established, but seldom lasted more than a few years. Many of these were, in fact, agencies for the Munda traders: Kelly, Williams and Woodhouse had an agent in the Marovo Lagoon in the late 1880s, operating from the islet of Lilihina. Edmund Pratt and his brother Jean purchased islets and small blocks of land throughout the Group which were occasionally used as stations and depots.

After the attack on the Marion Rennie in 1867 there were no further clashes between the islanders and traders until 1880; however, the following twenty years saw incidents occur regularly every few years. There are a number of possible reasons for the hiatus during the 1870s. In these years the copra trade was blossoming: islanders who had previously been unable to obtain European goods easily because of the monopolising influence of the Simboese and the natural limitations on the supplies of turtle shell and beche de mer now found that they could satisfy their initial demands with the readily available and plentiful coconut. In addition it would seem likely

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32 ibid., p. 10 (Claim No. 115). Edmund Pratt was also known as Pratt Edmunds, French Peter, Peter Pratt and Pratt Adams. This situation was further confused by the presence of his brother in the islands; the brother was Jean Pratt, also known as J.P. Pratt and Johnny Pratt.

33 Woodford Papers. Copy of Letter addressed to John Thurston, dated November 1886, found at end of Item No. 30, 'Diary... 1886'.

34 RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, p. 29. Lilihina was purchased by Kelly in 1885; see DLS 'Red Book', p. 1 (Claim No. 78).
that the European traders entering the area for the first time were cautious in their relations with the islanders, taking care to avoid exposing themselves in dangerous situations. In the 1880s, however, there are indications that some traders were becoming careless in their approaches to the islanders. In 1886 Captain Brooke of the Royal Navy reported that he considered that the habit of some traders of going ashore in small boats with large quantities of trade was a major factor in the incidence of 'outrages'. Perhaps a more important reason for the outbreak of violence in the 1880s was the islanders' demand for increasingly sophisticated goods, particularly firearms.

By the early 1870s the Roviana people had obtained muskets, and their ownership by islanders of other parts of the Group became common during that decade. However, these weapons were not particularly suited to a wet, tropical climate and were often inaccurate. The 1880s saw an increasing demand amongst islanders for breech loading rifles, principally Sniders. These more expensive guns may have been beyond the means of some islanders, who then resorted to more violent methods to obtain them. The supply of the new rifles was also affected by Queens Regulation No. 1 of 1884 which prohibited the sale of arms, ammunition and explosives to islanders. While this order of the High Commission only applied to British

35 RNAS 23 NGSI 1886, p. 60.
subjects, and not all of them felt inclined to obey it, it apparently had some impact. In early 1885 the trader Frank Wickham described the islanders of the Group as 'crazy' in their desire to buy rifles, but he doubted whether they could obtain them from the traders in the Group. Wickham was being over-optimistic for some traders, most notably Edmund Pratt, continued to supply arms well into the 1890s. Indeed, they may have had little choice but to do so, for some islanders apparently refused to produce copra for anything else but firearms and ammunition. While the desire for modern weapons and other goods, and the carelessness of Europeans, were probably contributing factors in the upsurge of European/islander clashes after 1880, there were also more basic reasons.

The 1870s were a period of familiarisation with the European and his ways for many islanders. Prior to those years, contact had been sporadic and limited, with Europeans being temporary visitors and often using the Simboese as middle-men in their relations with other parts of the Group. The 1870s saw traders residing and operating in the Group on a permanent basis, and although they were based at Munda, they toured the other islands regularly. Seemingly, familiarity bred contempt: in 1875 the Simboese had raised the ire of one naval officer because of the 'off-hand' manner with which they treated Europeans. By the 1880s this attitude had become more common

37 RNAS 23 NGSI 1885, p. 7.
38 RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, p. 29.
39 RNAS 13 Sanders to Goodenough, 11 January 1875.
throughout the Group, with islanders looking upon Europeans as 'white trash'. These feelings were understandable, for the Europeans in the islands were in no position to assert themselves. They lived at Munda on sufferance, tolerated because they were useful, and anxious to maintain cordial relations with their hosts. This situation was deeply disturbing to some Europeans, particularly for those with strong views on the white man's duty to civilise and control the 'savage'. Such a one was Charles Morris Woodford, who spent several weeks at Munda in 1886. Woodford was distressed to observe head-hunting, ritual sacrifice and cannibalism being practised in the presence of Europeans; he complained of the traders' familiarity with the islanders and described them as a 'very low lot'.

The islanders' refusal to show proper respect for the white man was galling; even more, it was a violation of faith:

Although they (the islanders) are accustomed every day to see white men they are a most treacherous lot.

The accusation of 'treachery' was a familiar one; Cheyne had made it in the 1840s and it was repeated frequently thereafter.

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42 Woodford Papers. Item No. 30, 'Diary from 4th August 1886 to November 10th 1886', entry for September 1.
43 ibid., entry for 28 September.
It was based in part on the islanders' raiding methods: their fondness for 'unprovoked' surprise attacks. For the European this was a moral black mark, but for the islanders it was simply an effective tactic - one which they used often on head-hunting expeditions, and which they expected to be used against them in turn. Neither was 'provocation' a necessary condition for the organisation of a raid. Heads were required for specific ceremonial and religious occasions, and if an insult was revenged at the same time, so much the better. In attacks upon Europeans head were taken and much desired goods obtained at the same time. The fact that a trader might have had prior dealings with a group of islanders did not insure him against assault from them; heads might well be required immediately for the launching of a canoe, and short-term rewards may well have proved more attractive than the long-term advantages of a stable relationship with a particular trader. In any case, with a situation of cut-throat competition between traders it was quite likely that another would fill the gap.

It was the nature of these attacks that so disturbed the Europeans working in the Group. They were not localised, but could happen anywhere: traders were attacked at Vella Lavella, Kolombangara, Rendova, the Marovo Lagoon, and even in the Roviana Lagoon. The attackers could be islanders with whom a trader had done business before, and they could strike anytime. Although fifteen Europeans were killed between 1880 and 1896, the impact of these 'outrages' was profound. Traders were never totally secure: they could be assaulted without warning and from any quarter. Their insecurity manifested
itself in their frequent complaints that the Royal Navy was taking insufficient action to punish culprits, and that the islanders were becoming more and more arrogant or 'saucy'.

The first three incidents during the 1880s were of a similar nature: all involved assaults on traders, operating from vessels, by islanders with whom they were doing business at the time. In May 1880 the Esperanza, a Cowlishaw Bros. and Ferguson ship, was cut out at Kolombangara whilst collecting copra. The entire crew of three Europeans and eight islanders was killed, the ship looted and then burnt. Ferguson estimated the material loss at £2,000. In August of the following year the Atlantic almost suffered a similar fate. The ship was at Njorio, Vella Lavella, trading for copra when the crew was set upon by islanders using the axes they had just purchased. The attackers were forced off with the loss of one Melanesian crewmember and the wounding of the European mate. In January 1885 the captain of the Elibank Castle, his mate and three of his Melanesian crew were killed when they were ashore trading at Mbaniata, on Rendova. The three attacks were not motivated by any particular animus for the traders concerned. Their explanation can be found in a

\[\text{\textsuperscript{44}} \text{ RNAS 23 NGSI 1885, p. 6; NGSI 1886, p. 6; SI 1891, p. 22.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{45}} \text{ RNAS 15 Ferguson to Wilson, 1 August 1880; Richards to Bower, 29 September 1880; Maxwell to Wilson, 31 January 1881 (printed).}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{46}} \text{ RNAS 15 Dawson to Wilson, 6 October 1881.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{47}} \text{ RNAS 23 NGSI 1885, pp. 2-8.}\]
combination of the desire for goods, and in the more traditional demands of island society. The assault on the Atlantic was instigated from the Roviana Lagoon. It was learnt that a 'contract' had been let out from the Roviana area for a vessel and heads. This practice was customary in the Group: a big-man who required heads but who did not wish to involve himself in an expedition at the time, or who was unable to obtain heads himself, would offer shell money to another group who would undertake to get them. In the case of the Roviana people, it may also have been a convenient method of avoiding a direct disturbance in their relationship with the traders at Munda. When the Njorio people failed to take the Atlantic, the contract was said to have been accepted by Tulo, a big-man of Mbilua. Shortly after the attack on the Atlantic a Mbilua tomako attempted to surprise the trader Nielson at his base on Nusa Zonga, but was thwarted when he received warning of the raid. The Mbilua men were then forced to purchase a 'slave' at Roviana and decapitate him so as not to return homewhout a head. The Elibank Castle murders had a simpler explanation: the Mbaniata people involved had recently constructed a 'tambu house' (a hope or paele) and heads were required for its inauguration.

The next incident occurred in December 1885, when a Mr Childe was murdered on Mbava, an uninhabited island off western Vella Lavella. This unfortunate gentleman had intended

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48 RNAS 15 'Proceedings of Commander the Hon. E.S. Dawson (HMS "Miranda"), p. 6.
49 RNAS 23 NGSI 1885, pp. 2-8.
to establish a farm and had been dropped off on the island with his companion, a young Simbo lad who promptly returned home and informed his elders of the 'sitting duck'. The Simbo men, who required a head for new tomako and were attracted by the possibility of plunder, seized the opportunity. The Childe was exceptionally foolish: any individual, white or black, who wandered unprotected into strange territory in the New Georgia Group was liable to lose his head. Similar cases occurred in August 1887 and July 1895. In the first instance two men who had stolen a yacht (the Spec) in Fiji sailed to Solomons and anchored at Ughele, Rendova. In the latter case, another two men went ashore at the eastern end of the Roviana Lagoon after the wreck of their ship, the Amelia. All four lost their heads.

In the late 1880s there were another four attacks on traders in the Group. In October 1888 Edmund Pratt's station at Munda was raided. Two islanders employed by Pratt were killed and the station looted of £200 worth of goods. The murderers were two Simbo men who subsequently fled to their home island. There may have been a personal motive for this attack, as it was rumoured that the two offenders had once worked for Pratt and had been mistreated by him. The next incident occurred in June 1889 when two islanders employed by Woodhouse's agent in the Marovo Lagoon, Eric Ellingson,

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50 ibid., pp. 25-6.
51 RNAS 23 NGSI 1887, p. 27.
52 WPHC No. 283 of 1896, Woodford to Thurston, 12 July 1896.
53 RNAS 23 SI 1891, p. 22.
were murdered on Marovo Island. As no material goods were involved in this attack, it would appear that heads were required for some reason. In the same month Edmund Pratt's station at Munda was again raided. On this occasion three of Pratt's employees were killed: one European, William Dabelle, and two islanders. The men concerned in this attack seem to have been something in the nature of renegades. They were Mbilua men under the leadership of the big-man, 'Goolie'; Goolie was not a lekasa, but a fighting man who had attracted a non-cognatic following through his prowess at warfare. They moved about the Group a good deal and had been in the Roviana area for some months before the attack on the station, after which they returned to Mbilua. The last incident of the 1880s occurred in September 1889, when the European second mate and four Melanesian crewmen were killed when they went ashore at Lokuru on Rendova to trade. A new paele had been constructed and heads were required for its inauguration.

The first six years of the 1890s, before the establishment of the Protectorate administration, saw a number of incidents. In March 1891 four Melanesians employed on the trading vessel Freak were killed while socialising with the

54 RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, pp. 26-7; NGSI 1890, pp. 18-20.
55 A lekasa was the traditional leader of a cognatic kin group, or toutou.
56 RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, pp. 20-22; SI 1891, pp. 19-21.
57 RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, p. 26; NGSI 1890, pp. 17-18.
local islanders at Ndovele, Vella Lavella. Their heads were needed for the launching of several recently constructed tomako. Two months later a similar killing occurred at Munda when two islanders working on the ship Marshall S were invited ashore and then murdered. It was not until March 1891 that the next incident occurred, when a trader, Donald Guy, two of his crew of Melanesians and two islanders who were passengers were killed on board their ship whilst trading with men of south-west New Georgia in the Marovo Lagoon. Again it seems that heads were wanted for several new tomako; in addition, there was the incentive of a vessel to be plundered.

The islanders employed by the traders in the New Georgia Group were, generally speaking, not local people. Although a few New Georgians were skilled seamen, working regularly aboard trading vessels, the bulk of the labour on both stations and ships came from other parts of the Solomons, in particular the island of Malaita. The lives of these men was even less secure than those of the white traders, with some thirty-eight of their number being killed by New Georgians between 1880 and 1896 - more than double the European casualties. As well as the dangers of the environment, the Melanesian labourers and crewmen had to cope with their employers, some of whom behaved quite brutally towards their workers. In these

58 RNAS 23 SI 1891, p. 39.
60 WPHC No. 293 of 1895, SI 1894, pp. 13-16.
circumstances it was not surprising that there were a number of cases of conflict between the labourers and both their employers and the New Georgians. Trouble of this kind occurred in 1894 and 1895. In the former year, twelve Malaitan labourers employed by Edmund Pratt deserted him, going to Kolombangara and the Vona Vona Lagoon where all but four were killed by the local islanders. It would seem, however, that they were partly responsible for their fate, as they had been intimidating the people in the area and stealing food from the gardens. Pratt had apparently caused the desertions by frequently beating his employees.\(^{61}\) More trouble occurred in 1895 when the trader Charles Atkinson and his European mate were murdered by their crew of Malaita and Nggela men in the Marovo Lagoon. It seems that Atkinson had prompted the attack by killing one of the crew in a drunken argument.\(^{62}\) In the same year, at Munda, a Malaitan labourer attempted to assault his European boss after being slapped for laziness.\(^{63}\) Undoubtedly there were many such incidents that went unreported, with summary 'justice' being dispensed by the trader concerned without recourse to official channels. These episodes were forerunners of the abuses and conflict between white employers and their black labour that were to become common with the establishment of plantations in the New Georgia Group.

\(^{61}\) ibid., pp. 19-20.

\(^{62}\) WPHC No. 141 of 1896, SI 1895, pp. 18-25.

\(^{63}\) ibid., p. 35.
In late May 1896 Charles Woodford entered the Solomons aboard HMS *Pylades* in the capacity of Commissioner for the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, and soon was energetically investigating reports of misdeeds and attempting to bring some order to life in the islands. This was a turning point for the islanders: for the first time British authority was to be expressed through a resident with some experience of Melanesian society. Prior to Woodford's arrival the agent of British power in the area had been the Royal Navy, expressed in the form of annual cruises amongst the islands in the dry season. It was the Navy's duty to investigate and act upon the reports of 'outrages'; a difficult task undertaken with mixed results.

The Western Pacific Order in Council in 1877 initially caused some confusion with regard to the activities of the Navy. The first High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, Sir Arthur Gordon, was determined to assert his authority over all British affairs in the region, including those previously in the Navy's sphere of operations. The impracticality of these ambitions soon became apparent and by 1881 conditions had largely reverted to their pre-High Commission state. In that year the Admiralty instructed its commanders that they were to deal with 'outrages' upon British subjects on the basis of their own judgement: it was no longer necessary to first refer the matter to the High Commission. To deal with

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64 WPHC No. 199 of 1896, Woodford to Thurston, 6 June 1896.
65 Scarr, *op.cit.*, pp. 36-51.
66 RNAS 15 Hall to Wilson, 12 September 1881.
offences committed by British subjects commanders were appointed as Deputy Commissioners to act under the provisions of the Order in Council. However, these provisions did not apply to the islanders who were 'regarded as members of responsible communities whose occasional violent acts must be interpreted as acts of war and be answered accordingly'. Thus punitive expeditions became 'acts of war', yet islanders captured in such conflicts were not treated as prisoners of war, but as criminals. This incongruity escaped the attention of the authorities.

The general procedure in dealing with offences against British persons and property was to demand the restitution of the stolen goods and/or the surrender of the offenders under the threat of war. If the demands were denied then the community as a whole was assumed to be responsible; a state of war was deemed to exist between Her Majesty and the community in question, and they were then collectively punished with the destruction of houses, canoes, coconut trees and anything else that was at hand. If a shore party was unable to reach a village, it was shelled from the ship.

In the New Georgia Group it was usual for a visiting warship to first call at Munda for information and, if necessary, guides and interpreters. The latter functions were generally performed by islanders, although occasionally a trader would

67 RNAS 17 Admiralty to Colonial Office, 19 November 1881.
68 Scarr, op.cit., p. 167.
accompany a naval vessel in its investigations. In the 1880s an islander named Mengo frequently assisted Europeans at Munda; in the Navy's eyes Mengo was a prominent 'Rubiana chief' whose life had been threatened several times because of the help he had given them.\(^69\) The latter may have been true, but the former certainly was not: Mengo had little or no authority at Munda because he was a refugee. He had been a mbangara at Kolokali, on eastern Ghizo, but had been forced to abandon the village with its small remnant of survivors as they were unable to defend themselves against head-hunters. The Ghizo population was so reduced that in 1920 only two descendants could be found, one of them Mengo's son. Mengo's friendliness to Europeans and his ability to speak pidgin English were the real basis of his status. He was able to capitalise on the gullibility of Europeans on a number of occasions, principally in the selling of land.\(^70\) While Mengo may have been able to attract some following with the wealth he obtained through his connections with Europeans, it was evidently not sufficient to establish him as a power amongst the other islanders. This position was filled by Ingava, the mbangara or big-man of Sisieta.

There were many mbangara in the Roviana Lagoon. Each district might have a big-man, but their influence and wealth could vary considerably. In the last few decades of

\(^69\) RNAS 15 Dawson to Wilson, 11 November 1881.

the nineteenth century some of the mbangara were Vagimata of Saikile, Lepe and Vonge of Kindu, Nona of Nusa Roviana, and Veo of Londumaho. Some of these, notably Vonge, were well known to the Navy, but none seem to have been regarded with as much respect as Ingava. In the European accounts of the time he was often called 'King of Rubiana', and although this was an exaggeration of his power, he did have a large following at Munda. His paele at Sisieta accomodated five tomao in 1886, and he had increased this fleet to seven or eight by the mid-1890s. He also possessed several 'good-sized English built boats' and a large arsenal. Ingava would have inherited some of his wealth and prestige from his father and uncle, Penggu and Izomo, the two previous mbangara Sisieta. Izomo was well-known to Europeans and seems to have gained status from the relationship. Ingava expanded these connections and had a broad reputation as a friend to traders. He spoke a little English and seems to have had the knack of making Europeans feel at ease: one visitor described him as a 'pleasant, intellectual man'. This was no mean feat, as he

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71 Woodford Papers. Item No.30 'Diary...1886', entry for 2 October.
H. Cayley-Webster, Through New Guinea and the Cannibal Countries (London, 1898), p. 120.

72 Somerville, op.cit., p. 399.

73 Cayley-Webster, op.cit., p. 108.
For Ingava's friendship with traders see: 'D.H.', loc.cit.
Papers of William Hamilton. MS. in the Oxley Memorial Library, Brisbane, Queensland. MUP. Item 4 'Account of Prospecting Voyages for Pearl Shell in New Guinea and the Solomons, 1899-1901', pp. 5-6.
also made no attempt to conceal the more ferocious side of his character - as a merciless killer and head-hunter. Indeed, Ingava's ability to unite these two roles was the basis of his success. The boats, guns and other goods he obtained through his European connections were used to increase his status in indigenous terms - as a mbangara and tie varane (fighting man). His wealth was assiduously employed in the construction of tomako, the organisation of expeditions and ceremonies, and the production of shell money.\(^74\)

In his relations with the Royal Navy, Ingava was very much his own man. He was willing to assist them when their attentions were not directed at Munda: he once accompanied the Navy on an expedition to Lokuru, Rendova.\(^75\) However at Munda itself, while giving every appearance of helpfulness, he seems to have preferred to risk the wrath of the Navy than jeopardise his relations with fellow islanders, as on no occasion did he surrender to their demands.\(^76\) Although he was reluctant to act as a de facto policeman for the Royal Navy, Ingava was quick to sense the possibilities of the

\(^{74}\) Ingava's family had a large collection of indigenous wealth objects, such as the clamshell bakia and poata. See J. Fleischmann *Footsteps in the Sea* (New York, 1935), p. 123. T.W. Edge-Partington, 'Ingava, Chief of Rubiana, Solomon Islands: died 1906', *Man*, VII (1907), pp. 22-3.

\(^{75}\) RNAS 23 NGSI 1890, pp. 17-8.

\(^{76}\) RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, p. 21; SI 1891, p. 38; SI 1892, p. 12.
white man's law: in 1893 he made an official complaint about the behaviour of Edmund Pratt, and won the ensuing court case in 1894.  

The Royal Navy's experience with Ingava was repeated elsewhere in the Group. Big-men such as Bera of Vangunu and Belengana on Simbo were reputed to be willing to assist the Navy in their investigations, but this assistance never extended to the apprehension of offenders. In not one case did the Navy obtain a wanted man from the islanders, and as a result had to resort to collective punishment, which varied considerably in its impact. In some areas such as Kolombangara and the Marovo Lagoon there was little to destroy, as the islanders lived deep in the mountains. The most that could generally be found on the coast were a few makeshift huts and canoes. Inland villages visible from the warship were shelled, but this also could be ineffective. The impact of a bombardment even slightly off target would be smothered by the dense growth of the forest. Only one islanders was known to have been killed in a shelling, although it is highly probable that some others were killed and villages were considerably damaged. The surest method of inflicting

77 WHPC No. 293 of 1895; SI 1894, pp. 11-12.

78 RNAS 23 NGSI 1890, p. 19; SI 1892, p. 13. There is a possibility that on one occasion Belengana allowed a man to go on board a naval vessel knowing that he would be punished. See SI 1891, pp. 38-9.

79 RNAS 15 Maxwell to Wilson, 31 January 1881. RNAS 23 NGSI 1890, p. 19.

80 RNAS 23 NGSI 1886, p. 7.
punishment was to land a shore party to burn the houses, destroy the canoes, and cut down the coconut trees. Such expeditions rarely encountered resistance, bar a few haphazard rifle shots fired from a distance. If the shore party ventured further into the bush they could expect to receive heavier fire, but on no occasion was a Navy man killed in such an exchange. The islanders fared a little worse, with two islanders being killed in clashes in 1891. 81

The effect of the Navy's operations on the lives and attitudes of the islanders does not seem to have been great. The loss of houses and small canoes would have been a short-term annoyance rather than a serious loss. The destruction of coconut trees was more severe, as they were a source of income and took about six years to reach a fruit bearing stage. However this blow was also softened, as the Navy were under instructions to avoid wholesale destruction of plantations. 82 The worst loss the islanders could suffer was the destruction of their tomako: their material and spiritual investment in these vessels was enormous, and could not be replaced easily. In consequence, the islanders often attempted to conceal the tomako if they heard of an impending raid. The Royal Navy's operations during the 1880s were in general not particularly successful, either as retribution or as a deterrent. A decade of shelling and burning had apparently done little to convince

81 RNAS 16 'Proceedings...(HMS Miranda)', pp. 7-8.
RNAS 23 SI 1891, pp. 21, 39-40.
82 RNAS 15 Hall to Wilson, 22 January 1881; Wilson to Hall, 12 March 1881.
the islanders of the error of their ways, for in 1889 three fresh 'outrages' occurred.\(^3\) However, in 1891 a single tour by HMS *Royalist* was to have more impact than all those of the previous eleven years.

The *Royalist* was given no special brief for the tour: her distinction lay in the determination of her commanding officer, Captain Edward H.M. Davis. Whereas previous commanders had been content to describe the bush as 'impenetrable' and to be satisfied with lobbing a few shells in the direction of an offending village, Davis marched eighty men into the hills of Mbilua on Vella Lavella to take the stockade of the big-man Goolie. Although the islanders managed to escape, with the exception of one man who was killed, it was an impressive achievement as the stockade was at an elevation of one thousand feet.\(^4\) At Ndovele on the same island, in punishment for the murder of the crewmen of the *Freak*, Davis burned the villages and shot a man who turned out to be the big-man, Tono. He also managed to ferret out and destroy two *tomako* which had been concealed.\(^5\) Davis also shelled another village at Mbilua and one on Simbo, but it was at Munda that he was to extend himself.

On the 25 September he arrived at Munda and demanded the murderers of William Dabelle, some of whom had recently

\(^3\) RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, pp. 20-22, 25-26, 26-27.
\(^4\) RNAS 23 SI 1891, p. 21.
\(^5\) *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
been seen in the Roviana district. When they were not forthcoming he proceeded to destroy all the villages of Munda: landing with a party of eighty men, he burnt 400 houses and 150 canoes, and smashed 1,000 heads that were discovered in the villages. The beaches of the lagoon were reported to be 'absolutely littered with skulls'. The only structures left standing were Ingava's house and two paele which were spared because Ingava was away at the time and Davis hoped that the big-man might thus be made more amenable to future requests. Davis also failed to destroy the tomako as they had been removed and hidden in the shallow waters of the Vona Vona Lagoon.

The impact of the Royalist's tour throughout the Group was profound. Some of the Munda islanders moved to Vona Vona, eight miles to the east, rather than remain at their old village sites. Those who remained were cautious in rebuilding. When the Navy called there in 1892 the islanders 'came from miles round to ask...if they might build again'. On Vella Lavella, the entire Mbilua coastline was deserted, and elsewhere in the Group the islanders showed the greatest reluctance to have any communication with the Navy. The

87 RNAS 23 SI 1892, p. 12.
impression left by Davis was still deep three years later: in December 1895 Commander Rason reported that the Royalist was 'a name to conjure by, owing to the strong action of Captain Davis, and his name is still respected throughout the Group.' However, the islanders' awareness that it was the character of Davis, rather than the general nature of naval operations, that was responsible for the punitive actions of 1891 may have weakened their effect as a deterrent. For from 1894 to 1896 another four Europeans were murdered. Two of these, the men from the wrecked Amelia, were killed at the eastern end of the Roviana Lagoon, not twenty miles from the Munda villages that Davis had flattened.

Much satisfaction was expressed over the razing of Munda. Davis himself wrote:

\[\text{this severe punishment will not be lost on the noted Rubiana head-hunters, who for years have considered themselves perfectly safe in their strongholds.}  \]

The Sydney Morning Herald echoed these sentiments:

\[\text{it is to be hoped that these savages, the noted Rubiana head-hunters, who have depopulated all the surrounding islands by their cruel practices, will not soon forget their well-merited punishment.}  \]

The tenor of these statements seems somewhat excessive, considering that the Munda people had not directly participated in the attack on Dabelle, and were being punished only for failing to apprehend the murderers, who were Mbilua men. The

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89 WHPC No. 141 of 1896, SI 1895, p. 39.
90 RNAS 23 SI 1891, p. 11.
91 Sydney Morning Herald, 10 December 1891, p. 4.
'strongholds' mentioned by Davis did not exist, for the Roviana villages were unfortified and Europeans had been going amongst them for decades. It almost appears, in some ways, that the white man was having his revenge for those long years of watching impotently as the 'noted Rubiana head-hunters' continued to act on the basis of their own faith and traditions, treating the European as an adjunct to their aspirations, not as a pivot for them. The hope that the Royalist's actions would induce the islanders to mend their ways was unfulfilled, for Ingava and the other big-men of Munda immediately stepped up their head-hunting expeditions in an attempt to replenish the stock destroyed by Davis.\textsuperscript{92} The suppression of head-hunting and other 'barbaric customs' was not, in fact, an objective of the European authorities. The Navy's attentions were focused upon relations between islanders and British subjects, and the Western Pacific High Commission held no brief to concern itself with what islanders did to one another. However, it was inevitable that the subject should confront them.

The New Georgian head-hunters had broadened the scope of their activities in the second half of the nineteenth century. In these years they had regularly raided Isabel and Choiseul, and on some occasions their expeditions had gone as far south as Guadalcanal. Such long-distance raiding seems to have either commenced or intensified during the 1860s. Before that time the people of southern Isabel lived in open, unfortified villages on the coast, but in the 1860s they were forced to move inland and construct stockaded settlements and

\textsuperscript{92} Somerville, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 399.
adopt other defensive measures. The most spectacular of these were the tree houses of Bugotu, to which the islanders would retreat if they feared a raid. They could then keep the attackers at bay by hurling down stones.\textsuperscript{93} There are a number of possible reasons for the increasing frequency of long-distance expeditions from the New Georgia Group. One may have been the growing difficulty of finding victims within the Group. It would have been an unprofitable exercise for the stronger communities of Simbo, Roviana and Vella Lavella to attempt large-scale attacks against each other and the weaker communities were becoming harder to get at: the people of Kolombangara, northern New Georgia and the Marovo lived in scattered communities deep in the mountainous bush. Another reason for raiding Isabel and Choiseul was that expeditions to these islands could include a stopover at the rich turtle grounds of the Manning Straits.

A typical mid to late nineteenth century head-hunting expedition from the Roviana Lagoon would first progress northwards through the Kula Gulf and across the New Georgia Sound to the islands of the Manning Straits. Here the men could recuperate and gain some revenue by collecting turtle shells. The raiders could then choose to go northwest to Choiseul or southeast down the coast of Isabel to Bugotu. The New Georgia men often were allied with some of the local villages, who

would provide guides. An alternative was to use men who had been captured on previous expeditions as guides. The most important element in the actual raid was surprise, so a favourite time for attacking was dawn. The raiders would move into position at night and then surprise their victims as they awoke for the morning's chores. Another tactical necessity was to prevent the women and children from seeking refuge in the women's privies, which were regarded as unclean and unapproachable by men.  

As well as taking heads, expeditions often returned with captives, usually referred to as 'slaves' by Europeans. The term 'slave' is quite inappropriate, considering the function of these captives. There were two varieties of 'slave' in the New Georgia Group, the pinausu and the veala. Both could be either captives or individuals bought in a cash transaction. Pinausu were normally treated with kindness and regarded as a welcome addition to the economic strength of the community. Not infrequently a pinausu who distinguished himself by industry and skill became an integral part of the community, marrying into local families. The latter was particularly common with female pinausu. The children of such unions were not discriminated against in any way: Ingava's mother was a pinausu from the Marovo. While some pinausu were accepted as equals, there was another side to the coin. Pinausu with little ability were used as drudge labour and as servants,
and one or more pinausu were usually killed and buried with a big-man on his demise. The veala were even less fortunate: they were captives deliberately selected as human sacrifices. They were segregated in houses and carefully tended and fed until their death. Such individuals were sacrificed for the inauguration of a new tomako, paele or hope. Their bodies could be thrown away, or in some cases, eaten.  

It is impossible to state how many people were killed by the New Georgian head-hunters. European reports of expeditions are sporadic and often unreliable. Traders, in particular, who were anxious to impress the Navy with the barbarity of the islanders might well have exaggerated their descriptions. Woodford's account of his fortnight stay at Munda in 1886 is probably the most accurate eye-witness report: he counted a total of thirty-one heads brought back to the villages by expeditions during his visit. Other second and third hand reports mention up to two hundred heads being taken on a single expedition, but it is difficult to imagine massacres on this scale occurring regularly. The accounts of two expeditions given to Hocart by the Simboese are much more modest and, one suspects, more typical. The first


96 Woodford Papers. Item No. 30 'Diary...1886', entries for 24 September to 8 October.

was a joint expedition by Simbo and Ranongga men to Isabel. The raid was a failure, with one of the attackers being killed by the defenders, and although two Isabel men were killed the raiders were unable to remove their heads as they were forced to retreat. The second expedition was to Nggerasi, in the Marovo Lagoon. After abandoning a plan to raid a certain village (because too many men were there) the raiders managed to ambush two canoes carrying women. Nine were killed and their heads taken, and two were spared and carried back to Simbo as pinausu. In contrast to these relatively humble accounts, there is a description of one of Ingava's expeditions which contained twenty tomako, two boats, five hundred men, three to four hundred rifles and nine thousand rounds of ammunition. The source of these figures was the Munda trader, Kelly, who was certainly not impartial, as he had an interest in seeing the power of the Roviana big-men reduced. However, the figures cannot be entirely discounted: the number of tomako is not excessive, as Ingava himself had seven or eight and in combination with other big-men in the Lagoon a total of twenty could probably be mustered. The possession of European boats was also not unusual amongst big-men. As a tomako could carry twenty to thirty men with their weapons, such a fleet would be quite capable of transporting five hundred men. The quantity of arms and ammunition described seems excessive, but again by no means impossible.

98 Hocart, 'Warfare', pp. 303-5.
99 Somerville, op.cit., p. 399.
The activities of traders and the Navy did nothing to discourage head-hunting; in fact, in some cases they seem to have directly encouraged it by offering opportunities to islanders who, without European contacts, might not have been able to employ their talents. Such an individual was Tulo (or Pulo), a big-man of Mbilua. Tulo's family was from Sirumbai, and thus he had no kin-based following at Mbilua: the status he achieved was derived solely from his own abilities. Tulo appears to have worked with Europeans from an early age, learning pidgin and the mechanics of the copra trade, eventually reaching a position where he traded in his own cutter for various Europeans. In this capacity he came to an agreement with the Mbilua lekasa Bisopi: Tulo was allowed to use the islet of Ozama and the Mbilua land opposite (called Saroparo) as an anchorage for his cutter, and in return was to assist Bisopi in his transactions with Europeans. Tulo took advantage of this agreement to sell Ozama Island and Saroparo: for Ozama, which he sold in 1885, he obtained £17/14/4 worth of goods, including two rifles, ammunition and a large quantity of axes and knives. For the Saroparo land he obtained £33/18/- worth of guns and ammunition. Tulo managed to make these deals without antagonising the Mbilua people, for he continued to live in the area as a big-man, organising head-hunting expeditions and recognised by Europeans as 'chief of Mbilua'.

100 LC I. Claim No.21, 'Statement of Soso'. DLS 'Red Book', p. 6 (Claim No.112) and p. 104 (Claim No. 212). RNAS 16 'Proceedings...(HMS Miranda)', p. 6.
The activities of the New Georgian head-hunters were well publicised and much deprecated. The Melanesian Mission, which had begun work at Bugotu, complained that the head-hunters were killing their potential converts; traders complained that the islanders were too busy head-hunting to collect copra and that as a result their trade was suffering; and the Navy recognised that head-hunting was a motive behind many of the attacks upon Europeans in the Group, but, as one naval officer commented, 'Nothing that a man of war can do will stop these expeditions'. The head-hunters took various steps to avoid the Navy: travelling at night when a warship was about, and concentrating their operations in the wet season, when the Navy was not in the islands. In addition, the tomako were easily concealed in the many rivers and shallow lagoons. For effective action against the head-hunters, a well-armed and mobile force permanently stationed in the islands was needed. Such a group did not come into existence until the late 1890s, after the establishment of the Protectorate.

In June 1893 a British Protectorate was declared over the southern and western parts of the Solomon Islands - the New Georgia Group was included, but not the islands of Choiseul and Isabel. The decision to establish the Protectorate had been taken under pressure: the resumption of the


102 Sydney Morning Herald, 11 June 1894. 'Island Voyage of the Lark'.

103 RNAS 23 NGSI 1886, p. 62.
Queensland labour trade, fear of French ambitions in the area and desire to avoid offending Australian opinion had forced the British reluctantly to assume responsibility for the islands. The Pacific Order in Council of March 1893 gave effect to the decision. Henceforth the Western Pacific High Commission would be responsible for all affairs in the islands, and not just the activities of the resident British subjects. To inform the islanders of their new status HMS Curacoa and several other warships were dispatched to the Solomons, where they toured the islands to plant the flag and proclaim the Protectorate. In the New Georgia Group these momentous events were somewhat dampened by the unwillingness of many islanders to approach the men of war, as memories of the Royalist were still strong in their minds. At Munda, however, Ingava was contacted and he expressed no opposition to the proceedings, which were fully explained to him. He evidently understood the ramifications of the new order of things, for two months later he was to put British justice to the test. Ingava's antagonist was Edmund Pratt, and the subject of the confrontation was land. It was fitting that the colonial era should be introduced by a land dispute, for these were to become endemic in the years ahead.

Before 1896 there was no legislation dealing with the sale of land to Europeans by islanders. British subjects

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105 RNAS 18 Pacific Islands. Confidential. 379 (printed), pp. 9-11.
wishing to establish a claim to land they had purchased could
forward the papers witnessing the transaction to the High
Commission in Fiji, where they were registered. However,
registration of a claim was not a guarantee of title.\textsuperscript{106}

During this period there were a number of land transactions
in the New Georgia Group, both registered and unregistered.
Most of these involved small islets which were intended for
use as trading stations. Vendors were paid in trade goods,
but it is doubtful if some understood (or were allowed to
understand) the precise nature of the agreements they were
entering. On the other hand, other islanders were quick to
exploit the credulity of some Europeans by selling them land to
which they had no claim. Tulo of Mbilua and Mengo of Roviana
were adept in such matters. The latter sold most of Ghizo
and the surrounding islets (over 7,000 acres) in 1886;
although Mengo had originally come from Ghizo his old home
was a small patch of land not included in the sale, and he
certainly exercised no control or interest in the rest of the
island. The recipients of the Ghizo land were Deutsche Handels
& Plantagen Gesellschaft der Sudsee Inseln zu Hamburg, a
German planting and trading company whose representatives
toured the Group in 1886 aboard the \textit{Uvea}. They also claimed
'possession' of all vacant and ownerless land on the north
east and the west coasts of Kolombangara. These massive
'acquisitions' were never acted upon: there was no attempt
to settle or cultivate the land, and the claims were virtually

\textsuperscript{106} Allen, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 34-5.
forgotten until the negotiations for the Pacific Islands Company land concession at the turn of the century. The only other large land transaction in the pre-Protectorate era was the purchase of six hundred acres at Mbanga, two miles west of Munda, in 1882 by the trader Lars Nielsen from the big-man Lepe. Lepe and his brother Vonge were prominent members of the mbutu mbutu Kindu whose land embraces Mbanga and thus would have been entitled to sell it after consulting with fellow clan members. No-one seems to have disputed the sale.

The 'transaction' which brought Pratt into conflict with Ingava was one of many in which Pratt had been involved. Edmund Pratt and his brother Jean were responsible for twelve of twenty-one known land deals made in the period before the enactment of legislation regulating land purchases in 1896. The Pratt brothers were far from being two of a kind: 'Johnny' Pratt apparently got on well with the islanders, although he was not above a shady land deal on occasion. He had no great affection for his brother, whom he described as 'a bad man' to Frank Wickham. By all accounts Johnny was not exaggerating - Edmund Pratt was notorious as an arms dealer, land

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107 DLS 'Red Book', p. 57 (Claim No.355) and p. 59 (Claim No.356).
109 DLS 'Deeds and Claims to Land' (Book A), p. 24 (Claim No.20).
110 DLS 'Red Book', passim.
110 LC I. Claim No.21, Wickham to Woodford, 30 May 1912.
grabber, bully and murderer. He first ran foul of the law in 1889 when he was bound over for £200 to keep the peace for a year, after smashing canoes at Mbilua. It is possible that this action may have prompted the Mbilua men to undertake the raid on Pratt's Munda station which resulted in the death of Dabelle.\footnote{111} Pratt was not long in losing his money, for in 1890 he was charged with shooting an islander on Vella Lavella. The Navy Officer investigating this affair reported 'At every place I have touched I have received complaints about this man's conduct'.\footnote{112} Pratt had shot the man when the islanders had protested over his abduction of another islander. There was no doubt that he had murdered the man, but he escaped prosecution because of lack of evidence.\footnote{113} Pratt's relations with the Vella Lavellan islanders were understandably bad, and it seems they would only do business with him if he were able to supply firearms.\footnote{114} However, in Pratt's case it seems that crime paid. He was said to have one of the most successful businesses in the Solomons, making a profit of between £700 and £1,000 each year.\footnote{115}

\footnote{111} RNAS 23 NGSI 1889, pp. 20-1; NGSI 1890, p. 15.  
\footnote{112} RNAS 23 NGSI 1890, p. 24.  
\footnote{113} RNAS 23 NGSI 1890, pp. 24-30; SI 1891, pp. 24-5.  
\footnote{114} LC I. Claim No.21, Wickham to Woodford, 30 May 1912.  
\footnote{115} WHPC No.305 of 1897, Woodford to Berkeley, 21 June 1897.
Pratt's dispute with Ingava was generated by the supposed purchase of about 500 acres of land at Munda in June 1893. The land involved extended from Gurasae Point to Munda Point at Sosolo, and thus fell under the control of two mbutu mbutu, the Kindu and the Sosolo or Lodumaho. Edmund Pratt had married Veladuri, a woman of the Sosolo mbutu mbutu and they had had a number of children. He approached a number of men with a view to obtaining permission for his children to use the coconuts that grew on the land specified in the deed. Some of these men can be identified: Lepe, the Kindu big-man and his son Veto and half-brother Ebebo; Kuba, who was connected to Sosolo by marriage. These men did have a genuine interest in the land concerned and they consented to allow Pratt's children the usufruct of the trees. From this point there were two developments: the straightforward fraud perpetuated by Pratt, and the claim by Ingava that the land was his and that on this basis (as well as the fraud) Pratt had no right to it.

After concluding a verbal agreement on the use of the trees Pratt persuaded the islanders involved to sign a paper legitimising the deal, but which was in reality a deed of purchase. He then attempted to build a station on the land. Ingava objected and then made an official complaint to the Navy in August 1893. The Protectorate had just been established and the case was regarded as something of a 'test case' in impressing the islanders of the wisdom and benefits of British

116 MSS. 'Buka tututi' in possession of H. Bea, Parara.
Justice. The High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, John Thurston, toured the Solomons in 1894 and while at Munda presided over the court to hear the case. Pratt claimed that Ingava had been prompted to make the complaint by another trader, Kelly, and that moreover Ingava had no concern in the matter as the land was not his. The court seems to have accepted Ingava's rights without question and to have concentrated on the question of fraud, and Pratt was ordered to vacate the land. In fact, Pratt was correct for Ingava's land was at Sisieta, to the east of Munda Point. Ingava's friendship with Europeans over the years, and his reputation as 'King of Rubiana' had paid dividends. He was accepted without question by Europeans as the spokesman for all of Munda, and the islanders seem to have been content to allow him to adopt that role. This was the seed of much future confusion and dispute in Munda over land, as Ingava's successors attempted to maintain an overriding interest in land matters while the other mbutu mbutu struggled to reassert their independence.

Land questions were to dominate much of the subsequent history of the New Georgia Group and many of the problems

117 WPHC No.249 of 1893, Bowden-Smith to Thurston, 2 October 1893.
Enclosed: Floyd to Bowden-Smith, 15 August 1893.

118 WPHC No.293 of 1895, SI 1894, pp. 11-12; No.308 of 1894, Edmund Pratt. Statement concerning land at Moonda Point, Rubiana.

119 Hocart unwittingly observed the progress of this confusion in 1908, when he visited Munda. See Hocart Papers, Item No.22, 'Roviana. Topography - Districts - Chiefs', pp. 5-6.
that did arise had their origins in the pre-colonial period. This was not a result of the land deals that occurred in those years - the amount of land effectively alienated was quite small. On the larger purchases there was little or no attempt to settle or extensively cultivate the land, and even the smaller islands and blocks used as trading stations were frequently deserted. This was not a matter of choice, but of necessity: Europeans had neither the force nor authority to assert themselves in the occupation of land. It was an easy matter to find a 'vendor' and establish a paper claim to a piece of land, but to occupy and cultivate meant a protracted period of residence which would depend entirely upon the goodwill of the islanders. No European could assert himself indefinitely in the face of the islanders' hostility. Edmund Pratt once attempted to 'bounce' some land on Simbo: he forcibly extended a property by cutting down trees under a cover of arms. After a few days the island became 'too hot' for him and he was forced to retire.\textsuperscript{120} The activities of the Royal Navy did nothing to alter this situation: they were not successful in either preventing or deterring islanders from attacking Europeans. Even Davis' actions did not result in a cessation of 'outrages' throughout the Group. The large scale alienation of land and the establishment of a plantation economy had to await a more effective and enduring 'pacification' programme, and this did not occur until the turn of the century.

\textsuperscript{120} LC I. Claim No.21, Wickham to Woodford, 30 May 1912.
The importance of the pre-Protectorate years in relation to the subsequent land problems lay not so much in the activities of Europeans, but in those of the islanders. Continual head-hunting had ensured that many communities kept well hidden in the bush of the islands' interiors. Yet these people still maintained contact with the coast: they kept canoes for fishing and head-hunting, and they had plantations on the shore. To a European gazing from the deck of a ship much of the land seem uninhabited and unused. The Deutsche Handels claim of 'vacant' land on Kolombangara was a forerunner of things to come. Thousands of acres of apparently empty land was to be declared 'waste' by the Protectorate administration and turned over to European commercial concerns. The coming of Woodford to the islands in 1896 marked the beginning of the end of the islanders' ability to determine the nature of their relationship with the white man. European ambitions and aspirations were to dominate the course of their lives.
Charles Morris Woodford had considerable experience in the islands of the Pacific before his appointment as temporary Resident Commissioner for the Solomon Islands in 1896. He was born in 1852 in Kent, the son of a prosperous wine and spirit merchant. After his education at Tonbridge School he worked in his father's firm for several years until he decided to pursue his inclination to be a naturalist and travelled to Fiji in 1882 where he spent some time collecting butterflies. In 1883 he found employment as a clerk in the Fijian treasury, and in the following year acted as a Government Agent on a labour recruiting ship on a voyage to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. In June 1886 he made his first trip to the Solomon Islands, and was to remain there, off and on, until January 1889.¹ In these years Woodford was impressed by several things that were to effect his actions as Resident Commissioner. He noted the sparse population on many of the islands, and concluded that head-hunting had led to the extensive depopulation of the areas. This conclusion was largely based on his observations of the intensity of head-hunting in the western islands, and on a superficial comparison between the records of the Mendana expedition and the situation as he saw it. The apparent massive decline in

population that he discerned was to provide a basis for his attitude on the future of the Solomon islanders as a race: he considered it to be inevitable that they would eventually decline into extinction. He was also impressed by the fertility of the islands, considering them to be a great prospect for future commercial development.²

In 1889 Woodford returned to England and worked in the London Stock Exchange for several years. In 1894 he returned to Fiji and later in the same year took up the position of British Consul in Samoa. Woodford had applied for the job of Resident to the Solomon Islands in August 1893, shortly after the British Protectorate had been declared but it was not until 1896 that he was appointed an acting Deputy Commissioner and instructed to report on the islands.³ Woodford was in the Solomons from 30 May to 4 October. The first two months of his stay were spent touring the islands on board the warship HMS Pylades, and thus his activities had much in common with previous naval tours. In the New Georgia Group he burnt a village in retaliation for the murder of the two men of the wrecked Amelia, and he also turned his attention to the problem of head-hunting. Woodford realised that little

could be done on one short visit, and restricted himself to collecting a number of heads he knew to have been recently taken. A permanent solution required 'a settled and continuous policy' based on the regular supply of information\(^4\) - in short, the establishment of the colonial administration. Woodford saw the futility of relying on warships for effective action: their presence simply ensured that the islanders would retreat into the hills.\(^5\) A police force based in the islands and the enlistment of the support of influential big-men were the alternatives envisaged by Woodford. To this end he considered that Ingava's power and influence should be 'fostered and encouraged in every way'.\(^6\)

Woodford's report was optimistic concerning the economic future of the Solomons. He considered them ideal for copra production and that the 'thousands' of low flat islands could be exploited in this manner. In 1896 there were about fifty Europeans permanently based in the Solomons and in that year they had exported 1,383 tons of copra. Twelve of the fifty resided in the New Georgia Group: seven at Munda and five at Simbo. The latter five were the brothers Pratt and their employees who had moved from Munda after Edmund Pratt's defeat in court. The traders of New Georgia

\(^4\) WPHC No. 283 of 1896, Woodford to Thurston, 12 July 1896; No. 285 of 1896, Woodford to Thurston, 17 July 1896.

\(^5\) WPHC No. 36 of 1897, Woodford to Collet, 25 January 1897.

\(^6\) WPHC No. 283 of 1896, op.cit.
together employed forty islanders as crew on four vessels. Other traders also visited the Group to collect copra, ivory nuts and shell. This produce was generally shipped back to Sydney on board the Burns Philp steamship *Titus* which visited the Solomons every six weeks. Less regular visits were made by other ships performing the same function. The copra was purchased chiefly with tobacco, at the rate of one stick (costing a little more than a halfpenny) for a string of ten halved nuts. The copra was of poor quality, as most of it was smoke dried and discoloured, but Woodford was enthusiastic at the prospect of large scale planting concerns improving the quality and the value of the copra, as the nuts were naturally rich in oil.\(^7\)

While Woodford was keen to see the islands developed, he was equally concerned to ensure that the administration should control the situation. He desired to restrict speculative land purchases, and advocated that the Western Pacific High Commission should assume ownership of all unoccupied land and then lease it to suitable concerns. He foresaw little trouble with the islanders over this policy: native land tenure, he asserted, was so 'insecure' that there was little chance of injustice being done.\(^8\) Woodford's recommendations were embodied in *Queen's Regulation No. 4 of 1896*. This

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\(^7\) WPHC No. 477 of 1896, Woodford to Thurston, 25 November 1896. Encl. 'Report upon the British Solomon Islands', by O.M. Woodford.

\(^8\) WPHC No. 281 of 1896, Woodford to Thurston, 4 July 1896.
provided that:

land for trading and agriculture could be purchased in freehold or leased from natives or in the case of vacant land, leased from the Government by non-natives, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner and subject to forfeiture and reversion to the native owners or lessors for non-performance of specified improvement conditions.9

The improvement conditions were generally the cultivation of one tenth of the land within five years. Vacant land was defined as land 'being vacant by reason of the extinction of the original native owners and their descendants'. It was also stated that the High Commissioner's approval was not to be regarded as conclusive evidence of the vendor or lessor's right to sell or lease.10 This regulation may have caused some uncertainty or wariness on the part of Europeans in the New Georgia Group, for no new land was taken up from the beginning of 1897 to late 1899.11 Another factor in this hiatus may have been the continuing violence in the islands. In October 1896 it was reported that it was 'all quiet to a certain extent' in the Group, but it was not long in remaining so. A month later a trader, Gibbon, was murdered at Rendova. In March 1897 two islanders working as crew on the Narovo were killed in the Marovo Lagoon whilst trading onshore, and

9 Allan, op.cit., p. 37.
10 ibid., pp. 36-7.
11 DLS 'Red Book', passim.
in November of the same year Jean Pratt's ship Eclipse was attacked at Mbilua. In addition, the New Georgian head-hunting expeditions were continuing unabated: a large number of tomako were under construction, and raids on the Russell Islands, Guadalcanal, Isabel and Choiseul were reported. This turbulent situation confronted Woodford when he returned in April 1897 to establish a permanent administration of the Protectorate.  

Woodford set up his head-quarters at Tulagi, a small island off Nggela and a considerable distance from the New Georgia Group. Although he was joined by a force of eight native police from Fiji he was without transport until October 1899, and was so forced once more to rely on the Royal Navy for communication with other parts of the Protectorate. Thus the administration's activities in the New Georgia Group were spasmodic, as they had been in the past, although there were some new developments. Woodford was now able to take hostages to Tulagi in attempts to force communities to surrender malefactors. However, this method does not seem to have met with much success: the islanders were as reluctant as ever to give up their fellows, and thus the burning of villages was again the norm. This occurred on Vangunu (for the Narovo attack) and at Ughele, Rendova (for the Gibbon murder).

12 WPHC No. 36 of 1897, op. cit.; No. 296 of 1897, Woodford to Berkeley, 30 April 1897; No. 300 of 1897, Woodford to Berkeley, 8 June 1897; No. 8 of 1898, Woodford to O'Brien, December 1897.

13 Woodford did have a whaleboat, but this was hardly suitable for long-distance travelling. In 1899 he was supplied with the Lahloo, a sailing vessel, although he had requested a steamer.

14 WPHC No. 205 of 1898, passim.
importantly, Woodford instituted more vigorous action against the head-hunters: *tomako* were destroyed, heads confiscated, and the return of *pinausu* demanded.\(^\text{15}\) The suppression of head-hunting had become an international issue, with the German Government complaining that New Georgian raiders were killing their colonial subjects, as well as threatening commerce and the friendly reception of the Emperor's warships in the area.\(^\text{16}\) However, the impact of Woodford's actions against the head-hunters was still limited by his dependence upon the navy for transport.

As the 1890s drew to a close the New Georgia Group was still, despite the birth of the Protectorate administration, very much a 'frontier'. The colonial power had not yet succeeded in imposing its authority fully in the area: trading in arms and head-hunting still flourished. In the early 1900s this changed as the days of frontier traders operating amongst the most 'bloodthirsty race in the Western Pacific' were superseded by the establishment of a plantation economy amongst an increasingly subdued people. The chief factor in this transition was the setting up of a permanent administration in the western islands.

\(^{15}\) ibid. 
See also WPJC No. 296 of 1897, Woodford to Berkeley, 30 August 1897; No. 380 of 1897, Woodford to Berkeley, 7 August 1897; No. 507 of 1897, Woodford to O'Brien, 25 September 1897.

\(^{16}\) The German sphere included Choiseul and Isabel. See FO 58/318 Cox to Undersecretary of State, 10 January 1898.
In January 1898 Arthur Mahaffy arrived in the Protectorate as an assistant to the Resident Commissioner. Mahaffy was a relatively young man, about 30, with an impeccable background: Marlborough, Magdalen College Oxford, Trinity College Dublin, and four years as a subaltern in the Royal Fusiliers. He had spent some time as a Government Agent and Resident Officer in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1896, and was to serve in the Solomons until 1904, when he became Colonial Secretary in Fiji.\(^7\) Thus his importance to the Group lay not only in his service as a resident, but also in subsequent years when he frequently advised and acted as a 'troubleshooter' for the High Commissioner. Mahaffy was an able and efficient officer who did much to pacify the Group. His army experience and athletic ability (he was an Oxford rowing 'blue') helped him to organise an efficient police force and undertake vigorous punitive expeditions.

In December 1899 Woodford established a government station on Ghizo Island which was to be occupied by Mahaffy and a force of about twenty policemen. The latter were recruited mainly from Isabel, with some from Malaita and Savo. They were armed with Martini Henry rifles and drilled by Mahaffy until they attained a 'remarkable degree of smartness' in bayonet and firing exercises.\(^8\) However, at the time of

\(^7\) The Cyclopedia of Fiji (Sydney, 1907), p. 195. Details of Mahaffy's period of service in the New Georgia Group (and that of other officers who were stationed there up to 1925) are given in Appendix III.

\(^8\) WPHC No. 831 of 1908, H.C. to C.O., 4 August 1910. Encl. Memorandum on the Solomon Islands Police by A. Mahaffy.
their first mission this discipline was not yet fully imposed, for apparently there was some wild shooting. The expedition was to the Roviana Lagoon, in retaliation for a head-hunting raid on Bugotu which had resulted in the deaths of six islanders. The offenders were men of Kalikonggu, a few miles to the east of Munda. On the 19 January 1900 Woodford, Mahaffy and the police made a surprise raid on Kalikonggu: one man was killed, five wounded, the village was looted, the canoes destroyed, and a tomako was taken. The latter was later used by Mahaffy and the police for transport within the Group.\(^{19}\) The Roviana area was raided again in March 1901. On this occasion the expedition was inspired by a report from three pinausu who had fled from the island of Honiavasa as they feared they would be killed to celebrate the construction of a new tomako. Apparently since the first punitive raid the islanders had been reluctant to make head-hunting expeditions and so had concentrated on the pinausu as a supply of heads. This time one man was killed, one wounded, some houses and canoes destroyed and the new tomako removed.\(^{20}\)

Simbo was also the recipient of Mahaffy's attentions. For some years the Simboese had been under pressure to surrender several female pinausu who had been captured in a raid on

\(^{19}\) ibid. WPHC No. 56 of 1900, Woodford to H.C., 21 January 1900 and 27 January 1900.

Nggerasi. In June 1898 Commander Freeman of HMS Mohawk had taken the big-man Belengana captive and throughout 1899 repeated attempts by Woodford and Mahaffy to obtain the pinausu were unsuccessful. Finally, in May of 1900 Mahaffy and his police encamped on Simbo for over a week and systematically destroyed houses, canoes, gardens and pigs until the islanders capitulated. After this affair Woodford confidently considered that the Simboese would undertake no more head-hunting expeditions.  

Mahaffy's other major action was directed at Mbilua. The punishment inflicted upon Simbo and Roviana had apparently been effective, for Woodford reported that the islanders of the two areas now had the 'friendliest relations' with the Government. However the head-hunters of Mbilua continued to ignore the administration's warnings. In November 1901 an expedition was organised by Mahaffy to deal with the recalcitrant islanders. It included thirty two police, volunteers from Roviana, Kolombangara, Simbo and other islands, five traders and Mahaffy, a total of about seventy men. This force covered the Mbilua region (coastal and inland) in a series of extensive marches over a period of eight days. They destroyed ten villages and over one hundred canoes, including a heavily fortified stockade in the mountains. No reports of

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21 WPHC No.285 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 10 July 1898, 11 September 1899, 3 October 1899, 26 June 1900, 10 September 1900.

22 WPHC No.41 of 1902, Woodford to H.C., 15 September 1902.
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casualties were given and Mahaffy later stated that the force had been well-behaved and fired only on order, being rewarded with loot from the captured villages. However with such a force, including many volunteers, it is quite possible that some indiscriminate killing did take place. Such things did occur (and were hushed up) in later expeditions of a similar character.

By the end of 1901 large-scale head-hunting had finished, although raiding and fighting on a much reduced scale did continue in parts of Vella Lavella and the Marovo Lagoon for some years. The relatively abrupt conclusion of head-hunting has led some historians to believe that the administration's punitive actions were merely a coup de grace to a practice that was already in decline. McKinnon has sought the explanation in the growth of the copra trade:

Raiding became counter-productive. A man drying copra for trade needed the security to work his coastal plantations without fear of losing his head. As long as raiding remained an obsession little copra could be produced, and traders were also reluctant to risk their necks.

He also sees the copra trade as being responsible for a decline in the status of the big-men who organised the head-hunting expeditions, thus further diminishing their frequency.

23 _ibid._, Woodford to H.C., 28 December 1901. Encl. Mahaffy to Woodford, 15 November 1901. WPHC No.831 of 1908, _op.cit._


Zelenietz also believes the copratrade to be the key to an explanation of the cessation of raiding. Such hypotheses cannot be reconciled with the facts. Large-scale raiding and trading in copra went on simultaneously in the New Georgia Group for thirty years: the two were not incompatible. From 1870 to 1900 traders lived and worked amongst the head-hunters of the New Georgia Group. When Woodford was at Munda for a fortnight in 1886, thirty one heads were brought into the Roviana Lagoon and at the same time the traders were locked in fierce competition — extending credit freely to the islanders. This was hardly 'reluctance' on their part. In the late 1890s the situation had not changed. When Mahaffy toured the Group in June 1898 he reported that head-hunting was as bad as ever and that he knew of 151 heads that had been taken during the previous year. He saw at least thirty tomako off Vella Lavella, and at the same island commented on the large numbers of people who came offshore with copra to trade. In the late 1890s competition amongst the traders was so intense as to be potentially ruinous, and an attempt was made to come to an agreement to restrict the giving of credit and gifts, and to halt price

26 M. Zelenietz, 'Heads or Tales? The End of Head Hunting in New Georgia, British Solomon Islands Protectorate'. Paper prepared for the Association of Social Anthropology in Oceania Annual Meetings, 2-6 March 1977, Monterey, California.

27 Woodford Papers. Item No. 30, 'Diary...1886', entries 24 September to 8 October.

28 CO 225/57 Woodford to O'Brien, 16 January 1899. Encl. Mahaffy to Woodford, 1 August 1898. 'Report from June 18 to August 1 on a visit to the Western Solomon Islands by Mr Arthur Mahaffy'.
Head-hunting does not seem to have adversely affected the copra trade, and nor does the trade seem to have diminished the islanders' fondness for raiding.

The cessation of head-hunting was, in fact, primarily due to the actions of Woodford and Mahaffy in the years between 1898 and 1902. The reluctance of some historians to accept this is largely based on the contrast between these successful operations and the failure of many previous naval punitive expeditions as deterrents. For example, Zelenietz concluded that because Captain Davis' razing of Munda in 1891 failed to suppress head-hunting and yet ten years later similar measures were effective then some other factor, apart from the actual punitive operations, must have been responsible. This view ignores a number of important considerations. Davis' actions were not intended to suppress head-hunting: he destroyed Munda to punish the islanders for failing to surrender the murderers of Dabelle, and the islanders knew this. It was not until after the declaration of the Protectorate that specific action against head-hunting was taken. As late as 1898 a naval officer investigating a head-hunting case on Simbo was told by the islanders that 'they did not know we white people took head-hunting so seriously'. However, even if pre-Protectorate

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29 WPHC No.8 of 1898, Woodford to O'Brien, December 1897. Encl. No.2 Traders Agreement at Gavatu, dated 29 November 1897.

30 Zelenietz, op.cit.

31 WPHC No.285 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 10 July 1898. Encl. Freeman to Commander-in-Chief, 24 June 1898.
naval actions were not aimed at head-hunting, but at 'outrages' on British subjects, then they were still ineffective as deterrents - why, in comparison, were Mahaffy and Woodford so successful?

The punitive operations of the Protectorate administration were on a completely different basis to the earlier naval operations. Mahaffy and his police were based at Ghizo; using their captured tomako they could reach Munda in less than six hours, Simbo in four hours and Mbilua in three.\textsuperscript{32} They could arrive at any time without warning, and once there could stay indefinitely, living off the land. They were familiar with the local conditions and had no need to rely upon the cooperation of the islanders. In contrast, the Royal Navy's warships were in the islands for only short periods at a time; they advertised their presence hours before reaching their destination, and once arrived often had to rely upon 'friendly' big-men and interpreters whose friendship was generally more apparent than real. The navy was a seasonal annoyance to the islanders, while Mahaffy and his men were an ever-present threat. Mahaffy destroyed villages with a thoroughness similar to that of Davis, but unlike the latter, he did not sail away. The tomako which could be hidden from the navy in the many rivers and shallow lagoons did not escape Mahaffy's attentions. Although the Gizo police force was small, it was armed with modern repeating rifles and well drilled in the use of them.

\textsuperscript{32} Mahaffy, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 192 states that he could travel twelve miles in two hours in his tomako, and that was with less than a full crew.
The fact that a number of the police were Bugotu men also added to their impact, as the New Georgians were fully aware that such men had many scores to settle.\textsuperscript{33} Like the naval shore parties before him, Mahaffy encountered little resistance, but he readily responded when it did occur, as the shootings in the Roviana Lagoon attest.

Mahaffy's strongest actions were at Simbo, Mbilua and the Roviana Lagoon, possibly the three most powerful centres of head-hunting in the Group, and their impact quickly spread throughout the islands. Pula, Ingava's adopted daughter, recalls that he decided to cease head-hunting as a result of Mahaffy's actions, although he had not been the object of them.\textsuperscript{34} The big-men of Ranongga also undertook to give up the practice.\textsuperscript{35} The people of Rendova were warned by Roviana islanders of the possible consequences of further killing, and they seem to have heeded the message. Boaz Bero, who was a young man at the time, remembers that fighting on the island continued, but that energies were directed towards the destruction of houses and gardens rather than bloodshed.\textsuperscript{36}

The efficacy of the administration's measures against head-hunting was also increased by the improved communications in the islands. Whereas it was sometimes a year or more

\textsuperscript{33} WPHC No.285 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 10 September 1900.

\textsuperscript{34} Interview with Pula, 2 October 1974, at Parara. Pula was born c. 1880, as she states that she was just under marrying age when Davis burnt her village.

\textsuperscript{35} WPHC No.41 of 1902, Woodford to H.C., 28 December 1901.

\textsuperscript{36} Interview with Boaz Bero, 23 September 1974, at Lokuru.
before the navy could investigate a matter and then take action, with the administration settled in the islands a much quicker response could be made. In 1899 Isabel and Choiseul became part of the British Protectorate and thus news of raids on these islands could more rapidly become known. In one case Woodford was almost able to catch a Vella Lavellan expedition at sea, while they were off Isabel.\(^3\) Information about possible or completed expeditions was also readily forthcoming. The victims of past raids and traders were not slow to take advantage of the administration's zeal in punishing the head-hunters. Even islanders who had themselves suffered at the hand of Mahaffy and Woodford seem to have been keen for others to share the experience.\(^3\) This made it difficult for the head-hunters: the construction of a new paele or tomako could easily be noted; the tomako could be spotted departing or returning, and the absence of many men from a particular community was hard to conceal.

Not all islanders acquiesced in the new order, but those who resisted were no longer able to continue large-scale raiding in the manner of the pre-Protectorate years. On Vella Lavella and in the Marovo area there were bands of varani, or fighting men, who survived for almost another decade. However such groups were forced deeper into the bush to avoid the reach of the police. In this situation they were unable to mount

\(^3\) WPHC No. 56 of 1900, Woodford to H.C., 14 January 1900.

\(^3\) WPHC No. 41 of 1902, Woodford to H.C., 28 December 1901.
classical expeditions, but were reduced to raiding neighbouring communities, and thus alienating any sympathy they might have received. They were eventually brutally crushed by the administration.\(^{39}\)

Head-hunting was an integral part of the religious, political and economic life of the islanders: it was a medium for the distribution of wealth, the accumulation of status and authority, and the acquisition of spiritual values. In this context, the suppression of head-hunting was virtually a social revolution. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how such a momentous change could be effected in such a short time, and be met with so little resistance. The answer to this problem probably lies in the shattering epidemics that swept through the Group in the years following the enforced reduction of raiding.

It was not uncommon for Europeans visiting the New Georgia Group in the early twentieth century to describe the islanders as 'listless' and 'indifferent'. This was seen to be a result of the end of head-hunting, which had deprived the men of their chief interest in life and in consequence was an important factor in the declining population.\(^{40}\) This view gained academic respectability with the publication of W.H.R. Rivers' essay 'The Psychological Factor' in the early 1920s.

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\(^{39}\) See pp. 174-193.

\(^{40}\) F. Burnett, Through Polynesia and Papua Wanderings with a Camera in Southern Seas (London, 1911), p. 84.
Rivers did his research in the New Georgia Group in 1908. Using genealogical evidence, he compared the birth rate of previous generations with that of the present, and concluded that 'the people's lack of interest in life...is largely due to the abolition of head-hunting'. A key assumption in Rivers' work was that his sample population, especially that of Simbo, had not experienced any great sickness or epidemics in recent years. Rivers apparently made some inquiries and concluded that disease had not been 'especially active'. Yet in 1907 a letter published in *Man* stated,

> There has been a tremendous lot of sickness among the natives, both in Simbo and in Rubiana. They have been dying every day and are still doing so. It is carrying off all the old men and women.

Nor was this the first such sickness: it would appear that in 1903–4 there was an influenza epidemic throughout the Group which caused many deaths. The sickness of 1906–7 may have been dysentry, and it also resulted in a great loss of life. Gumi, a Munda big-man, told Hocart that the epidemics killed between twenty and one hundred islanders each month in the Roviana Lagoon area. Losses on this scale would surely

42 Ibid.
43 Edge-Partington, *op.cit.*, p. 22.
have had a demoralising effect on a community, and could possibly have drained any will to resist the new order. The older generation was particularly hard hit; the numbers of mbangara and varani who had achieved status in the head-hunting era, and who might have provided a focus for discontent, dwindled. Men such as Ingava and Belengana of Simbo died in those years, and their successors were unable to attain a similar level of prestige and influence.

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The changing order was also reflected, to some extent, in the European constituent of the Group. In 1906 Thomas Woodhouse died at Gizo. He had traded in the islands for thirty years, but was penniless and living on charity at the time of his death.\(^{47}\) The brothers Pratt were no longer part of the scene: Jean Pratt had died in 1898, and in 1901 Edmund left the Solomons after being fined £100 for selling firearms. His departure was not mourned by Woodford, who commented to the High Commissioner that the 'Protectorate is to be congratulated upon being at last rid of this most undesirable resident'.\(^{48}\) Pratt's blatant transgressions were unsuitable for the changing times: future European dealings with the islanders were not necessarily any more scrupulous, but at least they would have the veneer of civilized legality.

\(^{47}\) WPHC No. 187 of 1906, Woodford to H.C., 28 June 1906.

\(^{48}\) WPHC No. 74 of 1901, Woodford to H.C., 7 April 1901.
When the administration indulged in massive land grabs and multiple murder, the proper forms would be observed.

Pratt sold his vessel, goods and station to Norman Wheatley for £1,000. Wheatley was a good example of the coming man: he had come to the Group in 1893, worked for Wickham for a time, and then set up his own trading station at Lambeti, on Munda. Although an erratic entrepreneur (he made and lost a fortune in the islands), his early work in the establishment of plantations was an excellent example for his successors in its method and efficiency. Wheatley was an affable man who got on well with the islanders. Although partial to an occasional bit of sharp dealing in land, he did not ill-treat his workers and generally cooperated with the administration.

The increasing stability of the group was also reflected in the coming of two new European concerns to the islands: the Pacific Islands Company and the Methodist Mission. The political background to the Pacific Islands Company's concession in the Solomons has been succinctly stated by D. Scarr in his *Fragments of Empire*. The future of the Protectorate was by no means assured in the 1890s; the Treasury in London was reluctant to have this extra financial burden on its shoulders and was in favour of passing the responsibility onto the governments of Australia:

The effect...was to add urgency to Woodford's personal predilection for large scale commercial development of the islands. If the protectorate was to be saved, it must stand financially on its own feet as soon as possible. This end

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49 WPHC No. 187 of 1906, Woodford to H.C., 28 June 1906.
could be attained...only by attracting a big company prepared to invest large sums in opening copra plantations.  

The company to be involved was the Pacific Islands Company, formed in 1898 with high-powered backing: John T. Arundel was vice-chairman and travelling director; the Chairman was Lord Stanmore, previously the Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. Others interested were Sir Robert Herbert and Sir John Bramstom, both late of the Colonial Office. Stanmore had political ambitions for the Company, wishing for the Protectorate administration to be replaced by Chartered Company rule. This desire was frustrated by the Colonial Office, but this did not affect the Company's application for a concession.  

Initially Arundel had written to Woodford in February 1898 asking for a concession of all unoccupied land in the Solomons, estimating it to be approximately 250,000 acres to be purchased at 2/- an acre. Woodford forwarded this application to the High Commission with a favourable recommendation, but wrote officially to Arundel that he considered it was unlikely that the application would be granted in its entirety and that it would be better if specific areas were named. In a private letter to Arundel of the same date (11 April 1898) he stated that although it was difficult to define unoccupied land, he considered the Western Solomons to hold the most promise, in particular

50 Scarr, op.cit., p. 264.
51 ibid., pp. 264-6.
Kolombangara, Ghizo, the Vona Vona islands and the east coast of New Georgia Island. He advised that these areas should be inspected and that his services and assistance were at the Company's disposal. In February 1899 Stanmore forwarded a formal application to the Colonial Office for the lands of Kolombangara, Ghizo, 'Narovo Lnoo' and the northeast coast of New Georgia plus any other unoccupied lands the Government was willing to grant or lease. Two months later he offered that the Company was prepared 'under reasonable conditions' to undertake the regulation and the exploitation of the entire Protectorate, adding that the Company was willing to suppress head-hunting at its own expense. He envisaged that the Company could administer the islands for about ten years after which they could come under Australian control. It is unlikely that Woodford was apprised of this suggestion otherwise his enthusiasm for the P.I.C. might have crumbled rapidly. The Colonial Office declined this offer on the grounds that Australia would probably take over the islands, but offered instead a 99 year lease of 100,000 acres of unoccupied land at £200 p.a. for the first ten years, £400 p.a. for the next twenty years, and £500 p.a. for the remainder of the term. After further negotiation, the concession was increased to 200,000 acres with a corresponding doubling of the rent, with

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52 LC I. Documents accompanying 'Lever Report'. File D. 'Correspondence Relating to the Solomon Islands' (Parliamentary Paper, 1905), Section No.1.

53 ibid., Section Nos. 1-2.
the exception of the first two years which would be reduced to £50 p.a. (if 100,000 acres, or £100 p.a. if 200,000 acres).\textsuperscript{54}

In November 1899 the Company was informed that it had until the 30 September to select its land, and Woodford was instructed that these selections were to be made in areas where the selectors would not be exposed to any risk of molestation by the natives, and that the land chosen for alienation was to be such that it would not lead to any later claims or troubles from the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{55} The contradictions in these instructions were apparently overlooked by the High Commission: how was Woodford to determine if the land was unoccupied if he was unable to penetrate the bush (because of the dangers involved)? In addition there were the physical difficulties of inspecting the vast tracts of heavily forested, mountainous terrain. Woodford's answer to these problems was to ignore them, and he must bear the chief responsibility for the gross injustices that were involved in the subsequent selection of lands. He accompanied the Company party and energetically supported their choices before the High Commission.

The selection party was in the Protectorate for two months; their examinations of the land involved were extremely cursory and they made no attempt to interview the islanders. Woodford optimistically reported to the High Commissioner that no permanent or occasional occupation was seen and that

\textsuperscript{54} ibid., Section No.3.

\textsuperscript{55} ibid., Section No.8.
native claims were therefore unlikely. As most of the observation was done from the deck of a ship and the inhabitants of Kolombangara and northeast New Georgia deliberately designed their settlements to be hidden from raiders, Woodford’s assurances were meaningless. Woodford had been among the islands and had observed the effects of head-hunting for about two decades so his negligence can hardly be excused. This becomes clearer in his comments on the formal application that was lodged by the Company in May 1900. Of the north coast of New Georgia Woodford stated that it was unexplored and uninhabited, though how one could conclude the latter without the former he did not say. Regarding the south coast of New Georgia and Hele Islands he admitted that the area had not been visited and that it could be subject to possible native rights. Nevertheless he believed it to be uninhabited and recommended the land for inclusion in the concession. In fact this area, in the vicinity of Viru Harbour, was inhabited and had to be excluded from the lease. Similarly, land at Woodhouse Harbour was discovered to have coconut trees planted by the islanders and this too was withdrawn. Interestingly, this grove of trees had been noted in a report to the Company before the formal application was lodged. No doubt the P.I.C. regarded the acquisition of an already established plantation

56 WPHC No.91 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 15 May 1900.
57 ibid., Woodford to H.C., 29 May 1900.
58 ibid., Woodford to H.C., 25 March 1905.
as a fortunate bonus, for they do not seem to have enquired after those responsible for planting the trees. As Woodford was with the party that inspected Kolombangara, the existence of this plantation could hardly have escaped him. However, he did not mention it in his initial comments on the application, and it was some months later before he informed the High Commission of the situation. The May 1900 application was for a total of 200,000 acres, comprising 70,560 acres on Kolombangara, 7,000 acres from the Vona Vona islands, 5,350 from Ghizo and adjacent islets, 32,380 from New Georgia and the Hele Islands. The remainder was taken up from islands in the Manning Straits, Isabel, Choiseul and Guadalcanal. As no surveys had been undertaken, the acreages given were approximations and were later discovered to be gross underestimations. For example, the land on Kolombangara, even after the concession had been reduced by the Land Commission in the 1920's, involved an area of 107,830 acres, some 37,000 acres more than was originally estimated.

The legal apparatus necessary to enable the High Commission to lease the land to the P.I.C. was enacted in Queens Regulation No.3 of 1900, the 'Solomons Islands (Waste Land) Regulation, 1900'. This defined 'waste land' as any land not owned, cultivated or occupied by native or non-native persons. No person could take possession of such 'waste land'
except under certain conditions: an application for a Certificate of Occupation had to be forwarded through the Resident Commissioner to the High Commission. This Certificate stipulated the years of the lease, the rental and the improvement conditions. In addition the lessee had to pay for a survey; mineral rights were not included, and paths and rights of way were not to be affected. The Certificate could be cancelled if the conditions were not met. The Regulation came into force on the 1 January 1901. However, the Regulation was amended in 1901, principally to make it necessary to obtain the High Commission's consent if the holder of the Certificate wished to assign, underlet or sell any of the concession. This was a sensible move to prevent any exploitation by the Company of its extremely cheap rental by making huge profits out of sub-letting. Both the 1900 and 1901 Regulations were repealed in 1904 and replaced by the 'Solomon Islands (Waste land) Regulation, 1904', which repeated the conditions of the previous two but added the stipulation that the Resident Commissioner of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate had to approve the application before he forwarded it to the High Commission.61

Before the Pacific Islands Co. could obtain its certificate further difficulties cropped up. It was discovered that the German concern Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft had registered prior claims to land on Ghizo and Kolombangara with the High Commission. These claims were

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61 Allan, op.cit., pp. 37-8. WPHC No. 91 of 1898, contains copies of the three regulations.
purchased by the P.I.C., who then extracted a **quid pro quo** from the Colonial Office for their surrender. This amounted to £1,500 cash and an abatement of rent to £1 p.a. for the first four years and £400 p.a. for the fifth to the tenth year. Stanmore was not satisfied and suggested that a further 50,000 acres or a cash bonus of £500 would be equitable. The final agreed terms were £2,000 cash, and a rent of £1 p.a. for the first two years, £100 for the third year, and the remainder as before. Another problem was the discovery that the land at Viru Harbour was owned by islanders and had to be removed from the Certificate. The Company was compensated with an equivalent area (3,500 acres) on Rendova, but not before Stanmore had eked out all possible mileage from the situation. He complained to the Colonial Office that the land at Viru Harbour was the most important acquisition of the Company and that this was where the first settlement was to be located. This was a blatant lie, as the selectors had not even examined the Viru area and had on the contrary recommended Kolombangara as the ideal place for the Company's headquarters.62

By the time the final Certificate was completed and signed by both parties Woodford had become disenchanted with the Company. The initial enthusiasm which he had expressed not only verbally but in considerable physical assistance and advice waned as the months passed and he saw no sign of development by the P.I.C. in the islands. In December 1903 he wrote to Stanmore expressing his disappointment that the Company

62 *LC I., op.cit.*, Section Nos.26-42.
had not begun work in the Protectorate. Even worse, the Company was considering an amalgamation with a German concern. Woodford was enormously concerned about the protection of British influence in the Pacific, and he considered the Germans to be the main threat, so the Company's actions were tantamount to treason. He advised Stanmore that the P.I.C. should abandon its concession if it did not commence work. His disillusionment further expressed itself in the increasing acerbity of his letters to the High Commission in Fiji. In January 1904 when discussing the land to replace the withdrawn Viru block he indicated (for the first time) that the P.I.C. leases would surely extend to more than 200,000 acres, and that as they did not seem to intend to work their holdings they should not be granted the additional land. Woodford must have realised long before that the Company had underestimated the size of its concession, but it was only now that he considered appraising his superiors of the fact. In June he complained that the Company had extended its holdings on Kolombangara and Ghizo through errors in the final licence, and that while other people were waiting for land, and developing their holdings, the P.I.C. was doing nothing. By the end of 1904 he recommended that the High Commissioner cancel the Certificate of Occupation as the Company was only interested in 'hawking it

63 WPHC No. 91 of 1898, Woodford to Stanmore, 1 December 1903.  
64 ibid., Woodford to H.C., 23 January 1904.  
65 ibid., Woodford to H.C., 19 June 1904.
Woodford was being a little harsh on the Company as Stanmore did attempt to raise capital for the Solomon Islands operation but was unsuccessful, and the prospects for the islands paled in comparison with the commercial possibilities of the discovery of phosphate on Ocean Island - which the Company was strenuously exploiting. In 1905 the P.I.C. negotiated with Sir William Lever to join in the working of the Solomons concession. Lever preferred to acquire the holdings outright and eventually purchased them for £5,000, and thus the P.I.C. Certificate was surrendered to the High Commission and Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. were instructed to apply for a new one.  

On the whole, Woodford's role in the P.I.C. episode was hardly commendable; his eagerness to see the Protectorate developed allowed him to overlook the interests of the islanders and actively participate in a massive land grab that resulted in great injustice and was later to necessitate the Land Commission of the twenties. His wide experience in the islands should have made him aware that a superficial absence of settlement along the coast did not preclude the existence of sheltered villages in the mountains constructed as a result of the danger of head-hunting raids. Indeed, in 1903, before the Certificate was finalised, the effect of the cessation of head-hunting could already be seen in certain areas of the

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66 ibid., Woodford to H.C., 31 December 1904.
Solomons. On Santa Isabel coastal areas that had been classed as 'waste land' were beginning to be occupied by islanders who no longer had to live in the mountains because the danger from New Georgia raiders had passed. 68

At about the same time that the P.I.C. first became involved in the New Georgia Group another European concern expressed an interest in the area. It too was to become a major landholder, but its presence in the islands was to be much more protracted and its influence immeasurably larger. This was the Methodist Mission.

The Methodists had been acquainted with the New Georgia Group for some years. The Rev. George Brown had visited the Roviana Lagoon in 1880 on his way to New Britain. In the 1890s Solomon Islanders connected with the Mission in Fiji requested the Board of Missions to undertake missionary work in their home islands. Brown, General Secretary of the Board, again visited Roviana in the late 1890s and on his return agitated for a start to be made in mission work in the islands. 69 This suggestion also found favour with Woodford, and in 1901 Brown was back in New Georgia to make further investigations. The local big-men were unenthusiastic about the proposal: Bera of Marovo stated definitely that he did not

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68 WPHC No.91 of 1898, Woodford to Stanmore, 1 December 1903.

want missionaries in his area as he feared an epidemic would follow as it had in Bugotu. The reaction in the Roviana Lagoon was no more favourable, but was side-stepped: it was decided to go ahead and establish the Mission, but not to ask Ingava for permission as this would only court a refusal. The *Missionary Review* reported that the 'chiefs' of Roviana had no 'real power' over the people so that any opposition to the new Mission would not be effectively organised. The authority of the big-men, which never had been absolute, had probably been diminished in the wake of the suppression of head-hunting.

Despite the impression that the Mission liked to create of themselves as pioneers in a land swarming with ferocious savages, by the time of the arrival of the Methodists the Munda area was not dangerous, although the same could certainly not be said of other islands, notably Vella Lavella and the Marovo. The actual establishment of the Mission probably owed most to the traders who gave the Methodists every assistance, including a small island to use as their first head-quarters. This was Nusa Zonga, originally bought by the trader Kelly in 1881 and transferred by him to the Mission in 1902. The Mission soon added to this small holding: in July 1902 they purchased an estimated 250 acres at Kokenggolo for £15. The vendors were Ingava, Gumi and Mia. Ingava had already established his right to sell this land, as it involved the same area which had been under dispute with Pratt in the

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70 *AMMR*, XI.5 (1901), pp. 2-4; XI.8 (1901), pp. 7-10.
71 *AMMR*, XI.5 (1901), pp. 2-4; XII.3 (1902), pp. 3-4.
WPHC. No.91 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 1 July 1902.
early 1890s. It seems that this transaction was facilitated by Wickham and Wheatley's good relations with Ingava; they spoke to him in an attempt to soften his attitude and apparently succeeded, as he agreed not to oppose the Mission although he remained unenthusiastic about it.\footnote{DLS 'Deeds and Claims to Land' (Book A), p. 18.} In December 1902 the Mission received another gift from a trader; an estimated 600 acres at Mbanga which was sold to the Methodists by Lars Nielsen for a nominal £1.\footnote{DLS op.cit., p. 24.} This latter block was excellent plantation land and was to be used as such by the Mission. In less than a year the Methodist Mission had acquired over 800 acres of freehold land in the Munda region. Why it was felt necessary to obtain such tracts is not stated in the Mission records: the growing number of these acquisitions seem to have been regarded as indications of success, just as an increase in the number of scholars or church attendance was, although the connection between acquiring land and saving souls was not stated. In later years the connection became obvious as the Mission began to develop the so-called 'industrial side' to mission work. Thus the Mission could make a profit out of its holdings while at the same time teaching the islanders to live and work by Christian principles. This was convenient for the Mission, but enraged some of the planters and traders who considered the Mission was exploiting its position as a spiritual leader to compete in the secular field of private enterprise.
In the years before 1910 the development of the Mission was rather slow; although the islanders displayed a thirst for the white man's knowledge and responded eagerly to the education programme, they were not so keen to commit themselves fully to the church. By 1910 the Mission had some 582 scholars and an estimated attendance at public worship of 6,300, but only 78 had become full members of the church. Nevertheless there were a number of encouraging signs for the missionaries. Although the older generation were suspicious of the Mission many younger men saw in it the way of advancement in a world increasingly dominated by Europeans. One of the most notable of these young men was Boaz Suna, the grandson of Ingava's half-sister. Boaz Suna's father Gumi also gave the Mission his support. Gumi did not have the stature of Ingava's nephew Gemu but he was an important man in the Lagoon and his conversion established close relations with Ingava's mbutu mbutu. Another significant ally was Boaz Veo, a big-man of the mbutu mbutu Lodumaho, whose land was adjacent to Kokenggolo. Ingava died in 1906, and although his influence had declined since the cessation of head-hunting and with the increasing feebleness of his age, the influence and wealth of his family was still strong. This was reflected


75 J.R. Metcalfe, Papers. Originals in the possession of their author. MFW. 'Articles on the Solomon Islands'. 'The Gumi Family', pp. 2-5.
in mourning ceremonies: he was placed 'in state' for two
days surrounded by the emblems of his status - the bakia
and poata. Hundreds of islanders came to view the body and
his family organised extensive feasts and mourning arrangements. In the last few years of his life his quiet opposition to the
church had diminished and he had become, according to Goldie,
a sincere friend of the Mission. He had no children and his
successor as mbangara was Gemu, described by Goldie as a 'fine
fellow' who would assist the missionaries. The Mission's
close connections with Ingava's family helped overcome resist­
ance to its teachings, and in later years when the Methodists' power in the Group became more established it reinforced the
stature of Ingava's mbutu mbutu.

The first decade of the century also saw the gradual
disintegration of customs and practices previously regarded
as inviolable. In some cases, such as the segregation of
women during childbirth, the Mission encouraged this process
by example. In other cases, Goldie used the threat of Govern­
ment action to stop practices involving physical harm to
individuals. Another boost to the Mission's activities was the
influenza epidemic of 1903. The Mission claimed that Mrs
Goldie's medical work resulted in a lower death rate at Munda,
although it is difficult to see what she could have done in
the epidemic. Certainly, her treatment of minor ailments was
popular and brought people to the station. Perhaps the

76 Edge-Partington, op.cit., pp. 22-3.
77 AMMR, XVI.7 (1906), p. 2.
78 AMMR, XIII.8 (1903), p. 4; XIV.1 (1904), pp. 4-5; XIV.2 (1904), pp. 4-5; XIV.4 (1904), p. 7.
major benefit the Mission derived from the epidemic was that it killed many of the older, more intractable islanders.

Over these years the Mission steadily expanded its activities throughout the Group. In 1904 Fijian teachers were placed on Simbo and at Mbilua. At the latter place there was initial opposition but Gumi and Boaz Veo spoke to the islanders and they agreed to accept a missionary. In the same year a teacher was sent to Choiseul and in 1906 a European missionary was established there. The increase in spiritual endeavours was accompanied by further acquisitions of land. In June and July of 1907 the Mission went on a buying spree and purchased in order, 328 acres at Sikuni, Vella Lavella, 100 acres on Simbo, 16.5 acres at Kundu, Ranongga, a further 745 acres at Sikuni, the islet of Perasare near Njorio, Vella Lavella, and 160 estimated acres at Njorio itself. The total cost to the Mission was £48. These purchases were overshadowed by one single transaction at Mundi Mundi, Vella Lavella. Here, in June 1907 Goldie, the chairman of the Methodist Mission, acting on his own behalf, bought over 6,000 acres for £75. It is unknown whether the vendors were aware of the distinction between this, a private purchase, and that made several weeks beforehand at Sikuni by Goldie on behalf of the Mission. In any event the distinction was not apparent on the surface, for

79 AMMR, XIV.1 (1904), pp. 4-5; XIII.11 (1904), p. 4; XVI.6 (1906), pp. 3-5.
both the Mundi Mundi holding and the larger Mission properties were to be developed on similar lines.

In the Solomon Islands District Synod of November 1909 the missionaries requested the Mission Board in Australia to provide £250 per annum for the development of mission lands. They reported that Woodford had been very encouraging with regard to the industrial side of the mission work, and that action should be taken as soon as possible. The Synod considered that development of mission lands would give young people suitable employment and prevent them from being scattered by recruiting agents. It was convinced that all mission work in the islands should be conducted on industrial lines with the object of teaching the islanders to live and work by Christian principles.81

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Although such large concerns as the Pacific Islands Co., Levers and Burns Philp were expressing their interest in establishing copra plantations early in the 1900s, the pioneers in this activity were individuals who had spent some time in the Protectorate as traders; prominent among them were Norman Wheatley and Frank Wickham. Wheatley had begun planting operations in the Roviana area in the late 1890s; in 1900 he expanded his activities with the purchase of the island of Rovana or Hamerai, in the Marovo Lagoon. He bought the 360 acre island with assorted trade goods and then entered into an

81 MCA Vol. 178, Solomon Islands District Synod, 12 November 1909.
agreement with the local islanders under which they would plant the trees and collect the nuts in return for a consignment of rifles which they could use to protect themselves against raiders. In 1904-5 an agent and store were placed on the island. These somewhat crude efforts were improved upon when he obtained an occupation certificate for a number of islets off Ghizo encompassing 200 acres in January 1903. He increased this holding with another 400 acres of islets in the same region in January 1908. Both leases were for 99 years and involved improvement conditions that could result in forfeiture if not fulfilled. Wheatley spent a 'considerable sum' in improving and planting the islands but was forced to mortgage his properties for an advance from Burns Philp in 1904. By 1907 Wheatley had planted a total of 48,000 trees on his various properties, and was said to be aiming for a total of 100,000 trees. His plantations were recognised as the best examples of scientific planting in the Solomons.

Frank Wickham, who had been trading in the New Georgia Group for over twenty years, branched out into planting in the early 1900s. Wickham was fortunate in his extremely cordial relations with Woodford, who wrote to the High Commissioner that 'there is not a white trader in the Protectorate who deserves encouragement and consideration at the hands of the

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82 Burns, Philp & Co., Ltd., Handbook of Information for Western Pacific Islands (Sydney, 1899), p. 50.

83 WPHC No. 152 of 1902, Woodford to H.C., 5 August 1902; No. 164 of 1907, Woodford to H.C., 24 August 1907; Encl. F.J. Barnett, 'Report on visit to Western Solomons', July 1907; No. 208 of 1907, Woodford to H.C., 4 November 1907.
Government more than Mr Wickham'.  He was endorsed by Mahaffy, who praised his fairness and kindness to both white and black, and his willingness to cooperate with the Government at all times. As a result Wickham had no difficulty in obtaining an Occupation Certificate for 400 acres of land on Ghizo in January 1903. This was Wickham's first land purchase since he had acquired the tiny island of Hobupeka as a trading base in the 1870s, but he was soon to make up the lost ground. In 1905 and 1906 he acquired 4,800 acres of freehold land at Kenelo on Rendova. Another trader who added planting to his interests was Joseph Binskin, who had come to the Solomons in 1899 and had been employed by Wheatley as an agent on Simbo. Binskin's acquisitions were interesting in that they illustrated the weaknesses of the Waste Land Regulations when combined with inadequate investigation by a Government eager for revenue and commercial development. The island of Mbava, off the coast of Vella Lavella, was uninhabited but used by the toutou Bava for hunting and fishing. In 1901 Binskin approached representatives of this toutou to arrange the purchase of Mbava. Woodford, however, insisted that as the island was uninhabited it could not be purchased outright as freehold land and acquired it for the Government under the Waste Lands Regulation. It was then leased to Binskin under Certificates of Occupation, thus bringing in revenue for the administration

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84 WPHC No. 151 of 1902, Woodford to H.C., 5 August 1902.
85 ibid.
86 DLS 'Deeds and Claims' (A), pp. 136, 142.
and ensuring that it was developed through the development conditions. Binskin also purchased a number of much smaller islands and a block at Njorio, Vella Lavella. Those acquisitions were all freehold.

While individual traders and planters may have pioneered the exploitation of the New Georgia Group with copra plantations, the larger economic concerns were not slow to sense the possibilities. The steamers of Burns, Philp & Co. had been making the Sydney to Solomon Islands run for some time. In the late 1890s their ships called at Ranongga, Simbo and Roviana. By 1903 the service to the Solomons was running six times a year, and this was later increased so that the S.S. Mindini was making the trip every six weeks. The round trip took about thirty-five days and cost £20, stopping at Ghizo and other ports in the Solomons. In January 1904 the Company obtained an Occupation Certificate for 14 acres of land at Ghizo on which they eventually erected a warehouse and store. They also capitalised on the financial difficulties of some planters by accepting mortgages on properties in return for advances. Burns, Philp soon began to acquire

87 WPHC No.2001 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 20 June 1922. Encl. Alexander to Kane, 1 August 1922.

Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd., Cruises to the Pacific Islands and Papua (1913), p. 3.

89 WPHC No.137 of 1903, Woodford to H.C., 1 August 1903, 15 January 1908 and 24 August 1907.
No.808 of 1909, Lucas to Mahaffy, 29 July 1909.
freehold land outright. In 1907 they purchased the entire island of Tetepare, an estimated 33,200 acres, for £100. This island had been uninhabited for at least 25 years when the owners had moved to Mbaniata on Rendova. Woodford reported that the former occupants had been wanting to sell the island for some time and that they were pleased with the price they received. The High Commission considered the sum of £100 to be 'trifling' and opined that it was the duty of the Government to safeguard native interests and secure a good price in such cases, but they nevertheless approved the transaction. As the Company had paid less than a penny an acre, 'trifling' was indeed an accurate description. However, there were some drawbacks for Burns, Philp. Tetepare is a rocky, inhospitable island with few areas suitable for plantations; it also lacked a harbour. The western end of the island, in the locality of Waugh Bay, was the only area suitable for commercial exploitation.

Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. had acquired the Pacific Islands Company's concession in 1905. In 1907 they applied for a new Certificate of Occupation. This certificate was not executed until 1914, after protracted negotiations, but Levers had been allowed to enter into possession of the land in 1907. They were slow to develop their holdings, beginning with the land in the vicinity of Hathorn Sound: in 1908 clearing was started at Noro, and in the following year they began work on Kohinggo. By 1911 only 744 acres had

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90 WPHC No. 111 of 1908, Woodford to H.C., 21 February 1908.
been cultivated of the entire 200,000 acre concession. Nevertheless, Levers had not been entirely idle; they were eager to add freehold properties to their holdings. In 1905 they purchased 5,000 acres of land at Rendova Harbour for £50, and in 1906 a further 4,350 acres at Viru Harbour, New Georgia. The latter purchase was conducted by the Rev. J. Goldie for the company and he seems to have sadly neglected his role as self-proclaimed protector of the islanders. The price was £40 worth of trade goods (later described by Woodford as inadequate), and the vendors were later discovered to have been bush dwellers from further up the Viru River with no valid claim to ownership of the land. For these reasons the transaction was cancelled by the High Commissioner, on Woodford's advice, in 1910.

Another Levers purchase was rejected at the same time; this was a transaction involving three miles of foreshore of mature coconut trees near Cape Satisfaction, Ranongga. Levers had paid £100 for this land and it appears that the original sale had been for only 250 yards of foreshore. Woodford considered that the islanders should not be allowed to alienate mature tree land for such paltry sums, and the High Commissioner supported this contention. A similar

attempted purchase by Levers on Vella Lavella was also rejected. This involved a strip of coastal frontage densely planted with coconuts, owned by several independent natives. The 'vendors' of the strip had only the right to sell a small portion of the land. Woodford again protested that the price was 'utterly inadequate'.

Woodford's increasingly critical attitude to Levers was not only based on what he considered to be the unnecessary slowness with which they were developing their properties; he also had good reason to believe that they were trying to usurp his authority in the islands. In 1908 Mahaffy reported to the High Commissioner that Levers wished to become the controlling factor in the Solomons. They desired to increase their land holding above the 200,000 acres already obtained and, like the Pacific Islands Company before them, were ambitious to get 'some sort of charter' to run the group. A Levers official attempted to organise a deputation to protest about Woodford's administration, but the move was ignored by the other European residents who had no love for the Company, sensing the danger of monopolisation of the Solomons if Levers managed to increase their influence any further. The agents and managers that Levers had recruited to run their plantations were also causing trouble. Most of these men were Australians whose dislike and hostility towards the 'niggers' often led to cruelty in their treatment of labourers on the plantations. This problem was accentuated by drunkenness;

94 ibid.
many of the men could not adapt to the loneliness and physical discomfort of island life and sought refuge in the bottle.\textsuperscript{95} Some of these matters came to a head in August 1908 with an incident on Levers' Rendova Plantation. George Fulton, the Assistant General Manager of Levers' Pacific Plantations Ltd., was visiting the Rendova plantation and desired a photograph of a naked Malaita woman. Hermes, an employee of Levers, attempted to take the photograph but was threatened by the woman's lover, another Malaitan labourer. Hermes shot the man and he later died. In the subsequent inquiry Fulton attempted to suppress the evidence concerning the photograph: Hermes left the Protectorate and a prohibition order was placed against his return. This sordid affair not only illustrated the callous irresponsibility of Levers' employees, but also provided the administration with a stick to beat the Company. Levers headquarters in Australia hastily assured the High Commission of their desire to work in harmony with the administration and emphasised that the Company did not sanction hostile attitudes towards the Government on the part of their employees in the Solomons. The High Commission in return, frostily criticised the conduct of Fulton and warned that such behaviour could lead to serious attention being paid to the affairs of Levers in the islands.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{95} WPHC No. 830 of 1908, Mahaffy to H.C., 21 December 1908.

\textsuperscript{96} ibid. WPHC No. 833 of 1908, Mahaffy to H.C., 22 December 1908; Meek to H.C., 12 October 1908; H.C. to Levers, 16 October 1908. (These letters are filed in No. 444 Of 1908).
By the beginning of 1910, of the estimated 2,000 square miles that comprised the New Georgia Group, an approximated 218,441 acres had been alienated. This figure was the sum of 54,557 acres of freehold alienated land, and 163,881 acres leased under Occupation Licence. Of the latter figure, 160,870 acres was under the one concession - that of Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. Although the actual lease was not finalised until 1914, Levers had been allowed into possession in 1907 and the rent payable was calculated from 1904, the time of the first lease to the Pacific Islands Company. During the negotiations the length of the lease was increased from 99 years to 999 years, so for all practical purposes the land was to be alienated indefinitely. Although the proportion of alienated to non-alienated land was not high (17.07%), it was the nature of the alienated land that was to cause trouble. The ideal location for the cultivation of coconuts is below an altitude of 1,000 feet, preferably near the coast on sandy/loamy soils just above the highest flood level. Thus virtually all of the alienated land involved stretches of foreshore, the very areas that were to be preferred for village settlement once the danger of head-hunting had passed. Land excluded from possible settlement because of alienation included: the entire islands of Tetepare and Mbava; the north-western, northern and eastern coasts of Kolombangara; the northern and western coasts of New Georgia and Rendova;

97 DLS 'Red Book', passim; 'Deeds and Claims' (A), passim; 'Deeds and Claims' (B), passim; 'Miscellaneous Instruments', passim. LC I., loc.cit.

substantial parts of the foreshore of Vella Lavella and numerous small lagoon islands. Although these areas had been alienated by deed by January 1910, the actual proportion that had been occupied was quite small: less than 1% of the Levers concession had been developed, and the other large block, Tetepare (33,200 acres) had not been touched. These two holdings together comprised about 90% of the entire sum of alienated land.

The slowness of development of holdings in the islands was in part due to the cost involved. Although the price of copra had been steadily increasing throughout the first ten years of the century, a considerable capital sum was required to commence a plantation. One could not expect a return from a plantation until the sixth year when the trees began to bear fruit, but expenses during the first five years were high. In 1905 it was calculated that to clear and plant 3,015 acres over a five year period would cost £26,050, and that it would not be until the eighth year that returns began to exceed expenses. By the twelfth year, after having planted cumulatively some 5,750 acres one could hope for a return of £34,920 minus expenses of £7,450. These figures were based on the 1905 prices which were bringing in a profit of about £12 per ton of copra in the islands so that if the price dropped a great deal of money could be lost.99 Another problem facing the developers of plantations was the difficulty in obtaining labour to clear the bush and then work the plantations. The

99 WPHC No. 70 of 1906, Woodford to H.C., 10 February 1906. Encl. Giblin to Stanmore, 21 July 1905.
issue was one which aroused considerable ill-feeling between Woodford and the High Commission in Fiji. In 1904 Woodford advocated the cessation of recruiting of Solomon Islanders for labour in Fiji on the grounds that the men were needed in the Solomons for local development. He was to cross swords with the High Commissioner, Sir Everard Im Thurn, a number of times over this issue and the tone of his correspondence was frequently extremely hostile and his manner of expression blunt.¹⁰⁰ Levers' solution to the labour shortage was the importation of indentured labourers from India or other Asian sources, but despite support from the Solomons administration and the High Commission this was disallowed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁰¹

The labour question was just one aspect of a general deterioration in the relations between Woodford and the High Commissioner's office which almost led to the former's enforced retirement. Woodford considered that since the departure of Sir John Thurston and Wilfred Collet, the Secretary to the High Commissioner, officials in Fiji had been 'entirely out of touch with the Western Pacific'.¹⁰² He continually corresponded directly with the Secretary of State instead of

¹⁰⁰ WPHC No.127 of 1904, Woodford to H.C., 21 November 1904 and 11 January 1908.
No.136 of 1904, Woodford to H.C., 16 January 1907.

¹⁰¹ WPHC No.774 of 1909, Meek to H.C., 3 August 1909; C.O. to H.C., 27 October 1909; Woodford to H.C., 26 December 1909; Meek to H.C., 13 July 1910; H.C. to C.O., 30 June 1911; C.O. to Levers, 28 December 1911.

¹⁰² WPHC No.59 of 1907, Woodford to H.C., 6 May 1907.
proceeding through the correct channels because he believed that neglect and delay in the High Commissioner's office was harming the welfare and progress of the Protectorate. Woodford's request that control of the Solomons be transferred from the High Commissioner to the Resident Commissioner was refused by the Colonial Office and he was eventually forced to apologise to Im Thurn or face the prospect of his enforced retirement. 103

Im Thurn was of the opinion that Woodford's 'deviations' in behaviour were the product of his health, which had suffered after years of protracted residence in the tropics. This was probably true, especially when combined with his finely tuned sense of his own importance and his mounting frustration over the pace of development in the Protectorate. The latter, he considered, had been impaired by the parsimony and neglect of his superiors, who had consistently refused to recognise that the Solomons were 'the finest group in the Western Pacific and compared with them New Guinea is a desert and the New Hebrides a howling waste'. 105

There was some justification for Woodford's complaints: from 1897 to 1907 the value of the Protectorate's exports had increased from £16,818 to £50,273, Government revenue had increased from £1,257 to £4,618, but Government expenditure had hovered between £1,000 and £3,000. Apart

103 WPHC No. 65 of 1907, H.C. to C.O., 11 June 1907; H.C. to Woodford, 28 March 1908; H.C. to C.O., 18 May 1908.
104 WPHC No. 65 of 1907. H.C. to C.O., 18 May 1908.
105 WPHC No. 82 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 24 May 1905.
from some Imperial Grants in the 1897 to 1901 period totalling £4,200, the Solomons administration was expected to pay its own way — it was notoriously difficult to extract funds from the Treasury in London. As a result, the salaries of officers of the administration were quite low; in 1905 Woodford complained that the Acting Resident at Gizo was receiving the 'mere pittance' of £150 per annum, quite insufficient for such a responsible position. The role of the Government officer at Gizo was an extremely difficult one: his functions included running the Government plantation, supervising both police and prison, acting as a magistrate, collector of customs and postmaster. In addition he had to contend with the constant rivalries and antagonisms between the various planters, traders and missionaries, and to undertake the often hazardous navigation of the Group in the course of his work. The strains of the physical environment also left their mark — malaria, dysentry and tropical ulcers — however the burden of loneliness had abated with the increasing commercial development of the islands. In 1908 there were over twenty Europeans resident in the New Georgia Group, several of whom lived at Gizo in close proximity to the Government station.

106 RNAS 44 'Northern Division Box'. Enclosure No.19, Reports on the Solomon Islands, 1900 and 1908. Includes 'Statistical Information upon the British Solomon Islands Protectorate', supplied to Captain Vaughan Lewes by C.M. Woodford, dated 6 August 1908.

107 WPHC, loc.cit.

108 RNAS 44, loc.cit. 'White Residents and Settlers in the British Solomon Islands 1 August 1908'. 
The early history of the Gizo station was somewhat turbulent, reflecting the difficulties of the position. From the opening of the Gizo Station in 1899 to 1910 there were only two full-time Resident Magistrates, with the powers of Deputy Commissioners of the Western Pacific, appointed to the post. These were Arthur Mahaffy and T.W. Edge-Partington, both energetic and efficient officers. Mahaffy left the Protectorate in September 1904 to become the Colonial Secretary and Receiver-General in Fiji; he was replaced by Edge-Partington, initially appointed as a temporary and provisional 'Peace Officer', though soon confirmed as a District Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner. Edge-Partington was young, born in 1883, an ex-Navy man who had left the service after failing his lieutenant's examination. He had taken part in the expedition to relieve Peking, and had a strong family connection with the islands as his father was J. Edge-Partington, a noted ethnologist of the Pacific. 109

Edge-Partington's service to Gizo ended in 1909 in scandalous disgrace. In the words of Mahaffy, he 'contracted a connection of an immoral kind' with a Simbo woman. The understanding Mahaffy, though noting that he had 'permanently impaired his influence with the natives' by reducing himself to the level of the disreputable traders, most of whom kept women, decided that there was 'certain allowance to be made' as Edge-Partington was a young, sociable man leading a very solitary life and that his work, otherwise, was excellent.

109 WPHC No. 112 of 1900, Woodford to H.C., 31 December 1904.
As a result Edge-Partington was shifted to Malaita on a year's probation.¹¹⁰ This affair, though illustrating the pressures on colonial officers posted to isolated stations, was of minor importance when compared to other difficulties afflicting the administration at Gizo. The basic problem was replacing the regular officers, Mahaffy and Edge-Partington, when they took leave. The poor pay of Acting Officers was not likely to attract suitable men, even if they had been available, and as a result Woodford often had to make do with what was at hand in the Protectorate. Some of these men were unused to life in the tropics and could tolerate the conditions for only a few months. Others were the sons of 'gentlemen', who had spent years of aimless wandering though the colonies, and who were likely to throw in the job at the smell of something different. Some, like William Hazelton, saw more attraction, and profit, in trading; and were not reluctant to capitalise on their past government service in establishing their business.

Hazelton worked for the administration from January 1901 to April 1904, during which he was Acting Officer in charge of Gizo for over a year. He resigned because of the smallness of his pay (£150 p.a.) to go into trading, being financed by another trader who probably saw the value of having an ex-government employee. Woodford described Hazelton as a 'most zealous and energetic officer', and these qualities soon appeared in his business dealings with the islanders.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ WPHC No.836 of 1908, Mahaffy to H.C., 22 December 1908.
¹¹¹ WPHC No.112 of 1900, Woodford to H.C., 9 June 1903, 15 June 1903, Hazelton to H.C., 5 May 1904.
Capitalising on his status, Hazelton introduced a new system of copra collection to the Group. A station would be established near extensive groves of native owned trees and all the coconuts found in the groves would be 'collected'. When the owner appeared he was paid the price the 'collector' thought fit, and had to be satisfied with it. One of Hazelton's collaborators in this scheme was Hermes, whose attitudes and actions have already been described. This simple form of robbery was soon adopted by other traders and was to be a cause of considerable trouble in the Marovo area. 112

Hazelton's methods were an indication of the changing nature of European-islander trade in the Group. In 1910, Arthur Mahaffy reporting to the High Commission on the state of the Protectorate, noted that relations between Europeans and islanders were not as friendly as they had been in the past. He concluded that this was due to the increasing numbers of young and inexperienced traders in the islands. In the 'old days' the traders were relatively few in number and conservative in their methods; they were well known by the islanders and they knew that if they departed from a certain line of conduct their trade could be damaged and their lives endangered. In more recent times, however, the younger traders had adopted methods that were not only difficult for the islanders to comprehend, but also often amounted to extortion. 113 The presence of the government

112 WPHC No.830 of 1908, Mahaffy to H.C., 21 December 1908. No.784 of 1910, Mahaffy to H.C., 8 April 1910.

113 WPHC No.784 of 1910, Mahaffy to H.C., 8 April 1910 and 11 May 1910.
and the threat of punitive action had reduced the islanders' options in retribution. Mahaffy's comments seem to have been justified: certainly a number of the old-style traders were rogues, but even a scoundrel like Edmund Pratt had to reconsider his methods in the face of retaliation from the islanders.\textsuperscript{114}

In the decade after the attack on the \textit{Eclipse} in 1897 there were no reported assaults on traders by islanders of the New Georgia Group. This growing security not only diminished the constraints on the conduct of traders, but it also resulted in an increase in their numbers. The government station at Gizo had been the seed of a town. Burns, Philp & Co. had established its warehouse and wharf nearby and Gizo had become the port of the Group, with the company's steamer calling every six weeks. On these occasions large numbers of traders would congregate at the port to ship their copra and exchange mail. Several other traders had built houses at Gizo, and by 1908 there were Europeans engaged in trading or planting at Vella Lavella, Ranongga, Simbo, Mbava, Rendova, Munda, Marovo and Vona Vona.\textsuperscript{115}

With the increasing numbers of traders competition became fiercer, profits suffered and new methods to boost them had to be devised.\textsuperscript{116} The situation became so critical

\textsuperscript{114} LC I. Claim No. 21, Wickham to Woodford, 30 May 1912.


\textsuperscript{116} An indication of the difficulties facing traders can be found in the accounts of Oliver Burns. Between July 1906 and November 1907 Burns had costs of £1045/12/5; from September 1906 to July 1907 he obtained only £720/-/-2 worth of copra and shell. See WPHC No. 835 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 10 June 1910.
that in 1908 the 'Western Solomons Traders Association' was formed. This short-lived group was organised in an attempt to enforce some form of regularity in trading practices so that profits could recover. The increasing competition had resulted in credit trading getting out of hand. Traders anxious to establish 'contracts' with the islanders who supplied copra had been giving credit lavishly and were now finding themselves out of pocket, as such 'contracts' were difficult to enforce without permanently alienating customers. Hence the 'Traders Association' was keen to have the administration make credit trading illegal and to enforce the payment of debts. Woodford agreed that credit trading was undesirable but stated that he had no power to punish debtors and considered it unlikely that a law to enforce a trading agreement would be sanctioned by the High Commission. The traders then attempted to discipline themselves. Under an agreement they were all to deposit £50 which would be confiscated if any member broke the conditions of the agreement. These involved a list of set prices, a ban on credit and the giving of gratuities in connection with trading.\(^\text{117}\)

The consequence of the traders' pact was an increasing use of the Hazelton-Hermes method of collecting copra. Often the parties that collected the nuts from the groves (without prior consultation with the owners) were armed, theoretically for protection but more probably to discourage

\(^{117}\) WPHC No.219 of 1908, Woodford to H.C., 20 May 1908. Encl. No.2 Meek to Woodford, 11 April 1908.
intervention. Armed groups of indentured labourers (usually Malaitans) were also used by European traders to conduct trading operations and to clear new plantations. The intimidation and coercion of islanders into concessions was common.\textsuperscript{118} By such means the traders could undermine the islanders' ability to contain exploitation through the boycotting of dealings with offending Europeans. Short of violence, this was the only tactic left open to them in any attempt to influence the course of their relationship with the white man.

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In the first decade of the Protectorate administration, the indigenous society of the New Georgia Group had been subject to severe pressure. In a few short years the islands had been largely 'pacified' and large-scale raiding had been completely suppressed. The administration had been fortunate in that its actions had been followed by serious epidemics, which probably further weakened the will of the people to resist. Nevertheless in some isolated areas, notably the interior of Vangunu and Vella Lavella, local raiding on a much reduced scale continued. Elsewhere in the Group, heads were taken surreptitiously on important occasions, such as the death of a powerful big-man.\textsuperscript{119} The purchasing of pinausu, generally from Choiseul, still went on and was

\textsuperscript{118} WPHC No.784 of 1910, Mahaffy to H.C., 8 April 1910.
\textsuperscript{119} RNAS 44, \textit{loc.cit.}, Report entitled 'Solomon Islands, Condition, August 1908', by Captain Vaughan Lewes.
accompanied with some of the ceremony and ritual that had been associated with the big head-hunting expeditions. It seems, however, that the satisfaction and excitement derived from this form of substitution was limited and declining.¹²⁰

In the same period island society was placed under further stress by the intensification of European commercial activities in the Group. For the first time larger blocks of land were being permanently alienated: bush once used for hunting was being cleared and planted, and more Europeans were taking up residence on their blocks. Traders were adopting strong-arm tactics and destroying what once had been an equitable commercial relationship. The administration's officers at Gizo did nothing to 'protect' the islanders from these and other developments. The Gizo station functioned largely as a police force, with the district officer's other main interest being the management of the government's copra plantation.¹²¹ The Protectorate had no provisions for the improvement of the health and general welfare of the islanders, beyond suppressing and punishing violence. After Woodford and Mahaffy's actions of 1898-1901 the Gizo station faced no major crisis for seven years, and its inadequacies went undetected. Indeed, to some the administration seemed to be doing a marvellous job:

¹²⁰ Hocart, 'Warfare', pp. 305-6, 312-15.

¹²¹ With assiduous work on this plantation, some officers were able to produce a profit for the government over the cost of running the Gizo station for a year. WPHC No.112 of 1900, Hazelton to H.C., 5 May 1904. Encl. Hazelton to Woodford, 8 April 1904.
If one wishes to behold an object-lesson in support of the British method of sustaining *The White Man's Burden*, he need go no further than the Solomons to seek it ... Nowhere could there be a better example of the peculiar genius of the Englishman for the ruling of uncivilized subject races, and for his splendid natural capacity for reducing order and good government out of chaos and anarchy.  

Unfortunately for the islanders of the New Georgia Group, the image and the reality were poles apart: for in 1908-10, when the administration was confronted with serious trouble, the 'splendid natural capacity' was to prove spectacularly deficient.

From 1908 to 1910 the pressures of the previous decade boiled over, and conflict broke out in the Marovo Lagoon and on Vella Lavella. This was to be the last attempt by islanders of the Group to assert their independence from the administration and to dictate the terms of their relationship with the white man. The Marovo and Vella Lavella affairs were similar to a certain degree: both involved assaults on traders and were partly inspired by the administration's stupidity, and both were reactions to the transitions that were occurring in island society. However, on a deeper level there were differences. The Marovo troubles involved islanders who had comprehensive dealings with Europeans, and who were not initially 'outlaws' or 'renegades', although they soon became so. The troubles were further fomented by the avarice of traders and the insensitivity of the government. The violence

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in Marovo was primarily a reaction to the manner of change in the islands. On Vella Lavella, at the heart of the troubles was a violent rejection of the fact of change. The central figure was an 'outlaw' big-man who struggled to maintain his status on traditional terms, as a head-hunter and fighting man. This affair, like that in the Marovo, was complicated by the inept actions of the administration. The conflicts of 1908-10 also mark a significant point in the relations between the various European interests in the islands – commerce, mission and government. They highlighted the growing dissension between the three, and saw the emergence of the Methodist Mission as a power in the Group. All these events can be seen in much greater detail than is usual with the history of the Group, for in addition to the administration’s records there are abundant references to them in the Methodist Mission's archives and also an account from the viewpoint of the traders. The latter is in the form of a book written by Frank Burnett, a traveller who was residing with Norman Wheatley at the time.

The Marovo troubles exploded in May 1908, when Oliver Burns, an independent trader with his headquarters at Nono, was murdered on board his boat. The killer was Lanesi, who undertook the murder at the instigation of a Vangunu big-man, Lela. The origins of this affair went back to 1906, when Lela's brother Ara was arrested for killing twelve other islanders and sent to Tulagi. There he committed suicide before he could be tried. On hearing of this Lela determined to take a European's head in revenge. Burnett states that Ara's original crime was in part due to the ineptitude of the administration. According to this source, Ara's village had
been raided and some of his people killed. He approached the administration which, in Burnett’s words, ‘favoured him with some ambiguous advice, which he construed as an authorisation to take the law into his own hands’. Accordingly he raided his enemies and then reported the matter to the authorities. How much of this is true is impossible to determine, as Woodford did not mention the Ara affair in his correspondence (apart from the suicide). Neither is it dealt with in Mahaffy’s later reports on the Protectorate. However, Burnett’s account is to be treated with some suspicion. His principal informant was Wheatley, who was then harbouring a grudge against the administration over the rejection of several land claims. In general, Burnett’s highly critical view of the Protectorate administration is representative of the views of the traders with whom he resided when in the islands. One interesting fact is that Ara was ‘arrested’ by the trader Harry Wickham, the son of Frank Wickham and Lupatina, a Bougainville woman. It seems unlikely that Ara would allow himself to be taken and then transported to Gizo unless he was unconcerned about the consequences of his actions. This could possibly be construed as evidence that Ara believed himself to have been acting with official sanction. Whatever the circumstances

123 Burnett, op. cit., pp. 105-6. See also WPHC No.830 of 1908, Mahaffy to H.C., 21 December 1908. RNAS 44, Enclosure No. 18, ‘Correspondence relating to the murders of Patrick Brown at Russell Islands, Mr McKenzie in Malaita, and Mr Oliver Byrnes in Marovo Lagoon’, Vaughan Lewes to Commander-in-Chief, 21 August 1908.

124 Burnett, op. cit.
WPHC, op. cit.
WPHC, No.793 of 1910, Wheatley to H.C., 8 July 1910, and Burnett to H.C., 7 June 1910.
surrounding the death of Ara, and the subsequent act of revenge by his brother Lela, they were to set in motion a chain of events that were to severely affect the people of the Marovo Lagoon for several years.

Oliver Burns was unlucky: he was said to have been a quiet, 'respectable' man, liked by the islanders. He was chosen as the victim because the prime candidate, a semi-imbecile trader named Faddy, had promised to take Lela on a visit to Sydney. Burns was unsuspecting and he was easily surprised on board his boat; he and one of his native crew were cut down but the rest of the crew escaped. The boat was looted and then burnt, and the head of Burns was taken to Lela's village on Ndure, a small island just off the coast of north western Vangunu, an area where Lela was regarded as the most powerful big-man. The reaction amongst the Europeans in the Group was immediate: a deputation of traders approached Sykes, the Acting Government Officer at Gizo, offering their services for a punitive expedition and insisting on the importance of action. Sykes, a rather weak man who was later dismissed for continual drunkenness, acceded to the traders' demands and an expedition consisting of twelve Europeans and sixty labourers got underway. Most of the prominent traders took part: Frank and Harry Wickham, Wheatley, Binskin, Hermes and interestingly, the Methodist missionary the Rev. Ernest Shackell. Shackell was an unorthodox toiler

125 WPHC No.830 of 1908, op.cit.; No.784 of 1910, Mahaffy to H.C., 9 July 1919. The location of Ndure, and other places from the central Marovo Lagoon mentioned in the text, is given on Map V.
for the Lord; he always carried a gun, even to church, and was known for his rude and arrogant demeanor towards the islanders. He excused his presence on the expedition by stating he was there to help Sykes restrain the traders from indiscriminate murder, as the latter felt that he might be unable to control them. In the event, the expedition was a failure: Ndure was raided but Lela, after some exchange of fire, escaped. The village was destroyed and the peoples' boats and canoes confiscated. The net result was to foment further 'rebellion', Lela and his men vowing that more white heads must be taken, and at the same time making it nigh impossible to trace the offenders as they had scattered into the Vangunu mountains. The traders' expedition was illegal, as Sykes at that time did not have the authority of a Deputy Commissioner or District Magistrate. 126

The second punitive expedition was official, being composed of the officers and men of HMS Cambrian accompanied by Woodford. This too, accomplished little. A number of villages and canoes were destroyed but the inhabitants had all vanished. 127 As a result of the continuing unsatisfactory conditions in the islands the High Commissioner sent Mahaffy to report on the situation. On Mahaffy's

MCA Vol.116, Simioni Teke to Danks, 16 August 1908 and 9 September 1908; Goldie to Danks, 14 January 1909.

127 RNAS 44, op.cit.
arrival in the Marovo in November 1908 it was found that Levers' store on Mase Island had been looted and apparently the two Malaitan labourers in charge of the station had been murdered. It was assumed that Lela and his men were responsible. Mahaffy also noted that the Hazelton-Hermes method of collecting copra was causing unrest amongst the islanders and attempted to get Levers to suppress it. As it later transpired, the attempt was fruitless. The administration's answer to the second assault on the Mase station was another punitive expedition in December 1908. This effort was to prove the most excessive and undisciplined so far.

The expedition consisted of Woodford, Heffernan, who was the District Magistrate for the Shortland Islands, and fifty "militia" most of whom were Shortland Islanders. The men were all armed with rifles and the long-handled tomahawks which were much favoured by the head-hunters of previous years. The Shortlands 'militia' were to use them in a similar fashion. There was some dispute about what actually occurred during this expedition, the conflicting informants being Woodford and Burnett. Burnett's source of information was Wheatley, who was with Woodford on board the government steamer Belama during the action. Wheatley was used to procure the services of one Woosi, the big-man of Nono, whose brother had been killed and himself driven from his district by Burns' murderers. The expedition concentrated on two areas: the district of the Pondokana people near the

128 WPHC No. 830 of 1908, op.cit.
Kolo River on New Georgia Island, and that part of Vangunu inland from Mase and Ndure Islands. The Pondokana people were allied with Lola and some of their men had participated in the Burns murder. In the official version of the affair Heffernan and his forty-four strong Shortlands 'militia' marched into the Pondokana territory, were fired upon, and so returned the fire, eventually killing two men, one of whom was chopped down with a tomahawk. At Vangunu, shots were again exchanged with no casualties to the 'militia' but five deaths on the other side. In both areas villages were burnt and trees and gardens destroyed. Woodford confined himself to criticising the Shortlands men as an 'undisciplined horde' whose only thoughts had been for loot. In Burnett's account the 'militia', which he incorrectly stated to have been Malaita men, went on a rampage, indiscriminately killing men, women and children. He also claimed that some of those killed were decapitated.  

It is impossible to determine the exact truth in this matter. Burnett's veracity is open to doubt, for there are a number of confirmed inaccuracies in his account, but there is also no reason to accept Woodford's version unquestioned. Indeed, after the publication of Burnett's book Woodford elaborated on a number of the charges made against him and in doing so revealed details that he had not thought

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to include in his initial report. While denying the accusations he also made some comments inconsistent with his first account. One incident that did come to light was the manner of death of one of the islanders. This man was being pursued along the foreshore; Woodford and Wheatley both fired at him from the deck of the Belama, one shot wounding him. He was then hacked to death by a Shortlands man. In conclusion, it would seem that some butchery did take place: men who could have been taken alive were killed by uncontrollable members of the 'militia'. The assumptions behind these punitive expeditions, that of collective guilt and corresponding collective punishment, remained unquestioned. The whole community was deemed to be criminal, and their homes, gardens and the plantations that gave them a source of income, were destroyed. As a result of the expedition, the Pondokana people moved further up the lagoon to Hau, a few miles from Ramata, leaving their remaining plantations at the mercy of the traders. Other communities in the Marovo were also forced to move further inland for protection. Not only was there the fear of being caught up in one of the successive punitive expeditions but there was also the threat from the marauding groups of outlaws who had been dispossessed of their homes and food supply by government action. The deserted plantations were ripe for the plucking, and the employees of Levers' Mase station were not slow to sense the opportunity. Armed

130 WPHC No.577 of 1912, Woodford to H.C., 11 February 1912.
parties of labourers would collect the nuts and often defraud the owners, and this in turn caused further unrest amongst the islanders in the Marovo district.  

The Mase station had been re-occupied early in 1909 by the trader Cromar. Interestingly, he developed strong relations with Lela who sold him copra and gave his sister to the trader as a 'wife'. This was not as surprising as it first appears, for both Lela and the Levers' store were profiting from the situation in the Lagoon. The unsettled condition of the area helped conceal the exploitation of the untenanted plantations by Levers, while the arms and goods that Lela obtained through the traders would help reinforce his position amongst the people he was terrorising. Other traders apart from Levers were also profiting from the situation; Anderson on Warata Island was selling firearms and Wheatley was using the people's fear of the government to increase his influence. In November 1909 Wheatley persuaded the Ndure people to surrender Lanesi, the actual murderer of Burns, and thus to avoid further retaliation by the administration. The unfortunate Lanesi was a man of little influence in his community, being the son of a captive brought back from Isabel by head-hunters, and was thus less able to resist Lela's orders to murder Burns and also more dispensable than others among Lela's following. Wheatley also actively discouraged the Pondokana refugees from communicating with

\[^{131}\] WPHC No. 784 of 1910, Mahaffy to H.C., 8 April 1910 and 11 May 1910; Minute: Mahaffy to H.C., 27 July 1910.
the administration.\(^{132}\)

In March 1910 Mahaffy again visited the Marovo area and once more arrived at a time of crisis. The constant defrauding of the islanders by unsolicited copra collection and the bullying tactics of armed parties of labourers had prompted retaliation. In the temporary absence of the European trader at Mase, unidentified Marovo men murdered one of his labourers. When the trader returned the other terrified labourers demanded to be allowed to leave the area. The trader, Panke, refused and was in turn murdered by the 'head boy' who with the other labourers then fled in a boat for their home, Treasury Island. The wheel turned full circle when the labourers, having second thoughts about the wisdom of their action, murdered the 'head boy' and returned to Mase. In an attempt to halt the continuing violence in the Marovo, Mahaffy and Woodford engaged A.W. Walsh as a Police Officer and stationed him with fifteen policemen at Mase. Walsh was ordered to try and contact Lela and through him obtain the murderer of the labourer. In addition a Prohibition Order was placed against all trading in the Marovo Lagoon. Mahaffy and Woodford also went to Ramata to persuade the Pondokana people to return home, assuring them of police protection. The meeting was inconclusive; they were willing to return, but still afraid of Lela.\(^{133}\)

\(^{132}\) ibid.

\(^{133}\) ibid.

WPHC No. 806 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 13 May 1910; Meek to H.C., 6 June 1910.
The administration's actions finally had some effect, and the Marovo region quietened down. In July 1910, in a surprising burst of commonsense, the High Commission commuted the death sentence passed on Lanesi commenting that another man should not die 'as a part of the long series of mutually retributive acts' in the Marovo.\(^\text{134}\) The edict against trading was lifted by the end of 1910 and steps were taken to stop traders defrauding islanders.\(^\text{135}\) In 1911 when the High Commissioner, Sir Henry May, visited the Solomons he was able to report that the Marovo Lagoon was quiet and only a few traders were operating there.\(^\text{136}\) In April 1913 the government station in the Lagoon was closed down because there was now no need for a police establishment in the area.\(^\text{137}\)

The Marovo episode had demonstrated that a combination of administrative blundering and commercial avarice could enlarge an isolated act of vengeance into a tragedy affecting innocent communities over a broad area. The people of the Marovo found themselves caught between an insensitive administration, rapacious traders and the outlawed Lela. Lela and the other islanders had no fundamental quarrel with the white man: they had traded peacefully with Europeans since 1895. However, a perceived injustice had

\[^{134}\text{WPHC No.261 of 1908, H.C. to Woodford, 16 July 1910.}\]
\[^{135}\text{ibid., Woodford to H.C., 18 August 1910.}\]
\[^{136}\text{WPHC No.2161 of 1911, May to C.O., 8 December 1911.}\]
\[^{137}\text{WPHC No.942 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 18 April 1913.}\]
goaded Lela into murder, and the following activities of both the government and the traders spread the turbulence. The lessons of the Marovo troubles were not learnt, and while the situation there subsided events on Vella Lavella were to bring the Protectorate government face to face with another crisis to which its response was even more damaging. This time the implications were to be more extensive, for the administration's opponent was the Methodist Mission.

On the 23 September 1909 a party of eight Vella Lavella men landed on Mbava, at the home of Joseph Binskin, with the supposed intention of trading copra. Instead, they murdered Binskin's Melanesian wife, his two daughters, and three of his Malaitan labourers, one of whom was a woman. Binskin was absent from his station at the time. This massacre had a long and involved history, much of it revolving around the career of Zito, a varani or 'fighting man' from Maravari, Mbilua.

Zito was a man who had risen to prominence as a head-hunter in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Unlike the tradition lekasa of the Vella Lavellan toutou, Zito's authority was not necessarily limited to his cognates bound together in a close residential unit. He attracted followers through his ability as an organiser of head-hunting expeditions and his own personal bravery. Zito's career

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138 WPHC No. 1121 of 1909, Barnett to H.C., 18 October 1909.
as a head-hunter was long and distinguished: he was credited by Woodford with having lead an expedition to southeast Isabel in 1886 which allegedly took the lives of one hundred villagers at Boko. Woodford also considered that Zito was responsible for the death of the European settler Childe at Mbava in 1885, but this claim was incorrect as the investigations of the Royal Navy at that time had clearly implicated islanders from Simbo in the murder. At the turn of the century the Protectorate administration had begun retaliating against raiders from the New Georgia Group who had been attacking settlements on Isabel, because such expeditions readily came to the attention of the government through the Melanesian Mission establishment at Bugotu. As a result Zito and his fellow head-hunters changed the direction of their assaults to the island of Choiseul, which was less accessible to official inquiry. One of these raids was reported to have taken seventy heads. The activities of Mahaffy and Woodford in destroying the tomako of the head-hunters further limited their operations and Zito began to maraud within the New Georgia Group and on Vella Lavella itself. Zito's attacks on Vella led to the migration of refugees to Kolombangara, Ghizo and New Georgia Island.  

It is not known precisely when and why Zito conceived his animosity for Europeans. According to Burnett, it was the result of a deal between Edmund Pratt and Zito for the purchase of firearms; a deal on which Pratt reneged because

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140 WPHC No. 1121 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 20 December 1909.
of government action against the arms trade.\(^{141}\) This story has the ring of truth: Pratt was a notorious arms trader so unpopular at Mbilua that the people there would only deal with him because he was able to supply guns. Whatever its cause, Zito's displeasure soon expressed itself. In November 1897 he attacked the Eclipse at Mbilua, severely wounding its owner Jean Pratt, brother of Edmund. Jean Pratt died a year later, apparently as a result of the wounds he had received.\(^{142}\) Woodford attempted to warn off the Vella Lavellan outlaws but drew only defiant messages in reply and armed parties of Zito's men were seen reconnoitring Ghizo for a surprise attack. Mahaffy's punitive expedition to Mbilua in November 1901 was largely in response to Zito's activities, and although it failed to catch any of the outlaws, it did reach a number of Zito's deserted strongholds in the mountainous forest. These were impressive constructions; fortified villages built on cleared hilltops or on precipices so that the entrance was narrowly restricted. If occupied, they were in Mahaffy's view, 'impregnable'.\(^{143}\)

Mahaffy's actions did not lessen Zito's belligerency; twice he landed on Ghizo in unsuccessful attempts to secure the head of a District Officer.\(^{144}\) These failures seem to have

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\(^{141}\) Burnett, op.cit., pp. 145-6.

\(^{142}\) WPHC, op.cit. WPHC No.344 of 1898, Woodford to H.C., 21 October 1898.

\(^{143}\) WPHC No.41 of 1902, Woodford to H.C., 28 December 1901. Encl. Mahaffy to Woodford, 15 November 1901.

\(^{144}\) WPHC No.1121 of 1909, op.cit.
discouraged Zito, for he retired to inland Vella Lavella and for the next few years things quietened down. In 1908 Mahaffy visited the area and opined that Vella Lavella could now be regarded as 'safe', with the exception of one or two inland places.\footnote{WPHC No. 830 of 1908, Mahaffy to H.C., 21 December 1908.} Outwardly the island reflected this peace: a number of plantations commenced and the Methodist Mission began operating on the island. Initial resistance to the introduction of the Mission at Mbilua in 1903 was overcome with the assistance of the Roviana big-men Gumi and Boaz Veo, who persuaded the people to accept a Fijian missionary teacher.\footnote{AMMR, XIV. 1 (1904), pp. 4-5.} The Mission developed very slowly as some of the Fijian teachers were unsuited to the work. One of them, Aisea Kili, had to be removed from the island because his conduct was antagonising the islanders. He was in the habit of helping himself to the produce of the villagers' gardens, and had been known to physically assault people.\footnote{MCA Vol. 116, Goldie to Small, 1 March 1911.} In 1907 the first European Methodist missionary to be permanently stationed on Vella Lavella arrived. This was R.C. Nicholson, who was to work on the island until 1916, and later from 1919 to 1922. Nicholson was much given to self-advertisement; so much so that an exasperated Goldie was forced to write to the Mission Board in Sydney: 'We have been made quite a laughing stock in the islands by Mr. Nicholson's determination to pose as a martyr.
in the press ... You need to be careful about anything he sends for publication'. Goldie was referring to Nicholson's eloquent descriptions of the terrible hardship that faced the self-styled 'Pioneer Missionary to Vella Lavella', most of which was 'purely imaginary'. In fact, in his first year at the Mbilua station very little mission work was done by Nicholson and it was not until the Mbava massacre and its consequences that the Methodists were to make substantial gains in obtaining the confidence and allegiance of the islanders.

The coming of the Mission did not go unnoticed by Zito, who in 1908 asserted that he would kill a missionary. However, circumstances were to frustrate this ambition. Two of Zito's kinfolk reported him to the authorities at Gizo for having murdered his uncle. Edge-Partington descended on Mbilua in an attempt to capture the outlaw, but instead succeeded in killing Zito's wife and adopted daughter. There is no reliable detailed account of this senseless butchery - they appear to have been shot during the course of a general assault on Zito's house by the Government 'militia'. Zito himself escaped and then determined he would have his revenge for the massacre of his family. The Protectorate records still extant do not mention this incident as a possible motive for Zito's later actions; indeed, they do not mention

149 MCA Vol.238, Goldie to Danks, 28 October 1908.
150 AMMR, XVII.12 (1908), pp. 13-5.
it at all. Woodford's explanation of Zito's motivation was rather lame: he reported that as Zito was now an old man and approaching death, he had vowed to kill someone in every district of Vella Lavella, Ranongga, Ghizo and Kolombangara. That the killing of his family by the administration was the major reason for Zito's later actions is confirmed by Nicholson, who talked to him after his eventual capture, Burnett, and the people of Mbilua themselves.\(^{151}\) Zito's rage first vented itself on the two men who had reported him to the authorities. These men had fled to Ghatere, on Kolombangara, when they heard that Zito had survived the government attack. They were traced down by Zito himself, who then killed them. He then determined to murder a European and so instructed a party of his men to go to Mbava and kill Binskin. Binskin being absent, the party massacred his family and staff. Zito himself did not participate in the raid. It was also alleged, by Woodford, that Zito was responsible for the murder of a man at Levers' station on southern Ranongga, and for an assault on Levers' store at the northern end of the same island.\(^{152}\)

The Mbava massacre created near-panic amongst the European residents of the area. One trader (a Levers man) hastily left Vella Lavella to return later with a police


\(^{152}\) WPHC, ibid. Interview with Tola Pitu and Remu.
guard; other traders also requested police protection. Nicholson who went to Mbava shortly after the murders, was met by the trader Martin and forty armed labourers who twice fired at him before realising who he was. Woodford was absent on leave at the time of the attack and did not return to the Solomons until late November of 1909. In his absence, according to Burnett, there was an abortive punitive expedition under the leadership of Wheatley and Claude Bernays, the young Acting Officer in Charge of the Shortlands Government station. Bernays was reluctant to act without the sanction of his superiors and little was accomplished. On Woodford's return a full-scale expedition was organised in December: this was to follow the well-trodden path of its predecessors and end in fiasco. The punitive force consisted of Woodford, a number of traders, and the usual 'militia'. The 'militia' numbered about 200 and incorporated men from the Shortlands; Malaitan labourers, some of whom were related to those murdered at Mbava; and islanders from Ndovele, Vella Lavella, who were eager to hunt Zito because he had recently been responsible for murders in their district. With these ingredients, it was a recipe for disaster. According to

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155 WPHC No.1121 of 1909, op.cit.
Woodford's official report, the operations on Vella Lavella resulted in the killing of six men, and the apprehension of sixteen others. In reality the death toll was closer to thirty, with traders, labourers and Ndovele men making the most of the opportunity to even up scores. Woodford obtained the cooperation of the Mbilua people through the simple expedient of threatening to deport the entire population to Malaita if it was not forthcoming. Although the 'militia' failed to capture Zito, they did however accomplish a great deal of wanton destruction and murder.

The general state of terror existing on the island forced many of the people to take refuge at mission stations, and Nicholson was forced to accompany the women to the gardens to ensure that they would not be attacked. The migration to the mission stations opened the Methodists to the charge that they were harbouring the outlaws. This accusation was apparently made by Wheatley and Binskin to Woodford, who unfortunately believed it. As a result a great deal of material damage was done to a number of mission stations. Goldie also accused a number of the traders of using the punitive expedition as an excuse to kill off some of their creditors among the islanders. Eventually it was the Mbilua people, under the threat of deportation, who captured Zito and several other of the murderers, and killed the remaining ones.\(^{156}\) However, this was not to be the end of the matter,

\(^{156}\) ibid. Interview with Tola Pitu and Remu.
for two of the prisoners were taken to Mbava and put in the custody of Binskin before they were transported to Gizo. While at Mbava they were beaten savagely by Binskin and his Malaitan labourers, and later died as a result of their injuries.

An inquiry by Mahaffy and Woodford into this affair found the Malaitan labourers guilty of murder, and Binskin an accessory before the fact. However, no action was taken against the men, and Binskin was found not to be responsible for his actions as he was at the time suffering 'acute mental anguish'. The whole matter was eventually buried by the Colonial Office; it was decided that Mahaffy and Woodford had been part to a 'serious miscarriage of justice' in not charging Binskin or the labourers, but ordered that the matter should not be resuscitated. With regard to the conduct of the entire punitive operation, the High Commission in Fiji merely noted that it did not like the use of head-hunters as agents of reprisal. This comment was prompted by the fact that the 'militia' and the Mbilua people brought in the heads of those killed to demonstrate that the guilty had, indeed, been punished.

With Zito safely in irons, it was important to Woodford that his trial and execution should occur near to the place of the crime so as to extract the maximum deterrent.

\[157\] WPHC No. 1121 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 4 April 1910.

\[158\] ibid., C.O. to H.C., 5 April 1910.

\[159\] ibid., minute by H.C., 1 February 1910.
value from the occasion. Accordingly the Pacific Order in
Council was amended so that executions could be conducted in
the Solomons at the High Commissioner's discretion, and Mr
Major, the Chief Judicial Commissioner for the Western
Pacific, was sent to the Protectorate to preside over the
court. Alas for Woodford, the affair ended not with a bang,
but with a whimper, for Zito was acquitted. There was
insufficient evidence for a conviction. Zito was, however,
transported to Fiji because it was judged that it would be
too dangerous for others, and himself, to allow him to return
home. He was, officialdom decreed, in a condition of 'almost
hopeless savage madness'.

Woodford not only lost his case against Zito, he
also had to back down to the Methodist Mission. Well could
Goldie exult, 'we have come out on top - and on the very
top', for the Mission benefited from the Zito affair in
several ways. Its efforts in protecting the islanders of
Vella Lavella from the marauding 'militia' resulted in an
enormous boost in its prestige on the island. In Nicholson's
words, it was

the chief factor in bringing to pass that
spirit of goodwill and confidence between
the natives and ourselves, which we knew
so well to be the primary requisite for
successful work. This confidence was shown
in increased attendances at the Sunday
services and day schools, as well as in the
large number of permanent homes that were
erected near to the Mission Station.

162 R.C. Nicholson, The Son of a Savage The Story of Daniel
The second benefit was political: the Mission's position in relation to that of the administration and the traders was reinforced. The Mbilua people connected with the Mission had brought in Zito where the administration and its two hundred men had failed. They had demonstrated conclusively that the Mission had not shielded the outlaw and Woodford was forced to apologise and offer compensation for the damage done to Methodist property.

Goldie was magnanimous in victory; he appreciated the assistance Woodford had given the Mission in the past and was not inclined to pursue the matter of the abuses of the administration's 'militia'. The chief villains in Goldie's eyes were the traders whom he considered had prejudiced Woodford and had used the whole affair to attempt to further their own interests. That the mission may have had a similar attitude did not occur to him. The discrediting of a number of the traders in the eyes of the islanders and of the administration was a source of great pleasure to the missionaries; a pleasure accentuated when Woodford and Mahaffy came to the Methodist's headquarters at Kokenggolo and endorsed the work of the mission publicly before the Roviana mbangara and people. Woodford's administration had again narrowly averted a scandal; the minutes of the Mission Board in Sydney reveal how close it had been to exposing the excesses of the Zito affair to the public. On the 6 April 1910 the Board

resolved that a report of the affair be sent to various newspapers for publication. Twelve days later, on hearing of the administration's backdown in the islands, it was deciding to withhold the information from the press. When the exposure did come, in the form of Burnett's writings, it could be easily brushed aside. Burnett's book contained a number of inaccuracies which could be used by Woodford to discredit his account. The High Commissioner informed Woodford that he was to take no notice of Burnett, and in his report to the Secretary of State dismissed the author as a man 'who will stoop to advertise a book dedicated to his wife with indecent photographs which he claims to have made himself but which happen to be hawked for sale in Tahiti and Rarotonga'. Thus was the reputation of the British colonial service upheld.

Zito was a man out of his time. He struggled to maintain his status as a varani, or fighting big-man, at a time when European power and 'civilisation' were extinguishing the species. Unlike other big-men such as Ingava who saw the tide and eventually moved with it, Zito resisted. His resistance was protracted, but doomed to failure. The suppression of large scale head-hunting, the destruction of the tomako, had catastrophically reduced his sphere of operations. His prestige, his mana and the satisfaction of his followers, could no longer be maintained and increased at the expense of the unfortunate people of Choiseul and

164 MCA Vol.204, Mission Board Minutes, 6 April 1910, 18 April 1910.

165 WPHC No.577 of 1912, H.C. to C.O., 23 March 1912.
Isabel. He was forced to concentrate on the inhabitants of Vella Lavella and its neighbouring islands, both islanders and Europeans. The response of the administration to this threat was typical in its ineptitude, the reaction of the traders was the familiar combination of hysteria and greed. Saddest of all, his own people were forced to turn against him in order to preserve their own community from both Zito's excesses and the depredations of the administration. The 'troubles' in the Marovo Lagoon and on Vella Lavella both reflected the changing circumstances of the Protectorate, but in different ways. Lela and his men in the Marovo were reacting not against the transition from the old to the new, but against the manner of this change, accompanied as it was with administrative insensitivity and stupidity, and grasping commercial exploitation. Zito's rebellion was against the fundamental fact of change, a transition that was slowly but surely destroying the assumptions that were the basis of his position in island society. Both affairs also marked a turning point in the nature of European-islander relations. It was the last time that islanders would initiate action within the framework of their own society in an attempt to do something about the changing circumstances of their lives. In future they were to be restricted to the perimeters of European morality, justice and commerce. In these circumstances it was not surprising that they were increasingly to become pawns in the battle of wills between government, missions, and commercial enterprise.
The administration's inept, but effectively brutal, response to the Marovo and Zito troubles were the final stages of the pacification of the New Georgia Group: there were to be no more such challenges from the islanders. Just as the successful operations of Mahaffy and Woodford in 1898-1901 gave a boost to European commercial activities in the islands, so did the actions of 1908-1910. Yet, there was a difference: the white settlers who came after 1910 saw themselves primarily as planters, and the freewheeling trader of the previous years became an endangered species. The traders' livelihood had depended upon their relationship with the islanders, although this connection had been gradually eroded in recent years. With the blossoming planting community, however, there was scarcely a need for any relationship with the people of the Group. In the settlers' world, and in their vision of the future, the New Georgians were peripheral. The settlers built, as it were, an island within the islands.
MAP V  The Marovo Lagoon
CHAPTER FIVE

THE WORLD OF THE SETTLERS, 1910-25

With the burgeoning plantation economy of the New Georgia Group, there developed a more stable and numerous European community of settlers. The desires and ambitions of this European planting community were increasingly to diverge from the needs and aspirations of the islanders. This divergence became more pressing as the settlers grew in number, and became better organised and more vocal in their demands. The years after 1910 saw the intensification of requests for representation in the administration, relaxation of regulations controlling labour recruiting and working conditions, the importation of outside labour, more favourable terms regarding land and the imposition of higher 'native' taxes to encourage the slothful to seek employment on the plantations. The administration was in a difficult position in responding to these pressures: the encouragement of the commercial development of the Protectorate could reach a state where it was prejudicial to the rights and welfare of the islanders. The Protectorate administration's reaction to the demands of the settlers was ambivalent: there was no long-term policy to act as a basis for decisions and recommendations, which were frequently made without serious thought for the future. The political and economic ambitions of the European settlers, had they not been checked by fortuitous circumstances and the Colonial Office, would have had severe repercussions for island society. The planting community equated the future progress and prosperity of the islands
with their own objectives and requirements; the role of the black man was to be a cheap and reliable source of labour. Although the future of the islanders was not entirely sacrificed to the vaulting ambitions of a tiny white minority, the gulf between plantation and village continued to widen. This gap was especially apparent in the New Georgia Group, the scene of intense European commercial activity and the centre of planter-settler agitation. The people of the Group refused to work on the plantations, preferring instead to participate in the European economy on their own terms. The New Georgian preferred to collect and sell his own copra and shell, as he had done for decades, rather than earn a living toiling for the white man. The plantations, the overseers, and the predominantly Malaitan labourers, were virtually a separate world within the Group.

In 1908 the European population of the Protectorate was some 250, of which between twenty and thirty lived in the New Georgia Group. This number included the District Officer, two missionaries, about ten employees of Burns Philp and Levers, and at least seven self-employed planter-traders. There do not appear to have been any European women in the Group other than Mrs Goldie, the wife of the Methodist
Missionary.¹ By 1922, the number of Europeans in the Solomons had risen to about 500, of which 79 resided in the New Georgia Group. Of the 79, seventeen were female, many of whom were connected with the missions. Only a small number of the men involved in planting and trading had European wives: the exact number is not known, though it would seem to have been between five and ten.² Most of the others appear to have married or cohabited with island women. An unusual feature of the New Georgia Group was the extent of miscegenation. In 1922 there were thirty-three Euro-Melanesians in the Group, but only seven throughout the rest of the Protectorate.³ Inter-marriage had been common since the early trading days: Frank Wickham, Edmund and Jean Pratt, Norman Wheatley, Joseph Binskin all married island women, and had children by them. This practice continued with the later planter-traders, and was still common in the 1920s. There are some possible explanations for the existence of this situation in the New Georgia Group and not elsewhere. Inter-marriage with outsiders was no new phenomenon to the islanders...

² RNAS 44, Enclosure No.19, 'White Residents and Settlers ... 1908'.
³ WPHC No.299a of 1922, loc.cit.

RNAS 44, Enclosure No.19, 'White Residents and Settlers ... 1908'.
of the Group, as pinausu captured in head-hunting expeditions, both men and women, frequently inter-married with their captors and became full members of the community. To European eyes, the women of the Group were not unattractive. Although much darker in complexion, the people of the western Solomons have a facial bone structure and appearance much closer to the European type than that of the islanders of the south-east Solomons.

The nature of inter-racial 'marriages' and the fate of the offspring of such unions varied considerably. In the islands, a man and a woman who lived together for any length of time and had children were inevitably regarded as married. For instance, Norman Wheatley married several times, and had seven children: one of his wives later married an islander and had another two children; his other wife later married a Euro-Melanesian and had another child. All such unions were regarded as valid marriages, the children taking the name of their respective fathers. In official eyes, a marriage between a European and an islander could be recognised as legally valid if 'native custom and law' had been followed, if it was a voluntary union, and not polygamous. These

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4 WPHC No.274 of 1932, Barley to H.C., 5 September 1932.
6 Interview with B. Gina and J. Zinihite, 28 August 1974, Munda.
7 WPHC No.1318 of 1922, Greene to Kane, 6 June 1922.
dicta, however, were often inapplicable in the New Georgia Group, where 'native custom and law' had been eroded by the missions. Marriages conducted under the auspices of the church were also not necessarily binding. The situation was, sensibly enough, a fluid one. The children of these unions experienced widely varied treatment. Some traders rejected their parental responsibility and the children were brought up within the islanders' community; others were sent to Australia for education. As a result the status and position of individual Euro-Melanesians could differ markedly, though as a group, their social mobility was generally high. Harry Wickham, the son of Frank Wickham and a Bougainville woman, educated at a private school in Sydney and a cultured and intelligent man, returned to Roviana because he considered life in the islands was free of the restrictions that plagued 'civilised' society. He married an island woman, pursued a career as a planter-trader and had his son educated in Australia.\(^8\) His half-brother Alick was credited with introducing the 'Australian crawl' to swimmers in Australia; he enjoyed a brief career as a stunt diver, married a European woman and eventually returned to the islands.\(^9\) Peter and John Pratt, the sons of Edmund Pratt, both became traders. The daughters of mixed marriages, particularly those of Wheatley, frequently married other European or Euro-Melanesian

\(^8\) Fleischmann, op.cit., p. 123.

\(^9\) WPHC No. 1306 of 1936, Kidson to H.C., 5 August 1936.
traders.\textsuperscript{10}

Of the Europeans resident in the Group in the 1920s, about half were employed as managers, overseers or assistants by the large companies and more prosperous planters, while the other half were self-employed planter-traders.\textsuperscript{11} The living conditions of these men varied considerably. While those employed by Levers, Burns Philp and the other larger companies could be assured of relatively comfortable accommodation (taking into account the difficulties of the environment), those whose welfare depended upon their own resourcefulness could easily end their lives as destitute beachcombers. Young men who came to the islands to work for Levers and then decided to go it alone as planters or traders, only to find their abilities insufficient for the task, ended as derelicts living off the charity of the islanders.\textsuperscript{12} Others went 'native':

Unshaven and dirty, with one sleeve entirely missing from his strange coat-like garment, and with trousers rolled up exposing his brown calves and bare feet, it was bewildering to hear the cultivated drawling voice issuing from such a scarecrow. He was an interminable talker, of the type that is always about to do great things, but never

\textsuperscript{10} Wheatley's daughters Florrie, Anne and Lena respectively married Joseph Binskin, Ernest Palmer and Frank Hickey.

\textsuperscript{11} WPHC No. 1976 of 1923, \textit{op.cit.}; No. 1977 of 1923, \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{12} WPHC No. 2270 of 1934, Ashley to H.C., 28 June 1934.
does ... he lived with a native woman in an old hut and his boat was almost a wreck. Notwithstanding these things he invariably referred to his few miserable trees as his "plantation", his one bony bullock as his "cattle", and his water-logged derelict as his "schooner".

Their health ravaged by alcoholism, and with insufficient funds for a trip to Sydney to shake off the enervating malaria and dysentery, such men often suffered an early death. Excessive drinking was common, as men tried to combat the physical and psychological damage caused by the unfamiliar environment.

Such total failures, however, were outnumbered by those who were successful, or who managed to keep their heads just above water, or who cut their losses and left the islands without facing complete ruin.

Norman Wheatley arrived at New Georgia in 1892 and died there in 1930, sixty-two years old. His house at Labeti was renowned for its comfort, and his hospitality was legendary. Wheatley was reputed to have had assets of £48,000 in 1920, but his 'open-handedness' and his passion for throwing money away on exotic sea-craft made its mark,

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13 C.W. Collinson, Life and Laughter 'Midst the Cannibals (London, 1926), p. 34. Collinson was a planter in the New Georgia Group in the early twenties, and his book gives the best account of the planter's life in those days.


15 Burnett, op.cit., p. 76.
and he died insolvent. Frank Wickham, after over thirty years in the islands, made enough money to retire and live in comfort in Australia for the last fifteen years of his life. H.A. Markham, who started as a trader on Ontong Java, moved to New Georgia and established a model plantation at Segi. His earnings were sufficient to enable him to educate his daughter in New Zealand. Other traders and planters such as F. Green, Binskin, MacKinnon, Pybus, Leslie Gill and Musgrave seem to have survived despite the vicissitudes of the copra market. These men and others may not have amassed a fortune — few, if any, did — but they managed to maintain a reasonable livelihood.

The fortunes and conditions of work of those Europeans employed by others could differ markedly. On the large plantations of Levers and Burns Philp, Europeans led a life as comfortable as possible in a tropical environment. For

17 WPHC No. 1306 of 1936, op. cit. Wickham left £4,000 on his death in 1927; he was also able to buy a ten ton vessel for his daughter-in-law in 1925.
the European wives of the managers, however, life could be extraordinarily dull, as platoons of servants took care of the domestic chores; whereas the European wives of self-employed planters could play a more active role in running the plantation. One luxury available to the Europeans living on the big company plantations was the availability of fresh meat, as they often used herds of cattle to keep the undergrowth beneath the trees level. Less fortunate Europeans had to be satisfied with a constant diet of 'bully beef' and other tinned foods, as they often displayed a myopic aversion to locally grown produce. Some Europeans employed by individual planters were not so fortunate in their accommodation: Griffiths, Wheatley's assistant, was described as living in conditions of extraordinary discomfort.

The social life of the European community was somewhat constrained, as the plantations were scattered and communication between them arduous. The six-weekly trip to Gizo to meet the steamer offered an opportunity to come together, and perhaps a binge at Freddy Green's store, which had a bar joined to it. Otherwise one was dependent on chance visits from those passing through, either fellow planters and

19 Muhlhauser, op.cit., pp. 212-13. A few women ran plantations; Mrs Newall and Rose Statham being examples.

20 Pastoral Finance Association Ltd., P.F.A. Quarterly Magazine, XIII.31 (December 1921), pp. 64-5, 'A Paradise for Cattle'.
Collinson, op.cit., p. 219.
WPHC No.454 of 1918, Workman to H.C., 17 January 1918.

21 Muhlhauser, op.cit., p. 216.

22 Collinson, op.cit., pp. 77-8.
WPHC No.2710 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 4 September 1916.
traders, or the occasional cruising yacht. It seems to have been common to let off steam at these occasions - drinking, gambling, and above all, talking. It is easy to underestimate the importance of these gatherings to Europeans isolated in an alien cultural and physical environment. The opportunity to talk in their own tongue again, and to reinforce their collective identity as cultural and social superiors, was a valuable safeguard against 'slipping downhill', or 'going native'. It was for similar reasons that lonely and isolated District Officers would each night ceremonially dress for dinner, read Punch, and then salute the lowering of the Union Jack with a presentation of arms by the native police. The legendary hospitality of the planters to European visitors was equally a reflection of their isolated position within island society, as it was a consequence of their generous natures. Markham at Segi was so eager to entertain visitors that he was reputed to have shot through the rigging of any vessel that passed through the lagoon without showing signs of calling.

While the plantations were scattered and often isolated, and despite the variations in wealth and status within the numbers of settlers, there did develop the sense of a

25 Struben, op.cit., p. 109. Burns, Philp and Co. Ltd., Tours to the South Sea Islands (n.d.) Tour No.1 'Solomon Islands'.
European community within the islands. This was a consequence of the growing settler population, and the increasing regularisation of life in the islands. The frontier days had well and truly passed, and so had, by and large, the cut-throat competition that had characterised the business practices of the 'pioneers'. Indeed, it was the self-destructive effects of such competition that had prompted the first attempts to establish some form of organisational unity within the European community. As most of those involved were shipboard traders whose common trait was intense competition, it was not surprising that the 'Western Solomons Traders Association' in 1908 was short-lived. As the numbers of traders declined in proportion to those involved in planting, so did the freebooting tactics of the early days. The planting community was not so much involved in competing for the islanders' copra, but in producing their own, and in doing so they faced the same problems and had similar objectives.

The growing sense of identity among the European population of the New Georgia Group was mirrored in the development of Gizo. Although one would be reluctant to describe Gizo as a 'town', it was the closest thing to it in

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26 WPHC No. 219 of 1908, Woodford to H.C., 20 May 1908.

27 WPHC No. 1976 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 13 July 1923. Only five Europeans designated themselves as traders, while over forty were planters or planter/traders in 1923.
the Protectorate outside of Tulagi. While Tulagi was dominated by the presence of the administration, Gizo was not, and despite its miniscule population it was rightly regarded as the 'centre of the Group' and of 'growing importance'. For these reasons it was re-opened as a Port of Entry in 1920. Gizo was the headquarters of Burns Philp in the western Solomons, and 'The Octopus of the Pacific' played a crucial role in the economic life of the Group: it had a virtual monopoly on the trade, and was instrumental in keeping many planters afloat. Most independent planters sold their copra direct to 'B.P.', as the cost and difficulty of freighting it to Sydney at their own expense was prohibitive. The company also financed struggling planters when they were hit by sudden falls in the copra price. Every six weeks Burns Philp's vessel, the S.S. Mindini would call at Gizo to deliver mail and goods and collect the produce of the islands. It was the only regular contact the Europeans had with the outside world, and was thus the occasion for the gathering of most of the white population. Thus despite their usual scattered distribution, the settlers could regularly share information and act in concert to exert pressure on the administration. In 1917 the government leased their plantation at Gizo to Burns Philp for £250 p.a. The news of this transaction quickly spread throughout the settler population and provoked a furore:

28 WPHC No. 155 of 1920, Workman to H.C., 31 December 1919. Gizo was a Port of Entry from July 1907 to January 1912.
the plantation was at the time producing copra worth £800 a year, and no tender was called despite the willingness of other planters to offer up £500 p.a. for the lease. The administration was acutely embarrassed, finding it 'most painful' that it should be common knowledge, and eventually in 1921 an excuse was found to cancel the lease. This incident illustrated that settler opinion could force the government to rectify an obviously bungled decision, without constructively influencing administrative policy. For this task a better organised expression of political opinion was required. The settlers of the New Georgia Group were to be prominent in the establishment of such an organisation.

In 1917 the 'Solomon Islands Planters Association' appeared. While the exact details of the origin of this organisation are unknown, its objectives were clear, as they were expressed in the form of a petition to the High Commissioner. The Chairman was William Hamilton, who had been among the islands since the 1890s when he had run a pearl-shelling business in the Admiralty Islands and the Solomons, operating out of Gizo in the latter area. He also acquired large land holdings, mainly on Choiseul, and by 1910 had some 7,000 acres in the Protectorate. The main concern of the petition that

30 WPHC No. 823 of 1918, Workman to H.C., 18 February 1918. Also No. 2557 of 1917, Barley to H.C., 25 July 1917 and No. 967 of 1921, Hill to H.C., 10 March 1921.

31 Pambu (Journal of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, A.N.U., Canberra), No. 3 (October 1968). For Hamilton's early career, see, Papers of William Hamilton, MSS. Oxley Memorial Library, Brisbane, Queensland. MFN, 'Logbook and Diary', January 1903 to November 1905; and Reports on Pearling Voyages, 1899-1901.
Hamilton presented to the High Commission was that the Protectorate should not have any connection with the Australian Commonwealth, but rather should be made a Crown Colony, with the European residents having a voice in the administration in matters that affected their interests. Other recommendations to alter the status of the Protectorate had already been made from official sources. After a visit to the Solomons in 1911, the High Commissioner Sir Henry May had considered that the control of the Protectorate ought to be placed directly in the hands of the Resident Commissioner. He believed the existing system was not a success, as the High Commission in Fiji knew little of conditions in the Solomons and there were lengthy delays in communication, it taking some three months for correspondence to pass between Tulagi and Suva. The Secretary of State declined to adopt these suggestions. In 1913 a report on the Protectorate by R.V. Vernon recommended that it become a Crown Colony, with the Resident Commissioner the 'Governor' or 'Administrator': his reasons were similar to those of Sir Henry May. His advice was rejected by the Colonial Office. This

32 WPHC No.1149 of 1917, Hamilton to H.C., 3 April 1917.
33 WPHC No.2161 of 1911, May to C.O., 8 December 1911; C.O. to H.C., 15 March 1912.
34 WPHC No.63 of 1913, 'Notes on the Solomon Islands Protectorate', by R.V. Vernon. Dated 17 December 1912. This report became a C.O. Confidential Print (February 1913), Australian No.213. See also, No.1518 of 1913, C.O. to H.C., 10 July 1913.
pattern was to continue: in 1916 A.S. Meek, on behalf of Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd., argued that the residents of the Protectorate paid for the administration through taxation and thus should have representation. To this suggestion, and to the petition of the Planters Association in 1917, the response of the Colonial Office was negative. The Secretary of State considered that the existing state of development of the Protectorate did not warrant a Legislative or Executive Council.35

Relations between the settler community and the administration worsened after 1917. The planters petition had not been overly critical of the government, but an article in the Sydney Bulletin of January 1918, written from the settlers’ point of view by T.J. McMahon attacked the administration unmercifully. McMahon asserted that 'Within the whole of the British Empire there will not be found ... such a bitterness of feeling, such an open aggressiveness towards an administration, as now exists here'.36 The main force of his criticism was directed at the government's economic policies: he considered that it was deliberately setting up obstacles to commercial development; and its 'soft' attitude towards the islanders, accompanied by a highly exaggerated


account of the dangers faced by Europeans in the islands. The Resident Commissioner's reply to these charges was closer to the truth: Workman pointed out that the 'immense influence' of Levers, Burns Philp and the missions, 'who exercise an imperium in imperio', had prevented the development of an official autocracy, and that the administration had given great assistance to the planters. As an illustration he cited official eagerness to assist land purchasers, which had resulted in the deprivation of the islanders of their land. This was indeed true, though the irony of the administration parading its past negligence as a defence against charges of incompetence seemed to escape the Resident Commissioner.

The ill-feeling between the government and settlers did not abate. Officials were soured by the unflattering comparison between the state of government residences and that of the 'imposing' mission stations and 'commodious' houses of the planters. The Gizo government residence was the exception: 'the one station in the Protectorate which for site and planning stands out as an Imperial outpost'. Workman had a less flattering view of the non-official European population in the Gizo district: when recommending

37 ibid.
38 WPHC No.1694 of 1918, Workman to H.C., 9 June 1918.
39 WPHC No.454 of 1918, Workman to H.C., 17 January 1918.
Captain Francis as District Officer for the area, he noted that he had no fear of Francis 'descending to the level of the (European) people round him'.

In December 1920 the Solomon Islands Planters Association published the first issue of its journal, The Planters Gazette. The Gazette lasted only till May 1923, a total of nine issues, but in that time it provoked considerable hostility. In 1922 the Resident Commissioner complained of the scurrilous abuse of the administration that appeared in the paper, and was reassured by the High Commissioner that he was prepared to consider the control or supervision of the Gazette if it exceeded the limits of criticism. What these limits were was left unstated, but in any event such action was not required. The final issue of the paper was a great deal more conciliatory in tone towards the administration. The Planters Association (S.I.P.A.), and the Gazette, were largely the creation of the European community of the New Georgia Group. The executive of S.I.P.A. in December 1920 comprised of J.F. Goldie (Chairman), D. MacKinnon (Vice Chairman), L.F. Gill, L.F. Stanley, H. Beck and R. McKerlie. All except Stanley were planters in the New Georgia Group. In 1921 Goldie resigned because he was leaving the Protectorate for some

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40 WPHC No.2445 of 1919, Workman to H.C., 8 December 1919.
41 WPHC No.1316 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 9 May 1922; H.C. to Kane, 18 May 1922.
time; he was replaced by MacKinnon, whose previous position was filled by Gill. Stanley also left the executive, and two new members were added - Wheatley and W. De Courcy Browne, both planters in the Gizo district. The Gazette was largely produced by Gill, who wrote numerous articles under a variety of pseudonyms.

Originally, the membership of the S.I.P.A. was limited to planters with at least fifty acres under cultivation, but in 1922 the organisation expanded to include all European residents of the Protectorate, and afterwards became the Solomon Islands Planters and Settlers Association (S.I.P.S.A.). However, this organisation continued to be dominated by settlers from the New Georgia Group: the general meetings of S.I.P.S.A. were held at Gizo. This domination reflected the developing sense of community amongst the European population of the Group, as well as their keen interest in political activity. They were, in a number of ways, apart from the other Europeans in the Protectorate. They had their own port and centre, Gizo, whereas the Europeans to the south-east looked towards Tulagi. By the 1920s the Group had been in a stable and peaceful state for a decade, and the vast majority of the islanders were under the

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44 PG, 9 (May 1923), p. 3-4.
influence of the missions, and had little to do with life on the plantations. The Europeans were free to concentrate on their own interests and prosperity, and in most cases they had the same objective: the making and selling of copra for a wage or a profit. The Europeans in the Group, too, had plenty of experience of political in-fighting, as attested by the constant internal quarrels between missions, officials, traders and planters. Officialdom in Gizo was grossly outnumbered, and non-officials such as Goldie were never slow to express their displeasure with the administration.

The high level of political consciousness and activism amongst the Europeans of the Gizo district was demonstrated emphatically in 1923. In that year S.I.P.S.A. organised a comprehensive petition on the state of the administration of the Protectorate which was signed by 166 European residents. While the non-official European population of the New Georgia Group comprised only 17% of that of the whole Protectorate, some 33% of the signatories were from the Group. More significantly as an indication of the keen interest and involvement generated by such matters, the petition was signed by 70% of the non-officials in the Group, whereas the figure for the rest of the Protectorate was 29%.47

The dominance of S.I.P.S.A. by the Europeans from the western

47 WPHC No. 1976 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 13 July 1923, Encl. Petition. For the population figures, see: No. 2991 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 28 September 1922, and Handbook of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (Suva, 1923).
islands did attract some comments from other planters who complained it was too Gizo-oriented. This criticism was in part justified: the S.I.P.S.A. did press for a number of changes that were of direct importance only to the New Georgia Group, notably the opening of Gizo as a port of entry, certain changes to the labour regulations, and the stationing of a doctor at Gizo. However, the main body of its policies were concerned with the entire Protectorate.

The first issue of the Planters Gazette in December 1920 listed the objectives of the Association: these were the promotion of the planting industry, the co-operation with government in passing suitable legislation, and the attainment of representation on a governing body for the Solomons. The partial fulfilment of the latter objective was to come sooner than the settlers realised. In September 1920 the High Commissioner visited the Protectorate. He noted that the unofficial population was apt to be kept unnecessarily in the dark on government and administrative matters, and so recommended that a small Advisory Council be established to consult with the Resident Commissioner. This advice was accepted by the Colonial Office, and in 1921 the Council was

49 WPHC No. 1917 of 1920, Greene to Workman, 19 October 1920; and, No. 155 of 1920, Workman to H.C., 31 December 1919.
51 WPHC No. 2787 of 1920, H.C., to C.O., 8 November 1920.
introduced. In reply to the Planters Association petition for Crown Colony status, the Colonial Office stated that the Advisory Council had been created as a result of 'careful consideration of the position of the Protectorate' and that no other change in the administration was contemplated at the present time.\[^{52}\] This hardly satisfied the Association: the Council was considered to be 'a step in the right direction', but only a temporary measure and that a legislative body, elected and controlled by the (white) people was still the ultimate objective. The 'Olympian aloofness' of the administration and the absence of any large constructive policy continued to be criticised.\[^{53}\]

The Council comprised the Resident Commissioner and four appointed non-officials; the latter group were a diplomatic balance of the various interest groups in the Protectorate. On the first council were Dr Steward, the Bishop of Melanesia; J. Symington, manager of Levers headquarters at Gavatu; and two planters, Hamilton and MacKinnon.\[^{54}\] Although the membership tended to change frequently, as the members were regularly absent from the Protectorate, the balance mission, company and individual planter interests was maintained.\[^{55}\] The creation of the Council did eventually have the

\[^{52}\] WPHC No.3339 of 1921, C.O. to H.C., 28 March 1922.

\[^{53}\] PG, 3 (August 1921), pp. 1-3.

\[^{54}\] PG, 4 (November 1921), p. 10.

\[^{55}\] WPHC No.2533 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 18 October 1923, 12 November 1923, 20 November 1923.
effect of improving relations between the administration and the settlers. The latter group now at least had a channel for their complaints and suggestions, and the new Resident Commissioner, R.R. Kane, who had arrived in 1921, was sympathetic to their aspirations. \(^{56}\) Agitation for Crown Colony status, however, continued, culminating in the S.I.P.S.A. petition of 1923. Kane, in giving his 'personal opinion' on the petition, commented that he considered that the time had come for the extension of wider powers of responsibility to the Protectorate government and noted that Woodford had recommended that the Solomons become a Crown Colony in 1909. \(^{57}\) In the Advisory Council, Kane opined that the authorities would require an indication that the islanders desired to become a Crown Colony before considering such a decision, but that he personally thought that a larger share of government should be given to the settlers. \(^{58}\) This new atmosphere of conciliation was echoed in the Gazette. In the May 1923 issue, the last before the paper folded because of lack of funds, the editorial stated that the S.I.P.S.A. was out to help, not 'fight', the government, and to kill the idea that relations between officials and settlers should be hostile and suspicious. \(^{59}\)

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\(^{56}\) PG, 7 (August 1922), p. 3.

\(^{57}\) WPHC NO. 1976 of 1923, op. cit.

\(^{58}\) WPHC No. 64 of 1924, Kane to H.C., 28 November 1923. Encl. Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of Advisory Council, 20 November 1923.

\(^{59}\) PG, 9 (May 1923), p. 2.
The 1923 petition produced a reaction from the Colonial Office: the High Commissioner, Sir E. Hutson, was to visit the Protectorate to personally investigate the situation and to meet representatives of the settlers. This occurred in September 1923. In a meeting with a deputation of representatives of the European residents Hutson expressed the view that there was little chance of the Protectorate having a council without an official majority as a necessary safeguard for native interests. However, his report to the Colonial Office did recommend some changes. He considered that the Advisory Council should be converted to a Legislative Assembly with powers to pass regulations, subject to the veto of the High Commissioner. This assembly was to be comprised of appointed members, and an official majority would be retained. In addition, he recommended that the Resident Commissioner's powers be extended so that he be able to engage and dismiss temporary officers, and incur expenditure of up to £50 without reference to the High Commission. The Colonial Office approved the latter recommendation but firmly quashed the concept of a Legislative Assembly, with a note that Europeans in the Protectorate could have no greater say in the administration of the Protectorate at the present time. Although the settlers' political ambitions were

60 WPHC No. 1976 of 1923, 'Deputation of Representatives of Residents' 29 September 1925.

61 WPHC No. 2366 of 1925, H.C. to C.O., 26 October 1925.

62 ibid., C.O. to H.C., 4 March 1926.
frustrated by the Colonial Office, they were to have more success in other directions. Apart from their eagerness to participate in government, the focus of most settler agitation was the conditions and regulations governing the copra industry.

The economy of the Protectorate was dominated by the coconut. Copra exports generally comprised 85% or more of total export earnings; the only other products of any consequence being trochus shell, ivory nuts and timber. In 1908 some ten thousand acres were under coconuts; by 1924 this had increased to fifty-five thousand acres. From 1910 to 1925 the quantity of copra exported increased from 4,030 to 19,206 tons. There are no exact figures describing the proportion of the Protectorate's copra that was produced in the New Georgia Group, and the acreage under cultivation in the

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63 RNAS 44, Enclosure No.19, 'Statistical Information'. WPHC No.1065 of 1925, Memorandum: Information desired by the High Commissioner in connection with his visit to the Solomon Islands, 14 May 1925. A list of the plantations operating in the Group up to 1925, together with a map showing their distribution is given in Appendix II.

latter area. Some idea, however, can be gained from later years. In 1931, in his report on the Census, the Gizo District Officer listed 12,803 acres cultivated in plantations, producing some 3,862.5 tons of copra per annum. In addition, the islanders were said to produce between 800 and 900 tons each year. Although the quantity of copra produced in the Solomons increased in the years between 1925 and 1931, this was not so much due to the expansion of the acreage cultivated, but as to trees planted prior to 1925 coming into bearing. It was estimated that the total Protectorate area of cultivated land increased from 55,000 to 60,000 acres in that five year period. The price of copra declined steadily between 1925 and the early thirties, and few were encouraged to undertake new development work. In the New Georgia Group some plantations were abandoned, and the large companies acted cautiously. By 1922 Levers had planted 2,842 acres on Kolombangara, and this figure had not increased by 1931. Thus the 1931 figures would not differ markedly from those of the mid-twenties. On this basis, it would appear that the Group contained about 21% of the Protectorate's cultivated land; from which it contributed about 20% of the B.S.I.P.'s copra production.

67 WPHC No. 274 of 1932, loc.cit.
In January 1925, there were forty European-owned plantations employing 951 indentured labourers within the New Georgia Group. The size and density of the plantation community was much greater in the Group than elsewhere in the Solomons. In the early 1920s, there was one European for every eighty islanders, and one indentured labourer for every sixty-nine islanders in the Group. The corresponding ratios for the whole Protectorate were 1:175 (Europeans) and 1:150 (labourers). The indentured labourers, in 1925, comprised some 13% of the resident population of the Group. About two-thirds of these men came from the island of Malaita, with the remainder principally coming from Guadalcanal, San Cristoval and Santa Cruz. Since the 1870s Malaita had been the principal source of Solomons labour for the plantations of Queensland and Fiji: it was the most heavily populated island in the Solomons, and one of the least pacified. The island did not really quieten down until the 1930s, after the Bell murders and the savage reprisals that resulted from them. The young men in the twenties signed on for New Georgia for basically the same reasons that their fathers had signed on for Queensland and Fiji: to escape from an unhappy or dangerous situation, to earn money for the bride price, to gain experience, or just simply as a change of scene. They

69 WPHC No. 1191 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 12 October 1925. Encl. Medical Officer's Returns for Labourers in Gizo District, April 1925. No. 1065' of 1925, loc.cit.
were recruited by a flotilla of small ships that plied the 'passages', where the prospective labourers congregated to be picked up. Most of these vessels were schooners, ketches, and cutters in the 25-45 ton range. They were owned by the companies and the planters who recruited their own labour. Levers had two large steamships, as well as several smaller boats, for this purpose. There were very few men who owned their own vessel and made a living out of contract recruiting, and the number of ships involved in recruiting steadily declined as the large concerns increasingly dominated the trade.

Recruiting was fairly tightly controlled by the government, and abuses would not have been very common. Undoubtedly some gun-running did occur, and labourers were probably misled over their destination, if the plantation concerned had a bad reputation. Indeed, considering the behaviour of some plantation owners and overseers, such deceit would have been necessary if they were to secure recruits. On signing up, the recruits were given a 'beach payment', usually about £8 in value in the twenties. This was normally distributed to the recruits' relatives and friends in the form of goods, although some 'old hands' might

70 K. Groenewegen, Report on the Census of the Population, 1970 (Southampton, n.d.), p. 9 (Table 1 H)
71 WPHC No.801 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 21 February 1914; No.875 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 25 February 1916; No.350 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 18 January 1923; No.1554 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 31 May 1923.
stipulate that they personally receive the beach payment in cash. Most recruiting vessels also carried a trader's licence and store items so that they could give with the one hand and then take with the other. As the customary mark up in price for goods was 100%, they did quite well out of this business. 72

The recruits signed on for two years, at a wage of between 10/- and 20/- a month. In addition they received board and lodging on the plantations. The housing conditions and food rations of the labourers was governed by regulation and theoretically subject to regular official inspections. However, the regulations themselves provided for only the most basic of needs and isolated plantations had little difficulty in ignoring them. The specified rations consisted of rice, meat, tobacco, tea, sugar and soap. Some plantations supplemented this by growing their own vegetables and fruit, while others ignored the schedule and made the labourers exist on a constant diet of rice. 73 This kind of abuse was not very common, as such a plantation would soon have difficulty in securing any recruits. The housing provided was basically a row of huts containing sleeping mats, and could not be described as either cheerful or comfortable. 74

72 WPHC No. 243 of 1924, Hill to H.C., 22 December 1923; No. 827 of 1930, op.cit.
74 WPHC No. 1094 of 1922, Allardyce to H.C., 19 April 1922. Encl. Allardyce to Kane, 17 April 1922.
conditions in which the labourers lived facilitated the spread of epidemics. In 1914, when a dysentery epidemic struck the Solomons, some 10% of labourers on Levers plantations in the Protectorate died, and the government was forced to suspend recruiting for several months until the outbreak subsided. The poor medical services available on the plantations continued through to the early 1920s, when eventually regulations were enacted to force the larger plantations to provide medical facilities and to regularly report on the health of their workers. 75

The labourers worked a six-day week; generally rising at dawn and working through to dusk, with a break of two hours in the middle of the day. Work was usually on the 'contract' or 'task' system whereby each man was assigned a certain daily task, such as the cutting of 450 lbs of copra. 76

The relationship between the labourers and their white overseers was one of continuing controversy. It was a constant complaint of Europeans working plantations that the law favoured the labourer at the expense of the white man's prestige, and that this made the maintenance of discipline among the workers impossible. It was stated frequently that if a white man dare to lift a finger against a labourer he would be harshly punished; or, if the workers retaliated


76 WPHC No. 1197 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 6 May 1925.
against a 'disciplinary action' by assaulting the European concerned, the law would protect them if the white man had struck first. The Planters Gazette was studded with examples of unfortunate managers and overseers who had been thrashed by their labourers, and had then been convicted of ill-treating their workers. The common philosophy was that the 'natives' were like schoolchildren, and had to be beaten when they misbehaved. It was generally held that if a supervisor detected trouble within the labour lines, he must take immediate and vigorous action or else his prestige and authority would be destroyed. This picture of the embattled white man was further enhanced by the emphasis on the potentially ferocious nature of the primitive native: the white man 'dare not show much kindness openly to these untutored savages, who would only mistake kindness for weakness, and become dangerous'. Such images appear to have been largely illusory. It seems to have been the case that labourers would naturally react when treated harshly, but that this would

77 PG, 6 (May, 1922), pp. 4-8; 7 (August 1922), pp. 19-20; 8 (December 1922), p. 2. See also W.A. Robinson, 10000 Leagues Over the Sea (New York, 1930), p. 212.


79 S.N. Hogg, 'A Trip to the Solomons or, Two Months on an Island Steamer', ML Newspaper Cuttings, Vol.24, p. 64. (Written in 1911).
often provoke punitive action by the European out of all proportion to the offence.

Before 1912, when labour regulations and inspections began being enforced regularly, there are accounts of plantation managers whose actions were unbelievably cruel. In 1908, when Martin Johnson was visiting the Solomons with Jack London, he witnessed an incident at Penduffrynp plantation on Guadalcanal. There was unrest amongst the labourers, and on finding two of the men carrying spears, the owner George Darbishire stripped them naked and thrashed them with 'a big boor-hide whip' which, Johnson complacently noted, made 'deep cuts in their hide, from which the blood spurted'. Another planter of Isabel described his attitude to Jack McLaren: 'Treat them as muck. Remember that a white man's the only human being and that there isn't any other kind'. This opinion was manifested in his actions: he worked his 'boys' 13 hours a day; beat them without provocation, and if insubordinate, whipped them or shot them in the legs. These men may have been exceptional in their cruelty, but there are numerous indications that many others shared their attitudes although their behaviour may not have been so extreme. Particularly disturbing was the frequency of intemperance and violence amongst the managers and overseers who worked for Levers, the largest employer of labour in the Protectorate.

80 M. Johnson, op.cit., p. 312.
These men were often young and inexperienced Australians, described by one traveller as a fine set of manly fellows. Their manliness expressed itself in strange ways. In 1914 two Levers overseers were charged with tying a labourer to a tree and whipping him, and with wounding a man with a revolver respectively. There were also four other charges of assault against one of the overseers. Both men were acquitted, though they were later dismissed by Levers. In 1915 William Ross, another Levers overseer, threatened to beat any labourer who complained to the Labour Inspector. He was convicted and fined £20 or two months goal. In the same year, a Levers manager, V.J. Francis, struck a labourer who later died as a result. Francis was drunk at the time. On being charged Francis stated, 'what does it matter if I did kill a nigger'. The court apparently agreed, for Francis was only required to pay costs and a surety of £25. Both Ross and Francis were sacked by Levers after pressure was applied by the Colonial Office, though the company considered that Ross was only doing his duty. In 1917 Eric Hylton, a Levers overseer, kicked

82 Hogg, op.cit.
83 WPHC No.1663 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 6 June 1914; No.1779 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 15 June 1914.
84 WPHC No.2747 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 15 September 1915; No.263 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 28 December 1915.
85 WPHC No.258 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 23 December 1915.
and punched a labourer to death for not shutting a gate. This man escaped punishment by fleeing the Protectorate.  

In 1922 another three Levers overseers were charged with the murder of a labourer, but were acquitted on a plea of self-defence.  

In 1918, the annual Labour Report for the previous year stated that the time of the brutal 'Nigger-driver' seemed to have passed, and that managers and overseers were now more educated and enlightened, although Resident Commissioner Workman, whose view of the non-official Protectorate population was generally unfavourable, disagreed.  

Nevertheless, it does appear that with increasingly regular labour inspections and more stringent regulations, the situation on the plantations improved. This seems to have been a forced change, rather than the result of a change of attitude on the part of the Europeans concerned. In the 1920s the Planters Gazette regularly complained about the restrictive regulations that hindered the maintenance of discipline on the plantations, and grew almost hysterical when a white man was charged with manslaughter and forced to submit to 'galling indignities'. The latter consisted of being confined aboard his yacht in

87 WPHC No. 430 of 1918, Workman to H.C., 10 January 1918.  
88 WPHC No. 1000 of 1922, Turner to H.C., 19 April 1922; No. 1227 of 1922, H.C. to Chief Judicial Commissioner, 9 May 1922.  
Tulagi harbour in full view of the public, while the police patrolled the shore. The abuses perpetrated by certain planters and overseers was largely a product of their own characters: their inexperience, drunkeness, or their bullying natures. The settlers' reaction to the problem as a whole, though, was symptomatic of more basic concerns and attitudes. The existence of regulations to protect the black man from extreme abuses was accepted, but that the black man was able to exploit the law for his own advantage was a bitter pill to swallow. Instead of Europeans disciplining their fellows out of a respectable sense of paternalistic responsibility, the 'childlike native' was using the law to enforce his rights and to 'humiliate' the white man. That the labourers could understand and use the law was a shattering realisation. The Gazette fulminated against those labourers who kept within the borderline of the law, and at the same time goaded the employer to 'madness'. Thus they considered European authority became a 'bluff', the labour regulations a 'farce'; and the much prized prestige of the white man evaporated. The planters urged that the laws be changed so that the labourers would not be able to insult white men with impunity, and so that they work without debate or insolence. It was argued that the protective legislation was responsible

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90 PG, 6 (May 1922), pp. 4-5.
91 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
for the occasional violent deaths of labourers: as the European could not trust the law to protect him, he was forced to take strong sudden measures - sometimes leading to a trial for murder or manslaughter. The doctrine that one had to react quickly and forcefully before a situation got out of control was much in vogue. What constituted a potentially explosive situation was not defined - an imagined insult, a hint of truculence, a sign of laziness - depending upon the sensitivity and irascibility of the overseer, such things might constitute open rebellion. For some planters, the only incentive the labourer understood was the rod, and they were outraged when its use was forbidden.

Although the planters of the New Georgia Group were just as vehement as their colleagues elsewhere about the maintenance of the white man's prestige, there were few cases of extreme abuses in the district. In 1911 Louis Austen, who ran a plantation in the Marovo, was charged with the manslaughter of one of his labourers. He had attempted to force a man to work on Sunday, and a conflict occurred in which Austen and two labourers were wounded, one of whom later died. Austen was acquitted of the charge, although he was prohibited from entering the Protectorate for two years. The proximity of the government station at Gizo to most of the plantations, and the presence of a strong mission

92 PF, 8 (December 1922), p. 2.
93 WPHC No. 2245 of 1911, Woodford to H.C., 23 November 1911; H.C. to C.O., 11 April 1912.
that was never reluctant to seize on such incidents as ammunition in the interminable battle for influence and prestige, had a fortunate restraining effect. The racial line was also not drawn so emphatically in the Group, with many of the planters having islanders as wives and children by them. Nevertheless, most maintained 'the usual Solomon Island code of severity, discipline and punishment', along with the belief 'that the laws favor(ed) the native too much'. They were outraged with the injustice of the laws when an overseer who had assaulted a labourer for disobedience was in turn assaulted by the Malaita men, who then only suffered a small fine and a few months in goal. Such outrage was hardly merited: Europeans convicted of murder or manslaughter received laughably light sentences, and the rate of acquittal was high. With the well advertised reputation of the Malaitans as cunning and ferocious savages, a plea of self-defence was often entertained favourably. Islanders convicted of assault or murder could expect much harsher treatment from the courts.

While conditions on the plantations improved gradually from 1910 to the mid-twenties, this could not be said to have been the result of a developing sense of responsibility on the part of the planters, or the administration.

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94 Robinson, op.cit.
95 PG, 7 (August 1922), p. 19.
96 H. McQuarrie, Vouza and the Solomon Islands (Sydney, 1945), pp. 11-12, 22-4.
Throughout this period the planting community continually pressed for changes in the regulations or in the attitude of the Colonial Office that they considered were prejudicial to their own economic interests. In quite a few cases, these demands were supported by the Protectorate administration.

The intensity of agitation from the planting community naturally varied with the economic situation. In good times the clamour for change was muted; with the crash of copra prices, it was almost deafening. The planters seemed to regard boom conditions as a natural right: their expectations knew no bounds, and many gave little thought to balancing their income and expenditure over the years. As a result, when hard times came they were often unprepared. In their despair they turned on the administration: rents, duties and regulations which they had borne without worry, and even supported, now became draconian and oppressive. The price of copra varied considerably between 1910 and 1925. In 1912 it was a booming commodity, and there was 'enormous growth in the copra industry'. This was due to technological improvements which had enabled the refining of the oil to remove the smell and flavour and thus allowing it to be used as a substitute for butter fat and lard. In the Solomons, plantations were fetching over £100 per acre, from which a planter could obtain a return of between £30 and £70 p.a., depending upon
his efficiency. This happy state of affairs did not last long. With the outbreak of the war prices crashed: in 1913-14, Solomons copra was worth £19/10/- per ton; by 1915-16 the price had dropped to £13/12/-.

From this low point, the price steadily improved and in 1920-21 had reached the dizzy height of £27 per ton. Once again, the boom was followed by a catastrophic crash, and in 1922-23 the planters could only obtain £12/10/- a ton. This was the lowest price in over a decade, but things steadily improved and by 1925-26 the return was £19/4/- per ton.

As well as the erratic market, the planters had to cope with a regular increase in costs. According to the calculations of one member of the administration, the cost of living in the Protectorate, based on necessities alone, rose by 43% between 1913 and 1920.

With regard to the total costs of running a plantation, the planters claimed that they had increased by 300% in the years between 1913 and 1925. The effect of the rising costs, and of the variable

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97 The Age, 23 March 1912, p. 22, 'Islands Set in Summer Seas'.


100 WPHC No. 1976 of 1923, 'Deputation of Representatives of Residents' (29 September 1925).
market, was particularly hard on those in the process of developing a plantation. To clear the land, plant and maintain the trees, required a considerable capital outlay. A plantation would generally become self-supporting after 8-9 years, but to reach this stage it would entail an expenditure of £60 per acre. Thus a planter who committed himself to development during a period of good prices, could find himself facing huge losses if the price had fallen badly when the trees came into bearing. It was not surprising that only large companies could afford to undertake extensive development, while the individual planters contented themselves with maintaining a plantation of mature trees and cautiously expanding in good years. This was possible because the improvement condition for freehold property purchased under the 1896 regulation had resulted in most of the land in this category being at least partly under bearing trees by the time of the first copra price crash, in 1914-15. Thus they could afford to sit out the bad years. For the holders of leases the situation was more grim, and quite a few were forced to cancel them. For instance, on the 1 January 1914 the government let a total of 2,120 acres to various lessees, in the New Georgia Group; with the war and the drop in copra prices, all but 170 acres was eventually cancelled by the

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101 Handbook of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (1923), p. 44.
The principal targets for planter agitation were the labour supply, the leasehold system and the various forms of taxation and duties. It was a truism amongst the planting community that the population of the Solomons was insufficient to provide the labour for the development of the Protectorate. The solution was to import labour from elsewhere, or if this was not possible, to introduce some form of coercion to force the islanders who 'loafed' to work on the plantations. Levers had for years lobbied for the introduction of indentured labour from outside sources. To achieve this objective they proposed a bewildering variety of schemes, as one after the other was rejected by the Colonial Office. Indians from the sub-continent or Fiji, Javanese, Chinese 'coolies', were all offered as solutions to the labour shortage. These proposals were often supported by the administration. In 1909 Woodford and the High Commissioner, Im Thurn, agreed that Indian immigration was necessary as the Melanesian population of the islands was doomed to eventual extinction.\footnote{103}

In 1911 Sir Henry May was blandly recommending that the

\footnote{102 British Solomon Islands Protectorate List of Lands Leased to March 1917 (Suva, 1917).}
\footnote{Freehold land purchases were phased out in the years 1910-1914. In the latter year King's Regulation No.3 replaced previous legislation: under its terms land could only be purchased by the administration, which then leased it (with improvement conditions) to interested parties. (See Chapter 6).}

\footnote{103 WPHC No.774 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 26 December 1909.}
Solomons 'be regarded as a country to be gradually filled with the overflow of the Indian population'. These assumptions were not supported by J.H.P. Murray, who conducted an inquiry into the labour situation in the Solomons in 1916. Murray conceded that the island population was declining, but he did not believe that its extinction was inevitable. He did not support the importation of labour to the islands and considered that the existing supply was sufficient for the needs of the current plantations, and also for slow and cautious development. Nevertheless, Levers persisted in their proposals for the introduction of outside labour. The government of India had vetoed the suggestion thatindentured labourers be recruited from the country in 1914, so Levers pressed forward with a scheme to obtain Indian settlers from Fiji. This too came to nothing because of the difficulties of ensuring that free settlers should be obliged to work for the Company. Undaunted Levers proposed Chinese coolies as another source of labour. This suggestion was supported by the Protectorate administration, but again rejected by the Colonial Office. Throughout the whole debate over this question, the recommendations of

104 Scarr, op.cit., p. 294.


106 WPHC No.1994 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 27 August 1923; C.O., to H.C., 18 September 1923.
the officers of the Protectorate had betrayed a notable lack of serious thought. They accepted the simplistic thesis of an inevitably doomed Melanesian population, without investigating the premises or accuracy of the argument. There was no analysis of the causes of the decline in population, or of actions that might be taken to prevent it.

The attitude of the administration towards the planters and their objectives depended largely upon the personality and views of the Resident Commissioner. Between 1910 and 1925 there were four occupants of this post, although one was officially appointed only in an 'Acting' capacity. Woodford remained at the helm until January 1915, when he retired, although he left the Protectorate in July of the previous year on leave. His passionate commitment to the commercial development of the islands placed him at one with many of the demands of the planting community, but this support was modified by his frustration and disappointment at what he considered to be the slow pace of progress. For this he partly blamed the speculative tendencies of certain planters, including the large companies. Woodford was a leading proponent of the 'dying race' attitude towards the Melanesians, and was enthusiastic over the idea of imported labour. He also agitated for measures to increase the labour supply within the Protectorate. In 1910 the term of indenture had been decreased from three to two years. Not two years later, Woodford was arguing for the restoration of the longer term. At one stage he also advocated that the Government take responsibility for the recruiting of labourers, though his
support for the measure declined when the costs involved increased. Woodford's keenness to increase the labour supply landed him in hot water on one occasion. After the outbreak of the war Bougainville was occupied by imperial forces, whereupon Woodford recommended to the planters that they use it as a recruiting ground. This advice, given without consulting his superiors, was later negated and Woodford was called upon to explain his action though by that time he had retired.

Woodford was replaced by F.J. Barnett, who had been the Treasurer of the Protectorate. He was to remain Acting Resident Commissioner until 1917. Barnett had been a long term resident of Fiji, where he was a prominent merchant and was involved extensively in public life in a honorary capacity. He had also been long associated with the Fiji Planters Association. He had come to the Protectorate in 1906, and in spite of his background was to prove no particular friend to the planting interests, especially toward the large companies. He was active in promoting the idea of a land commission and considered that Levers should not be allowed to expand

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107 WPHC No. 1713 of 1912, Woodford to H.C., 29 July 1912.
109 Cyclopedia of Fiji, p. 216.
their holdings.\textsuperscript{110} He criticised the fuel monopoly held by Burns Philp and Levers, and considered them to be profiting from the uncertainty in supplies caused by the outbreak of war by charging extortionate prices.\textsuperscript{111}

Barnett was not active in 'encouraging' the islanders to work on plantations: on one occasion he advised the people of Alu not to recruit if it meant ignoring communal duties, and also warned them of the dangers of credit trading. In general he seemed to consider that the energies of the islanders should be directed towards improving the general conditions of the community, and that finance could be raised by the cultivation of communal plantations.\textsuperscript{112} This doctrine of self-help was not likely to please the planters. Barnett, however, was not involved in any confrontation with the white settlers, partly, perhaps, because he was consumed in wrangles with his own staff, and harboured bitter feelings over his status. One observer commented upon the 'continual state of friction that exists between the Acting Resident Commissioner and the officers serving under him'.\textsuperscript{113} Barnett

\textsuperscript{110} WPHC No.480 of 1917, Barnett to H.C., 12 January 1917. No.490 of 1917, Barnett to H.C., 29 January 1917. No.3103 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 12 November 1915.

\textsuperscript{111} WPHC No.2316 of 1914, Barnett to H.C., 26 August 1914. No.2499 of 1914, Barnett to H.C., 22 September 1914.

\textsuperscript{112} WPHC No.2288 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 31 July 1916.

\textsuperscript{113} WPHC No.868 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 25 February 1916. Memo. in folder by Auditor.
favoured a lenient and understanding approach towards islanders convicted of offences which were in accordance with their own custom, but against the European law. Other officers, notably Bell, believed a more vigorous attempt should be made to eradicate such heathen practices.¹¹⁴ The prefix 'Acting' gnawed at Barnett's soul: he was exceedingly bitter that his appointment was not made permanent, and that the perquisites of the office were beyond his grasp.¹¹⁵ His health suffered and he died shortly after leaving the islands, a wretchedly frustrated man.

Barnett's replacement was Charles Workman, who had previously served in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and Nauru. He assumed duty in June 1917, and served until September 1921, although he was absent from the islands from November 1920 on leave. As has been noted already, he had no great affection for the white settlers, considering them a somewhat inferior class. He reacted strongly towards criticism of the administration and the demands of the settlers, noting that the planters wanted laws to drive all men to work on their estates and that in fact they were allowed more latitude in the matter of labour conditions than in other colonies. If anything, he considered that the government had gone too far in assisting the settlers, especially as they did not appreciate their 'extreme good fortune' in receiving such help.¹¹⁶ Workman chafed under the

¹¹⁶ WPHC No.1694 of 1918, Workman to H.C., 9 June 1918.
power of the missions, particularly when it was united with the planters' demands in the form of the Rev. J.F. Goldie. Commenting on a series of submissions by S.I.P.A. relating to the recruiting of labour and extension of indenture terms he stated:

the planters as a class consider only their present interests and have no sympathy with large views on the welfare of the natives whom they wish to exploit ... Their leader is the Reverend J.F. Goldie ... whose subtle influence has been steadily opposed to Government throughout his twenty years residence in the Protectorate. 117

Fortunately for the planters, Workman did not serve long in the islands, leaving to become the Colonial Secretary for the Gambia. His replacement was the flamboyant Capt. R.R. Kane, who had served in Fiji and was to remain in the Solomons until 1928.

Kane entered the Solomons at an unfortunate time. The bottom had just fallen out of the copra market and the settlers, rather than the 'natives', were restless. The export duty on copra had been increased from 10/- to £1 per ton when the price was high and import duties had also risen. 118 The Planters Gazette was heaping abuse upon the administration and there was talk of rebellion in the air. In May 1922 S.I.P.A. informed the High Commission that the white residents had reached the limits of their endurance and that they were prepared to organise opposition to the administration. 119 Despite

117 WPHC No.1912 of 1920, Workman to H.C., 8 July 1920.
118 WPHC No.122 of 1921, McKerlie to H.C., 4 April 1921.
this inauspicious beginning, relations between Kane and the settlers rapidly improved. For this, the creation of the Advisory Council, the gradually improving price of copra, and the attitudes of Kane were responsible. The personality of Kane may also have had some influence. With his fondness for the bottle, and his predilection for the wives of his District Officers, Kane may have appeared more human and sympathetic that the austere Workman.\textsuperscript{120}

Kane's favourable responses to the settlers political aspirations and their demands for labour have already been described: he was also active in promoting their interests with regard to land and rentals. In 1922 he supported a S.I.P.A. request for a reduction in leasehold rentals.\textsuperscript{121} This was opposed in the High Commission which prompted Kane to attack such attitudes as dealing with the subject from 'a short sighted commercial and legal aspect'. He then launched into a spirited defence of the 'pioneers' who by their enterprise had developed the islands. He advocated that the government acquire all surplus lands and then lease them at moderate rentals, thus encouraging settlement and eventually boosting revenue through the consequent increase in imports and exports. This scheme also involved the acquisition of all 'native leases' by the government. Kane concluded that the large areas claimed by the islanders were in reality never occupied or used, and that their rightful title was extremely doubtful.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{120} McQuarrie, \textit{op.cit.} pp. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{121} WPHC No.622 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 9 May 1922.
\textsuperscript{122} WPHC No.2659 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 18 August 1922.
As a land commission was at that time in the process of assessing, and in many cases validating, these claims, Kane's judgement seems extraordinary. Like Woodford before him, Kane's eagerness to see the islands commercially developed led him to endorse policies that could have had disastrous long-term consequences for the islanders. Such policies envisaged a future where white entrepreneurs vigorously developed the land with imported labour, while 'the Melanesians, confined to adequate reserves, dwindled away in a cultural twilight which administrators would make as comfortable as the limitations of science and of protectorate funds would allow'.

Of the administrators, only the beleaguered Barnett seems to have formulated a policy which saw the islanders as central to the future of the Protectorate. The 'Great Panjandrum', as one planter referred to Workman, did not express any long-term policy, and his anti-settler position seems to have been motivated by a personal distaste for the protagonists, rather than any objective analysis of the situation.

The principal victory for the planters in the years after 1910 was the relaxation of improvement conditions and leasehold rentals. The depressed state of the copra market after 1914 caused anxiety amongst the planters that their inability to meet improvement conditions might imperil their tenure. This fear was allayed when the Colonial Office announced that the improvement conditions would not necessarily

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123 Scarr, op.cit., p. 294.
124 Collinson, op.cit., p. 33.
apply, and that land holders would have their cases considered on their merits. In application, this decision became a moratorium on improvement conditions, and was extended for a further three years in 1920. For similar reasons, the Colonial Office also agreed to an amendment to the rates of rental on crown leases, whereby the initial rate (3d per acre for the first five years) was extended. The planters obtained further assistance in 1921, when proposed increases in licence fees and duties were shelved.

In 1923 the planters working crown leases pressed for further concessions. In petitioning for the conversion of leaseholds into freeholds, they argued that:

the Leasehold System of land tenure is opposed to that sturdy individualism which so markedly characterises pioneering British Colonists, who delight to feel that when engaged in wresting cultivation areas from the primeval jungle, they are improving their own freeholds and not winning virgin lands for a landlord.

This endearing image of heroic pioneers struggling manfully against a barbarous environment failed to touch the cold hearts at the Colonial Office. Anticipating this result, the

125 WPHC No. 2277 of 1917, C.O. to H.C., 11 July 1917.
126 WPHC No. 73 of 1920, C.O. to H.C., 19 March 1920.
128 WPHC No. 2099 of 1921, Barley to H.C., 19 November 1921; H.C. to Barley, 16 December 1921.
petitioners had added a rider appealing for a reduction in rentals. This request was received more favourably, and in 1926 there was a considerable cut in the rates.  

The most significant changes in the regulations governing plantations and labour occurred in the 1920s. In late 1920 the High Commissioner toured the Solomons and was not impressed by the labour conditions on the plantations. In his report to the Colonial Office, he recommended the establishment of a commission to investigate the matter, although the tenor of the suggestion was low-key. After several months' reflection in Fiji, however, his concern became more acute: he wrote of the necessity for a special enquiry to look into the grave abuses and conditions that existed, and how it was probable that only the remoteness of the Solomons had prevented the arousal of public attention over the issue.  

As a result, K.J. Allardyce was sent to the islands as a Special Commissioner in early 1922. Apparently the High Commissioner's agitation was unwarranted, for Allardyce produced no startling disclosures and the general tone of his report was quite mild. He found that the conditions and treatment of labour was 'on the whole, satisfactory'. Housing he described as 'fairly good', though never cheerful or comfortable. He also recognised that there should be more regular inspections of plantations, otherwise there was a tendency for overseers to

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130 WPHC No. 2364 of 1925, C.O. to H.C., 13 February 1926. No. 947 of 1926, H.C. to Kane, 27 April 1926.  
131 WPHC No. 2787 of 1920, H.C. to C.O., 8 November 1920. No. 2608 of 1920, H.C. to C.O., January 1921 (only date given).  
132 WPHC No. 2764 of 1921, Greene to Allardyce, 16 December 1921.
take the law into their own hands.\textsuperscript{133}

Allardyce's report was inconsistent and superficial, which was hardly surprising considering the brevity of his investigation and his inclination to rely on European informants. Allardyce considered the medical care available to be adequate, and indeed recommended that there be a reduction in the compulsory medical obligations of employers of labour. In this he was supported by Kane. In 1914 a dysentry epidemic had killed 10\% of Levers' labourers. In 1919 an influenza epidemic caused many deaths, especially on Malaita, the source of most labour. Surveys had discovered that almost 50\% of plantation labourers had hookworm, that yaws was practically universal, and that gonorrhea was widespread. Just ten months before Allardyce visited the islands a report by the Chief Inspector of Labour had criticised plantation housing as below standard, and stated that there was insufficient medical services for labourers.\textsuperscript{134} Thus did Allardyce and Kane agree: hundreds of labourers who lived in sub-standard, gloomy and uncomfortable quarters were housed in a 'fairly good' manner; labourers who were almost universally infected with some form of disease nevertheless received satisfactory medical care.

\textsuperscript{133} WPHC No. 1094 of 1922, \textit{op. cit.}

The three major recommendations of the Allardyce report were the abolition of 'beach payments', an increase in wages from 10/- to £1 per month, and the prohibition of the right of recruiting vessels to trade. He had ascertained that Levers, Burns Philp and S.I.P.A. agreed with these measures; in fact, the Planters Gazette had agitated for the first two measures not long before as inflation had forced the 'beach payments' up to an uneconomical level. These recommendations came into force in 1924, but by that time a section of the planting community had rescinded their support of the changes. To these planters' protests the administration replied that the new legislation was the result of the 'loudly expressed opinion' of the settlers. Thus the recommendations of the Allardyce commission, a commission which had been conceived of as an investigation into the conditions of labour and any abuses that might exist, was now perceived as a response to planter demands.

Those planters-recruiters-traders who opposed the introduction of the new regulations were predominantly from the southeast end of the Solomons: they protested that S.I.P.A. and the Gazette, who advocated the changes, were the voice of the planters from the western district, and did not represent the views of other settlers. They had some economic justification for their objections. On the surface the new regulations were equally bad for all employers of labour. Under the old

136 WPHC No.243 of 1924, Hill to H.C., 22 December 1923.
system an employer paid, per labourer, £12 in wages (over the
two-year indenture term), plus £12 recruiting cost and £8 beach
payment: a total of £32. Under the new system wages were £24,
plus the £12 recruiting cost: a total of £36. However, in
reality the new system favoured the planters of the western
islands, who were more distant from the main sources of labour,
Malaita and Guadalcanal. There were a number of reasons for
this. A planter who employed another party to recruit for him
faced a cash charge of £20 (£12 recruiting cost plus £8 beach
payment). As recruiting vessels were also allowed to trade,
the beach payment was likely to be given in, or exchanged for,
goods with a retail value of £8, but a much lower wholesale
value (as low as 50%). Thus an employer who hired a recruiter
was subsidising the latter for up to £4 per labourer. While
the larger planting concerns could afford to do their own
recruiting, the small individual planters in the western district
could not sustain the costs and time involved and thus relied
on other recruiters. With the passage of the new legislation
these settlers were only required to pay £12 cash per recruit.
Although they had to face a doubling of wage costs, this money
was paid out monthly to the labourers, who were then likely
to spend it at the store on the employers own plantation, and
thus he recouped on the 100% profit margin, rather that the
recruiters and/or the traders in the southeast. For the
planters in the southeast Solomons, these benefits were not so
apparent. Because of their proximity to the labour sources,
they were more able to do their own recruiting, and thus avoid
the £20 cash payment for each new labourer.

\[\text{ibid.}\]
The story of the European settlers, their political and economic aspirations, and the reaction of the Protectorate administration to them, is hardly elevating. The years after 1910 saw the development of a stable European community, and this was accompanied by increasingly vociferous demands for a greater say in the running of the islands, and for more favourable policies affecting the plantation economy. This was particularly true in the New Georgia Group where the white residents demonstrated an ability to organise and dominate settler opinion. The reaction of the administration to the settler ambitions was not edifying. The demands for a greater localisation of power in the Solomons, with a corresponding increase in the influence of the tiny settler population over the policies that were to determine the future of the Protectorate, were often supported by the officials at Tulagi. The same assumptions lay behind the official response to certain economic policies - most notably, the question of imported labour. The administration also tolerated conditions on the plantations that were, to say the least, unsavoury. Overseers sentenced for maltreating labourers received ludicrously light sentences; housing and medical facilities were substandard. The commission appointed to investigate these matters failed to do so; instead it responded to settler agitation from that group most able to organise their demands - the planters of New Georgia.

The indigenous people of the New Georgia Group had been relatively fortunate: their islands had not become the
dumping ground for the 'overflow' of the empire; they had not been dragooned on to the plantations, and their future had not been placed in the hands of an irascible and selfish minority. Yet, in the years following 1910 they suffered in other ways: consideration of their welfare was submerged in the vindictive bickering of government, missions and settlers, and the impact of the alienation of large amounts of their best land began to make itself felt.
CHAPTER SIX
LAND AND LEVERS, 1910-1920

The decade after 1910 saw an increase in troubles concerning land. The reduction of the last elements of resistance amongst the islanders in 1908-10 had resulted in increasing numbers of land purchases, as Europeans sought to capitalise on the growing stability of the Group. Speculation in land became common, eventually forcing the administration to take action to bring the situation under control. No sooner had this occurred than the problems created by the earlier cavalier alienation of land began to emerge. At the centre of this development was the Levers concession. As negotiations over the scope and terms of the Occupation Certificate continued, it became apparent that many of the thousands of acres included in the concession were not 'waste' land, but were owned and used by the islanders. Land which had appeared to be uninhabited in the head-hunting years was now found to be occupied. There was also a growing number of claims by islanders against other European holdings in the Solomons. The mounting difficulties concerning alienated land forced the administration to call for an inquiry, and in 1919 a Land Commission was established.

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In March 1910 Arthur Mahaffy was in the New Georgia Group reporting to the High Commission on the disturbances in the Marovo Lagoon. At that time he also noted that some land
transactions were causing trouble amongst the islanders. There had been a rapid growth in the number of Europeans attempting to exploit the availability of relatively cheap land and the steadily increasing price of copra. In 1904 there had been no Europeans resident on Vella Lavella, but by 1910 there were seven settlers on the island, not including the missionaries. Mahaffy made no specific recommendations regarding land alienation, and only cautioned that the greatest care was to be taken in determining the proper owners in all land purchases.  

Woodford was also concerned with the changing circumstances of land alienation. Speculation was becoming common, and companies were mushrooming in the rush to obtain property. Some of these concerns had solid financial backing and were genuinely intending to develop their holdings, but this did not prevent them from attempting to acquire property far in excess of their capability to develop it. Burns Philp & Co. formed the Solomon Islands Development Co. with a stated capital of £100,000 to work their 33,200 acre freehold property, Tetepare Island. In addition, they wished to acquire a 1,500 acre holding at Renard Cove on Rendova, as it was the nearest anchorage to Tetepare. Other companies had less reliable backing. Ulberts Plantations Ltd., for instance, was formed by a syndicate in Sydney with a registered capital of £6,000. Of this only £2,500 was in cash, coming from the instalments of six subscribers who were to each contribute £1,000. Walter

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1 WPHC No. 784 of 1910, Mahaffy to H.C., 8 April 1910.
2 WPHC No. 808 of 1909, Lucas to Mahaffy, 29 July 1909; No. 977 of 1909, Burns to C.O., 27 February 1912.
H. Lucas, a Burns Philp man, described Ulberts as a 'Jew Company' intent on obtaining a property then refloating it for a profit.³ This accusation proved to be incorrect, for Ulbergs eventually became the Union Plantation and Trading Co. which did undertake the development of its holdings. However, the suspicion was probably justified, as much speculation was occurring. The Liapari holding on Vella Lavella was conveyed thrice and mortgaged once between 1908 and 1910.⁴ In the rush, clashes of title and fraud were inevitable: the Methodist Mission and E.H. Pybus both claimed Ozama Is. and Saroporo on Vella Lavella as being within their respective deeds.⁵ The Vella Lavella Plantation and Trading Co. Ltd. foolishly acquired two 'deeds' from the old swindler Edmund Pratt, without verifying the claims first. The 'deeds', themselves of doubtful validity, were for a stated 825 acres which on inspection was revealed to be only 50 acres.⁶ The land rush was not limited to newcomers: older established residents were also buying up heavily. Norman Wheatley entered eight separate claims in 1910 alone, all of which were eventually approved. The total area of these purchases was not large, being approximately 200 acres, but Wheatley had revealed his acumen by concentrating on

³ WPHC No.782 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 23 June 1909; Lucas to Mahaffy, 12 August 1909.
⁴ LC I. Claim No.21, 'Certified Copies of Titular Documents'.
⁵ WPHC No.812 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 12 March 1912.
⁶ WPHC No.977 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 17 April 1912. Encl. No.2 Woodford to Drummond, 17 April 1912. DLS 'Red Book', pp. 74-5.
small lagoon islets: ideal for coconuts, easily developed, and with no possibility of boundary disputes. 7

The continuing large-scale alienation of land with its accompanying speculation prompted Woodford to recommend some changes to the system of land transactions. In early 1910 he advocated that the administration should purchase land from the owners and then lease it, with appropriate improvement conditions, to European concerns. Under the Waste Land Regulations the government could acquire land that was not owned, occupied or cultivated and then lease it under a Certificate of Occupation. However, the terms of the Waste Land Regulations did not cover the land that was not 'waste' because it was nominally owned and used for hunting. According to Woodford there was a large amount of this type of land in the islands that the owners were willing to sell for a low price. 8 Under Woodford's proposed system, speculation would be dampened because it would no longer be possible to acquire freehold titles, and development would be assured through stipulated improvement conditions. At the same time the administration would be deriving income from the rental. In October 1910 the Colonial Office expressed agreement with the principle that the sale and lease of native land should only take place through the government. 9 Although regulations enforcing this decision

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7 DLS 'Deeds and Claims' (A), pp. 311, 315, 344-7, 365, 375.
8 WPFC No. 977 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 14 February 1910.
9 ibid., C.O. to H.C., 20 October 1910.
were not enacted until 1914, it was adopted as practice much sooner as a result of the situation on the island of Vella Lavella.

By early 1911 conditions on Vella Lavella were improving. Zito had been removed to Fiji and the unrest on the island had quietened down. The Methodist Mission was steadily expanding, encouraging the people to resettle in larger villages near mission stations and on the coast. With this increasing stability there was a rush of traders and speculators to buy land on the island. The land in question was extremely good: on parts of Vella Lavella, particularly the east coast, there is a flat foreshore strip up to a mile wide and ideal for plantations. Moreover, much of this land was already thickly covered in coconuts planted by the islanders, many of whom had died in the previous decades of head-hunting and internecine warfare. The rush to acquire these valuable acres was ended abruptly in February 1911 when Woodford issued a notice stating that he would decline to recommend any transactions of land on Vella Lavella. Instead he proposed to visit the area himself, seek out the surviving claimants and then purchase the land for the government; later making it available for leasing.  

10 A few months later Woodford acquired 1,250 acres at Sakasukuru, Vella Lavella for £200 (to be paid in annual instalments of £10). There were some hundred coconut trees already planted on this block. The lease was offered to several companies before being accepted in 1915. Concerns such as the Vella Lavella Plantation and Trading Co., eager to acquire freehold properties, were not so keen to accept a 99

10 ibid., Woodford to H.C., 9 March 1912.
year leasehold that would entail immediate development work.¹¹

The Sakasukuru purchase was not the first occasion that the government had acquired land that was not 'waste': in 1910 Woodford had bought a small block at Mbili in the Marovo Lagoon which he leased to the Malayta Co. as a trading station site.¹² Sakasukuru was, however, the first substantial plantation property acquired by the administration. At the beginning of 1912 the rental for such 'coconut land' was determined by the High Commission to be a minimum of 3d per acre for the first five years, 6d per acre for the second five years, 3/- per acre for the third five years, and 6/- per acre for the remaining years of the lease. This was soon amended to 3/- per acre from the eleventh to the twentieth year, 6/- per acre from the twenty-first to the thirty-third year, and thereafter 5% of the unimproved value of the land.¹³ It was also decided that in no case should more than 2,000 acres be leased to one individual and that as general policy it was desirable to limit the areas leased so that they were within the ability of the lessee to develop the land.¹⁴

Initially, in April 1912, the High Commission decided that only in cases where native ownership was doubtful was land to be bought directly by the government in 'fee simple'. Where

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¹¹ ibid., Woodford to H.C., 17 April 1912; No.1141 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 6 May 1913; No.1660 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 25 May 1915.

¹² WPHC No.1221 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 4 August 1910. Minute by Mahaffy.

¹³ WPHC No.2161 of 1911, H.C. to Woodford, 31 January 1912; No.1708 of 1912, Woodford to H.C., 26 July 1912.

¹⁴ WPHC No.2161 of 1911, loc.cit.
no doubt existed the land was to be leased on behalf of the owners through the government, with the owners receiving the full rental less 10%, which was deducted by the administration in payment for the service it provided.\(^\text{15}\) This stipulation was apparently ignored by Woodford, who throughout 1912 purchased several blocks from specific owners in 'fee simple'. One such transaction, the Sakasukuru property, involved a single vendor, and thus could hardly have been a case of disputed ownership.\(^\text{16}\) In April 1913 it was decided by the Colonial Office that in future all transactions involving native land would take the form of either direct purchase by the Government and subsequent lease to non-natives, or lease through the Government on behalf of native owners with the deduction of the 10% commission. It was left to the Resident Commissioner's discretion to adopt either method, paying due regard to the wishes of the owners.\(^\text{17}\) Woodford replied to this directive by stating that he had, in fact, followed this course since the beginning of 1912.\(^\text{18}\) This was untrue, as some 900 acres had been alienated as freehold throughout 1912. It is possible that Woodford had allowed these transactions to be concluded in that year because they had been arranged some time

\(^{15}\) WPHC No.182 of 1912, H.C. to Woodford, 24 April 1912.

\(^{16}\) ibid., Woodford to H.C., 31 May 1912.

\(^{17}\) WPHC No.877 of 1913, C.O. to H.C., 2 April 1913.

\(^{18}\) WPHC No.1408 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 18 June 1913.
before; but if this was the case then he was certainly displaying a fine sense of selectivity, for a number of other transactions in that category were rejected by him. Most surprising of all was the largest freehold purchase of 1912; a 700 acre block at Njorio, Vella Lavella. This was a similar property, and just fifteen miles distant, to the Sakasukuru block that Woodford had refused to allow the Vella Lavella Plantation and Trading Co. to acquire.\(^1\)\(^9\) One further freehold acquisition was allowed during 1913; this deal, as we shall see, was part of the protracted negotiations between Levers and the government over the status of their freehold properties.

The legal basis for the abolition of freehold alienation was enacted in King's Regulation No. 3 of 1914 ('The Solomons Land Regulation'). This repealed the regulations of 1896 and 1904, although those holding freehold land would continue to do so on the terms of those regulations. It provided for the leasehold of native and public, or crown, land under the system that had already been in practice. The definition of 'public' land allowed for 'waste' or vacant land to be recognised as public land, though in practice the tendency was 'to avoid assuming land to be public unless it was bought'.\(^2\)\(^0\) This was perhaps fortunate as the concept of 'waste' land as described in the 1904 regulations was proving to be a problem. In 1910 two applications were made for Certificates of Occupation of 'waste' land on Kolombangara. The two blocks, totalling

\(^{19}\) DLS 'Deeds and Claims' (B), p. 102.

\(^{20}\) Allan, op.cit., pp. 40-1.
4,500 acres, were adjacent on the south-west coast of the island: and both applications were recommended by Woodford and Mahaffy. However, it soon became apparent that the land was not in fact 'waste', and that there were islanders living in the area. As the Group became increasingly more peaceful, more islanders moved from the bush and began to settle nearer the coast. Woodford was forced to purchase their 'rights', and reserve for their use the coconuts on the foreshore. Both of the certificates lapsed and the land for which Woodford had acquired the 'rights', at a cost of £100, was classified as public land. The Land Commission in the 1920s investigated this section of Kolombangara and found extensive evidence of occupation, and it was thus classified as native land.

By mid 1913 the concept of 'waste' land, which had enabled the alienation of several hundred thousand acres, had become obsolete: Woodford declared that in future it would be convenient to consider that vacant land in the Protectorate was 'practically non existent'.

By the time of the 1914 Land Regulation, and after the finalisation of the Levers Certificate in October of the same year, an approximate 218,000 acres had been alienated:

21 WPHC No.525 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 1 April 1910; No.676 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 31 January 1913; No.2306 of 1913; Woodford to H.C., 27 October 1913; No.2301 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 12 August 1916.


23 WPHC No.1408 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 18 January 1913.
of this figure some 54,000 acres were freehold, and the remaining 164,000 on Occupation Certificate.\textsuperscript{24} This represented some 17% of the total land area of the Group. Land alienation was to continue, but under the auspices of the administration. Up to the end of 1925 a further 13,170 acres was to be acquired as Crown land, and 4,528 acres were let as 'Native Leases'. The form of Crown land leasehold and the 'Native Leases' were similar. Small station sites were leased for ten or twenty years on a fixed rental, while the large holdings were subject to the general cultivation lease previously described, and were usually let for ninety-nine years.\textsuperscript{25} While the legal framework for the alienation of land may have changed, the form of acquisition in reality did not. A European interested in obtaining a lease would select the land, negotiate the price on behalf of the government, then apply to the Resident Commissioner for the lease. The documents were then drawn up. As Allan has indicated, it was not surprising that some confusion existed amongst the islanders, and they were given the impression that they were dealing with non-official individuals.\textsuperscript{26}

The transition in the nature of land transactions during the period from 1910 to 1914 was not accomplished without dispute. One of the resulting wrangles shed interesting

\textsuperscript{24} DLS 'Red Book', passim; 'Deeds and Claims' (A, B), passim; 'Miscellaneous Instruments, Vol. A', ff.1-3. For acreages after survey see WPHC No.1443 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 14 April 1926. Encl. Wilson to Kane, 13 April 1926.

\textsuperscript{25} WPHC No.1443 of 1926, loc.cit.

\textsuperscript{26} Allan, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 39.
light on the methods employed by various planters and missionaries. The chief protagonist in this affair was F. Snowball, manager of Gizo Solomons Pty. Ltd. Snowball's commercial interests in the islands had begun in 1908, when he acquired Frank Wickham's holdings for £6,400. These holdings included an Occupation Certificate for 400 acres on Ghizo, and a large freehold property on Rendova. In 1910 he sought to increase his holdings by acquiring land on Vella Lavella. The land was at Njorovetto, and involved a one and a quarter mile shore frontage thickly planted with coconuts: the price for the 2,000 acre block was £35. Woodford considered that the value of the land, in lease, was £60 per annum. There also seems to have been some doubt whether the vendor had the right to sell all the coconut trees on the land. On Woodford's recommendation, the High Commissioner refused to sanction the sale, and despite a number of later protests this decision was upheld.\(^{27}\) Snowball claimed that he had not bought the coconuts, but had provided for their retention by the islanders, but if this was the case the agreement must have been verbal, for it was not mentioned in the deed. Snowball was supported by the Rev. R. Nicholson, who affirmed that he had acted as interpreter and had checked the details of the transaction. As it transpired, Nicholson's support was not disinterested, as he was a relative by marriage of Snowball. When, in 1913, the government made inquiries about purchasing land in the

\(^{27}\) WPHC No.1223 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 21 August 1910; No.123 of 1913, Snowball to H.C., 14 December 1912; No.792 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 15 March 1913.
same area, District Officer Hill was informed by the owner, Kaponi, that he would not sell anything until he consulted Goldie or Nicholson, as he was afraid of the latter who had told him to stall any possible purchase of the land that Snowball had attempted to buy.  

During the last five years of his post as Resident Commissioner, Woodford's frustration at what he considered the slow pace of development in the Protectorate was mirrored in his increasingly intransigent attitude towards those he considered responsible, the European land-owners. This was expressed not only in his reaction to opportunistic land deals such as that of Snowball, and in his adoption of new land regulations to suppress speculation, but also in the hard line he maintained against Levers. Since their entry into the Solomons in 1905, with the acquisition of the Pacific Islands Co. concession, Levers had steadily increased their holdings in freehold lands. This was ended abruptly in 1910, when their applications for land at Viru Harbour and on Ranongga were quashed by the Colonial Office, and they were informed that no further applications from the company would be entertained.  

However, in the same communication, they were allowed to take up a block at Njorovetto, Vella Lavella for which they had already negotiated the purchase. This transaction was allowed on the condition that the area be limited to 100 to 200 acres,

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28 WPHC No.123 of 1913, loc. cit.; No.2461 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 22 November 1913. Encl. Hill to Woodford, 6 November 1913.

29 WPHC No.61 of 1905, H.C. to Levers, 17 December 1910.
and they were later also forced to pay 5/- per coconut tree as compensation to the owners.\textsuperscript{30} Despite these restrictions, Levers still managed to increase their holdings through the acquisition of already established plantations.

In early 1911 they negotiated with Wheatley for the transfer of his Occupation Licences to the company. Wheatley's success as a planter was undoubted, whereas Levers had failed in a number of their attempts to establish plantations. Woodford considered this was due to their poor selection of land, and that now they were seeking to make amends by acquiring already established plantations.\textsuperscript{31} Woodford regretted that Levers were increasing their land holdings in this manner, but could find no valid ground to refuse to sanction the transfer. However, he did urge that their freehold properties be subject to forfeiture because of non-compliance with improvement conditions, and that their Occupation Certificate be cancelled for the same reason.\textsuperscript{32} Action was soon taken in this direction when it was revealed that Levers had failed to cultivate the requisite one tenth of their 5,000 acre Rendova freehold property. The company was offered two acres for every one cultivated and so the Rendova holding was reduced to 1,362 acres. Levers suffered badly also with their properties in other parts of the Protectorate, forfeiting 20,000 acres out of a total

\textsuperscript{30}ibid., H.C. to Woodford, 24 April 1912.

\textsuperscript{31}WPHC No.1325 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 19 January 1911.

\textsuperscript{32}WPHC No.977 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 14 April 1911; No.111 of 1911, Woodford to H.C., 14 March 1911.
of 34,680. Even this was not enough for Woodford, who complained that the promise of two acres for every one cultivated went beyond the provisions of the regulation. In this he was correct, and the offer was technically illegal; but as the Colonial Office had already made it, Woodford's opposition was futile.

Although Levers' cultivation of its freehold properties was insufficient for it to avert forfeiture in many instances, it was quite substantial when compared to the development they had undertaken on their concession holdings: by September 1911 they had cultivated only 7% of the 200,000 acres they held under Occupation Certificate. There were a number of reasons for this concentration on the freehold properties, among them being, according to R.V. Vernon, 'an almost superstitious reverence for the virtues of freehold tenure as compared with occupation on license for 999 years at a peppercorn rent'. Expenditure on freehold land also gave the company an immediate return, whereas development of the huge concession would take some time before it resulted in an increment of its capital value. Under the terms of the

33 WPHC No. 61 of 1905, H.C. to Levers, 10 April 1912; No. 1462 of 1912, C.O. to H.C., 20 June 1912. Encl. Levers to C.O., 30 May 1912.
34 WPHC No. 39 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 18 November 1912.
35 WPHC No. 61 of 1905, Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. Statement of Expenditure on Development and Cultivation of Coconut Estates in the Solomon Islands.
36 WPHC No. 63 of 1913, loc. cit.
37 ibid.
Occupation Certificate, Levers were required to expend 2/- per acre (a total of £20,000) by 1 January 1914. Woodford believed they would not be able to make this deadline, but when the company was confronted with an ultimatum from the Colonial Office Levers quickly ordered it representatives in Australia (Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd.) to ensure that the proper amount was spent.38

Another problem with the concession was that land on Isabel included within its boundaries was discovered to be occupied, and so the company was ordered to select other tracts in lieu of this land, which was withdrawn from the certificate. Levers requested that they be allowed to select some of the freehold land they had already forfeited, but this was refused. This selection was completed by 30 September 1913, and so a decade after the original certificate was issued to the Pacific Islands Co. the way was open to finalise the replacement certificate for Levers.39 The new certificate was finally issued on the 19 October 1914. The licence was for '200,000 acres', of which 153,870 acres were in the New Georgia Group. Although the New Georgia acreages were reasonably accurate, the other holdings were grossly underestimated: after survey the


total area was found to be 280,000 acres, and this was later embodied in the Certificate.\textsuperscript{40}

The signing of the 1914 certificate was not, however, the end of the matter, for the fertile imagination of the Levers organisation had produced yet another scheme. Levers signed the certificate on the understanding that a 'supplemental deed' be later prepared that would embody certain changes in their land holding. The company wished to surrender land they held on Isabel in return for more land on Kolombangara.\textsuperscript{41}

Behind this exchange lay the question of labour. Levers had long agitated for the introduction of indentured Asian labour to the Solomons to overcome the shortage of local manpower. Their request for indentured Javanese and Indian labour was refused by the Colonial Office, who did not however reject outright the possibility of importing free Indian labourers and their families from Fiji. Levers feared that such free labour might well desert the company to work for other concerns, and so to reduce this risk they suggested that Indian labour be used to develop the island of Kolombangara, and thus be isolated from other plantations. If they could obtain the interior of Kolombangara, not including the land reserved for the islanders in the south western corner, they could also offer their labourers a piece of land in the island's interior on terms. This presumably would have had the effect of binding

\textsuperscript{40} WPHC No.966 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 28 March 1914; No.2804 of 1915, Levers to H.C., 28 October 1915.

them to the company.\(^42\) There were no other European concerns operating on Kolombangara, and the only alienated non-Levers land on the island was the block which Woodford had acquired for £100, after discovering that it was not 'waste'. It was agreed that this block would become part of the 'native reserve' in the south western corner.\(^43\) Woodford was agreeable to the Levers scheme on the grounds that the population of Kolombangara would eventually die out, and that unless labour was supplied the progress of the Protectorate would come to a standstill.\(^44\) The Kolombangara exchange was embodied in King's Regulation No.3 of 1921, which issued a new certificate which included the interior of Kolombangara in its schedule—an increase from 90,470 to 148,010 acres of the island. There were some minor alterations in the acreage of other parts of the concession, with the end result of increasing Levers Occupation Licence holding in the New Georgia Group from 160,870 (1914) to 216,000 acres, which was 77\% of the entire Solomon Islands concession.\(^45\) Levers other ambition, to import labour, was never fulfilled despite constant appeals to the Colonial Office.

\(^{42}\) LC I., loc.cit.

\(^{43}\) WPHC No.3103 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 12 November 1915; No.2301 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 12 August 1916; No.480 of 1917, Barnett to H.C., 12 January 1917.

\(^{44}\) WPHC No.1784 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 26 June 1914.

\(^{45}\) LC I. Documents Accompanying 'Lever Report'. File C, Printed Copy of King's Regulation No.3 of 1921.
While the labyrinthine negotiations over the Levers concession continued in the rarified atmosphere of Whitehall, it was becoming increasingly apparent that something was seriously amiss in the islands. In his report on customary land tenure in the Solomon Islands, Allan noted that from 1914 onwards a developing 'land consciousness' could be detected amongst the islanders.\textsuperscript{46} In the New Georgia Group such feelings had existed for a considerably longer period. Land sales had been made for forty years, and a number of islanders had been quick to exploit the credulity of some Europeans in such matters. The islanders were aware that land was a 'negotiable asset', that land transactions had to follow certain proper forms if they were to be binding, and that redress could be obtained for violation of these forms by appealing to European jurisdiction. In the early 1890s Ingava had successfully disputed Edmund Pratt's claim to land at Munda before the High Commissioner's Court. While this awareness was at first limited to the more 'sophisticated' areas of the Group, such as the Roviana Lagoon, it soon spread to other districts. By 1910 islanders of Mbilua were successfully complaining about land 'jumping' by Europeans.\textsuperscript{47}

The 'land consciousness' that Allan discerns after 1914 was not a new development, but rather a reflection of the changing circumstances in the islands. Land was now being cleared and planted on a greater scale, and in some cases it

\textsuperscript{46} Allan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 42-3.

\textsuperscript{47} LC I. Claim No.21, 'Correspondence Before Submission of Claim'. Goldie to Brown, 1 February 1911.
became apparent to the islanders that the purchaser's understanding of the extent of the transaction did not tally with their own. An even more important factor in the growing restiveness over land at this time was that clearing and planting began on land that had not been subject to any transactions - the so-called 'waste' land that had been deemed to be unoccupied and unused. The islanders had no way of knowing the extent of the Levers concession until the company began to utilise its holdings, and when they did commence operations, complaints were soon made. 48

The original Pacific Islands Company concession had been selected in a superficial, slap-dash manner. Investigation of the land involved and consultation with the islanders had been cursory in the extreme. It was hardly surprising that much of the land appeared unoccupied, for the islanders had taken good care that it did so in order not to attract the attentions of raiders. Nevertheless, the foreshore and its hinterland were still frequently used. Temporary bases were set up for fishing expeditions; nuts were collected from the scattered plantations, and the bush was used by hunting parties. There were, as well, numbers of hope distributed throughout the 'waste' land. 49 The population of these areas, Kolombangara and north-western New Georgia, was not large, but it was more than the pessimistic estimates given by Woodford, who was convinced that the islanders were well on the road to extinction.

48 LC I. 'Lever Report', pp. 35-44.
49 ibid., pp. 18-23.
Woodford estimated the population of Kolombangara at 90 in 1914; in 1915 it was given as 70, but according to the Land Commissioner in the early 1920s, it was well above this figure. The 1931 census counted 257 on the island, and it was quite likely that this was less than the population in the late 1890s. There were a number of serious epidemics in the intervening years, and on other islands in the Group it is known definitely that the population declined.50

With the end of head-hunting the people in the hills began to establish settlements closer to the coast. This migration had already been observed on Isabel in the early 1900s, and had led to the withdrawal of a portion of the Levers concession on that island. The migration was slower in parts of the New Georgia Group, as the suppression of raiding was not totally accomplished until the conclusion of the Marovo and Zito troubles. The movement from the bush to the coast was also encouraged by the Methodist Mission, as it facilitated their contact with the people. For instance, the mission station at Menakasapa, on the northwestern tip of New Georgia, soon attracted a large settlement in its neighbourhood.51

50 ibid., pp. 200-14.
As well as the epidemics of the early 1900s, there was an outbreak of influenza in 1919. See WPHC No. 2491 of 1920, Workman to H.C., 15 September 1920. Encl. Report on Influenza Epidemic 1919, by N. Crichlow.
The population of Simbo declined from c.400 in 1908 (Hocart's figure), to 379 in 1931. See WPHC No. 274 of 1932, 'Census of the B.S.I.P. for 1931', Return for the Gizo District.

the migration to the coast, the islanders began to realise the extent of the Levers concession: on New Georgia Island about fifty miles of foreshore had been included in the concession, incorporating the entire coastal area used by the Kusaghe and Lupa people. Similarly, as villages began to appear along the coast, the administration was confronted with a problem it could no longer ignore.

In August 1916 the Acting Resident Commissioner wrote to the High Commission detailing a number of land disputes and recommending that a commission be appointed to investigate them. The disputes mentioned included several involving the Levers concession, and a number of complaints involving freehold properties. The part of the Levers concession which had prompted the islanders to complain was the holding in the Vona Vona Lagoon area: the eastern and northern foreshore of Kohinggo with the adjacent islets, and the northern end of Vona Vona Island had been included in the Occupation Licence. The western half of the Lagoon, including Vona Vona Island, was the province of a number of Munda mbutu mbutu, some of the members of which had settled in the area following the Royalist's actions at Munda in 1891. The western half of the lagoon, including Kohinggo, was the land of the Kindu and other mbutu mbutu with strong Kazukuru connections who had long maintained an interest in the area, using it for pig-hunts, fishing and camping. Levers had begun planting on Kohinggo in 1909 and this soon prompted complaints from the islanders. In 1911 the company gave £50 to representatives of the Kindu

52 WPHC No.2289 of 1916, Barnett to H.C., 1 August 1916.
and Munda mbutu mbutu as part of an agreement in which the islanders surrendered their claim to the land already cleared on Kohinggo and in return Levers waived its rights to the land on Vona Vona Island. This, at any rate, was the islanders' understanding of the agreement, although apparently Levers saw it differently, and after 1914 rumours that the company was about to commence work on Vona Vona Island prompted further complaints. Whatever the nature of the 1911 agreement, it was nevertheless clear that the land in question was not 'waste' land and as such should never have been included in the concession. This also applied to some of the Levers land on Kolomangan-gara, which was also mentioned by Barnett in his request for a commission.

The other disputes referred to by Barnett involved freehold properties on Kohinggo and Rendova. In both cases the buyers had occupied land which was in excess of that originally conveyed. Barnett stated that in his experience the islanders did not renege on a transaction if they understood the original agreement. In many cases a vendor had assumed that the conveyance only included the land that he was entitled to sell, whereas buyers had taken advantage of vague boundaries and loose definitions to expand their holdings outside these limits, with resulting complaints from other islanders whose land was affected.

54 WPHC No. 2289 of 1916, op.cit.
Barnett repeated his call for a commission in November 1916 and February 1917, stating that it was becoming increasingly apparent that large tracts of the Levers concessions were claimed by islanders who wished to keep the land, and that trouble was bound to arise when the company attempted to cultivate it.\(^{55}\) The Government Surveyor, S.G.C. Knibbs, had investigated parts of the Levers concession and looked into other disputes and his report convinced the High Commission that a commission was necessary. Accordingly, the High Commission recommended to the Colonial Office that a commission be appointed to investigate disputed claims, the working of the Solomon Islands Land Regulations, and to generally inquire and report on all matters connected with the tenure and disposal of land in the Protectorate.\(^{56}\) Unfortunately, the Colonial Office, while accepting the need for a commission, disagreed with the recommended terms. It decided that a general inquiry into native rights with the object of determining an overall policy regarding land matters was not necessary, and that all that was required was an investigation of specific cases of native claims or rights to land then held by Europeans under freehold title, occupation certificate or leasehold arrangements.\(^{57}\) This decision may have saved the Colonial Office some expense in the short term, but it paid dearly in the continuing friction

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\(^{56}\) LC IV. 'General Correspondence Files'. No.1/12, H.C. to C.O., 23 March 1917.

\(^{57}\) ibid., No.1/13, C.O. to H.C., 19 June 1917.
over land matters that persisted in the Protectorate throughout
the subsequent decades and eventually, in the 1950s, a full
inquiry had to be held.

The wheels of the colonial bureaucracy turned slowly,
for it was not until mid-1919 that the appointment of a commis-
ioner was confirmed. The Land Commission began hearings in
the islands in early 1920, and its deliberations were to
continue, with some interruptions, for the next five years.
The Commission had been an almost inevitable consequence of
twenty five years of ill-supervised land alienation in the
Solomon Islands. The New Georgia Group had been at the centre
of this process, and had borne the brunt of the resulting
problems. While comprising only 17% of the total land mass
of the Protectorate, the New Georgia Group contained 42% of
the alienated land in the Solomon Islands. Much of this (some
70%) was in the form of the Levers concession, and the problems
created by this mammoth holding had been the single most
important factor in the establishment of the commission. The
Land Commission was to have particular significance to the
New Georgia Group in other ways: it became the focus of the
rivalry amongst the Europeans in the islands and the culminat-
on of a decade of conflict between missions and the
administration.

58 ibid., No.1/16, H.C. to Barnett, 2 May 1919.
The multiplication of land problems which culminated in the establishment of the Land Commission occurred in conjunction with another development: this was the intensification of ill-feeling amongst the white residents of the Group. At the centre of this squabbling was the Methodist Mission: the Mission competed with commercial interests for copra, it struggled with the administration for power and influence, and it battled with the Seventh Day Adventist Mission for converts. The arrival of the second mission provided an alternative for those islanders who, because of a reluctance to associate themselves with a mission connected with their former enemies, had shunned the Methodists. The Methodist Mission, and in particular Goldie, did all in their power to restrict the growth of the Adventists and to negate the islanders' act of choice. The conflict between the Methodists and other Europeans in the islands was to reach a climax in the Land Commission, as Goldie attempted to impose his terms upon the Commission and to use it as a weapon to attack the rivals of his mission.

From 1910 to 1920 the Methodist Mission gained considerable influence in the New Georgia Group, but in doing so it found itself in a state of almost continual confrontation with other Europeans in the islands. The Mission's 'industrial' work and business activities, and its increasing power, were perceived by both the commercial interests and the administration
as a threat to their status. In 1914 the Seventh Day Adventists came to the Group, and the Methodists did all in their power to restrict the development of this new rival. Goldie, the Chairman of the Methodist Mission, was at the centre of these conflicts: he dominated the Mission and its policies, and had an unswerving determination to uphold both his own, and the Mission's, authority in the Group. The welfare of the indigenous population, ostensibly the object of these struggles, became a secondary consideration to the pursuit of prestige and power.

The Mbava massacre and its consequences had demonstrated the ill-feeling which existed between the Methodist Mission and some of the traders and planters in the Group. These relations were a far cry from the cordiality with which the Mission had been received when it first settled in the islands. At that time it had obtained crucial assistance from Wickham, Wheatley and Binskin. Frank Wickham remained on good terms with Goldie and the Mission, for he was a pious man who strongly sympathised with the objectives of the Church. The same could not be said of Wheatley, who became a bitter critic of the Methodists. His feelings were shared by many of his colleagues, when it soon became apparent that the missionaries had no intention of limiting their activities to the 'spiritual welfare of the islanders.'

The commercial activities of the Methodist Mission were on two levels: that of official policy, otherwise known as the 'industrial side' of mission work, and the efforts of

1 WPHC No. 812 of 1909, Lucas to Mahaffy, 29 July 1909.
individual missionaries as planters and traders on their own behalf. In November 1909 the Solomon Islands District Synod requested a grant of £250 from the Mission Board for the purpose of developing the Mission's properties. The Synod resolved that mission work in the islands should be conducted on 'industrial lines'. The justification of this policy was that it would prevent the dispersal of young men who were being recruited by other plantations, and would teach them honesty, cleanliness and industry. It would also retain the people close to the influence of the Mission, and prepare them for establishing small plantations of their own. Another consideration was that the development of the Mission's holdings would be an excellent investment and would assist it to become self-supporting. Woodford was very encouraging to this side of mission work, and Goldie considered that the church should make the most of his approval. Goldie's argument that plantation development by the Mission would reduce the dispersal of islanders through recruitment to other plantations was sophistical: from the 1870s through to the 1940s the New Georgia Group maintained a reputation as a notoriously poor recruiting ground. The numbers of New Georgian recruits had always been extremely small, and Goldie's heart-rending tales of villages being entirely denuded of their young male population were quite imaginary. Of course, in later years the Mission itself


used indentured labour to work its developing plantations without shedding any tears for the disrupted village life of the young Malaitans who had been recruited.\(^4\)

The commercial development of Mission properties rapidly got underway. In 1910 a store and wharf were constructed at Gizo on land leased from the Government. The labour for the construction was provided by forty boys from the Kokenggolo school.\(^5\) In the following year it was resolved at the annual Synod to set aside £500 to develop the Mbanga holding. Not only was this desirable on the grounds of policy, but it was also necessary because there was the danger of losing the property if it were not developed.\(^6\) Work was soon commenced: the labour lines were constructed and forty or more recruits obtained.\(^7\)

By 1919 the Mbanga plantation was employing an average of about thirty labourers and had a cultivated area of 500 acres, involving 25,000 trees. The total number of coconut trees on mission property in the Roviana district was about 37,000.\(^8\)

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4 WPHC No. 1191 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 12 October 1925. Encl. Medical Returns of Indentured Labour. These reveal that in January 1925 Goldie was employing 45 labourers on his plantation at Mundi Mundi, and the Mission itself was employing 27 labourers at Mbanga.


6 MCA Vol. 179, Report of Solomon Islands District Synod, 9 November 1911.

7 MCA Vol. 117, Goldie to Danks, 1 August 1912.

the growing conviction that the 'industrial method' was the best, and the Synod echoed with such phrases as 'Land development means character development'.

In 1917 the Mission Board in Sydney passed a number of resolutions regarding 'Industrial Missions' in the islands. The general tenor of these was to reinforce the existing situation by establishing more business-like accounting procedures. Industrial work was described as a valuable and essential part of mission work which should be conducted with regard to the educational and spiritual interests of the natives employed, and not just for profit. However, it was recognised that industrial work need not only be self-supporting, but could also provide funds for the extension of mission work. To clarify these matters it was decided that the financial arrangements for Industrial Missions be separated from the allocations for normal mission work, and that a yearly statement of assets, profit and loss be required. In conclusion, the Board expressed its dislike for the term 'recruited labour' with reference to Industrial Missions. It was decided that when such labour was employed on mission stations it was to be called 'voluntary', though still protected by the regulations laid down by the government regarding the employment and condition of indentured labour. By 1919 the Methodist Mission in the New Georgia Group owned freehold land estimated at 3,404 acres with a given

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9 MCA Vol.184, Report on Solomon Islands District Synod, 9 November 1916.

10 MCA Vol.205, Minutes of the Mission Board, 7 February 1917.
value of £27,416.^{11}

Although the burgeoning planting operations of the Mission were regarded by some of the other Europeans in the Group as an indication that its objectives were commercial rather than spiritual, they were not the major cause of their antagonism towards the Methodists. This was largely based on the 'trading' activities of the Mission, and the fact that the Mission was attracting much of the islanders' wealth and produce that had once passed through the traders' hands. The Mission not only produced its own copra, but also obtained a great deal from the donations of its converts. Between 1918 and 1921 it collected £3,434 from Roviana and £2,118 from Vella Lavella in copra contributions.^{12} Goldie always denied that the Mission engaged in 'trading', claiming that all the copra sold by them came from donations or was the product of the plantations on mission freehold land, and that none was purchased from the islanders.^{13} Other traders remained unconvinced, and in their eyes the Mission was taking advantage of its position to trade without having to pay the usual licence and ships' fees.

The distinction between 'trading' and the Mission's activities was extremely fine, and in 1913 the administration entered into the debate. The Mission had opened stores at Munda and Mbilua which, Goldie claimed, operated on a non-profit


^{13} MCA Vol.168, Goldie to Danks, 1 February 1911.
basis and dealt only with islanders connected with the Mission. Woodford was unconvinced, especially as Goldie was not prepared to state categorically that goods had never been sold for a profit. It was also quite obvious that the stores sold goods to 'non-mission' customers, and so Woodford accordingly demanded that the Mission pay the £10 trading licence for each of the stores. Woodford also requested that the Mission pay a £10 ship licence for the mission vessel Tandanya which he had heard carried trading goods. Goldie denied this, but paid for the three licences under protest.¹⁴

The unpopularity of the Mission was increased by its attitude with regard to a number of land deals in the Group. In 1910 the administration forced Wheatley to vacate Samarai and Repi, two islands in the Vona Vona Lagoon which he had 'jumped' several years earlier. As Wheatley had cleared and planted the islands, this represented a considerable loss. Wheatley believed that the Mission had prompted both the administration and the islanders in this matter, although he was clearly in the wrong. Certainly Goldie did not attempt to hide his pleasure over the outcome of this affair, and gloated over the financial loss sustained by the planter.¹⁵

The bitterness between Wheatley and the Mission was intensified

¹⁴ WPHC No. 1660 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 3 June 1914. Encl. Goldie to Woodford, 7 November 1913 and 11 December 1913.

by their proximity to each other: Wheatley's station at Lambeti was a mile from the Mission's headquarters at Kokenggolo. Clashes between Wheatley's Malaitan labourers and the local islanders connected with the Mission occurred, with the former being reinforced by Levers labour from Kohinggo and Rendova on occasion. 16

Another confrontation between the Mission and a planter over land occurred at Vella Lavella in 1911. This affair involved somewhat complex questions of title that were not finally settled until the Land Commission in the 1920s. The centre of the dispute was the island of Ozama and a piece of land opposite it at Mbilua. Although the acreage in question was not large, the emotions aroused were violent. The antagonists were Nicholson (for the Methodist Mission) and E.H. Pybus (for the Union Plantation & Trading Co.); both laid claim to the land and attempted to collect the nuts on it. The climax to the dispute was a 'battle', later described by the Land Commissioner, F.B. Phillips:

> It is to be doubted whether even a casual visitor to the Western Solomons could fail to hear of the struggle at Saroporo in which detachments of Mission "boys" and the Company's native labour, respectively headed by a former missionary and a former manager of the company, were engaged: the story of this encounter, of the coconuts hurled, of its battle-cries (sacred and profane) has become, by repetition, almost Homeric. 17

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16 WPHC No.790 of 1912, Woodford to H.C., 12 March 1912.

17 LC I. Claim No.21, Land Commissioner's Report, 16 May 1923. See also WPHC No.812 of 1909, Woodford to H.C., 12 March 1912.
At the time of the encounter, however, the participants were not inclined to be so reflective. Pybus described the missionaries as being 'traders pure and simple, hiding it under the cloak of religion'; and to Goldie, Pybus was one of the 'most plausible, most accomplished rogues' he had met. The affair ended inconclusively, as it was discovered that Woodford's inquiry into the matter had no judicial authority. This dispute, like many other petty quarrels between Europeans in the islands, had a certain ridiculous aspect in the arousal of such fierce antagonisms over a patch of land and a few coconuts. To the participants, however, it was a further campaign in a perpetual war in which European generals marshalled their black troops in a struggle to uphold white 'face'.

Although the 'industrial policy' of the Methodist Mission was sufficient to cause dissension within the European community, it was increased by the commercial activities of individual missionaries, in particular those of Goldie. Goldie was a remarkably able and determined man, with an unshakeable confidence in his own position and attitudes. He was willing to fight hard and long over any issue that he considered would affect either the influence and prestige of the mission, or his own personal standing. For these ends he was willing to confront not only the planters and administration, but also his own superiors in the church. In June 1907 Goldie purchased a block of land at Mundi Mundi, Vella Lavella, estimated to be 3,000 acres, for £75. This was a bargain, as the land contained

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18 WPHC No. 248 of 1911, Clark to H.C., 14 February 1911 and 26 April 1912; H.C. to Clark, 22 May 1912.
many mature coconut trees, and a survey of the block in 1913 revealed that its true area was 6,197 acres. Goldie attempted to extend his holdings in 1909 when he purchased several islands in the Roviana Lagoon for £20. In a letter to Woodford he explained that the people had wanted to give him the land as it was too stony for gardens, no-one lived on it, and they did not wish to sell it to anyone else. Woodford disapproved of the transaction, noting that the price was inadequate, that the islands were good coconut land, and that the islanders used to live on them. Accordingly, the High Commissioner did not sanction the sale, and Goldie seems to have allowed the claim to drop.

Goldie's ownership of the Mundi Mundi plantation first came to the notice of the Mission Board in Sydney when Wheatley complained about it in 1911. Wheatley claimed that Goldie was actively trading, and that he used the mission plantation at Kokenggolo as a nursery for his own Mundi Mundi property. Dr George Brown was in the Solomons at that time, and he investigated these matters on behalf of the Mission Board. The charge of trading was not sustained, but Goldie's ownership of the plantation could not be ignored. Brown also discovered, to his surprise, that Goldie owned the ex-mission vessel, the Bondai. In 1909 Goldie had written to the Board

20 WPHC No. 1213 of 1910, Woodford to H.C., 4 August 1910. MCA loc. cit.
21 MCA Vol. 57, Danks to Goldie, 10 January 1911.
recommending the sale of the Bondai, which was bought in the following year by a Mr Teague in Australia, who was Goldie's father-in-law. Goldie had originally intimated that he could get £90 for the ship, but Teague purchased it for £80. His explanation was that he was unable to get more than £55 for the ship in the Solomons, so he had written to Teague to tell him to offer £80. This noble gesture was not without profit: Goldie chartered the vessel to the government for 30/- a day, and also used it to carry cargo for other companies and to recruit labour for his own plantation. Other traders protested that if Goldie paid no licence fee for the Bondai, then they would refuse to pay their own. Woodford eventually demanded that Goldie pay the licence fee and he did so under protest. He later resold the ship to Harry Wickham.²²

Goldie vigorously defended his ownership of the Mundi Mundi plantation before Brown. He stated that it had been purchased by Teague on his advice, and although he had a financial interest in the property and it was in his name, he spent no time on the estate and it did not interfere with his mission work. The plantation was run by an overseer and labour recruited at normal rates from the eastern Solomons. He also denied using the mission vessel to carry stores for the plantation, and rejected the suggestion that he traded on the estate. Brown accepted these explanations but still considered that the plantation could eventually interfere with Goldie's

²² MCA Vol.168, Goldie to Danks, 19 October 1909 and 10 June 1911; Brown to Danks, 24 January 1911. WPHC No.1660 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 3 June 1914.
mission work, and that it would give a bad impression of the Mission. The Board notified Goldie that he should carefully consider his position as both a planter and a missionary; Goldie replied that he had now appointed a manager for the estate who relieved him of all responsibility, and that if asked sever his connection with the property he would have no alternative but to resign from the Mission. In view of this determination, the Board decided not to press the matter.\textsuperscript{23}

Goldie's planting activities became a matter of controversy again in 1913, when the Mundi Mundi property was surveyed and it was discovered that the acreage was 6,197, rather than the 3,000 stated in the deed. Under the improvement conditions of Clause 6 of Queens Regulation No. 4 of 1896, one tenth of the total acreage had to be cultivated within five years of the High Commissioner's approval of the transaction. Goldie had cultivated only 435 acres, and so the land was liable to forfeiture.\textsuperscript{24} When informed of this, Goldie struggled desperately to avert the loss of his land. He argued that he had not been informed of the High Commissioner's sanction of the sale until late 1909; that the surveyor had made an error; that he had been prevented from recruiting labour; that he paid an additional £200 to islanders who appeared to have an interest in the land; that he supported old people on the land.

\textsuperscript{23} MCA Vol. 168, Brown to Danks, 24 January 1911; 'Report of Deputation to Solomon Islands District, January-April 1911'; Goldie to Danks, 1 February 1911, 15 March 1911, 7 June 1911, 10 June 1911.

\textsuperscript{24} WPFC No. 2001 of 1913, \textit{op. cit.}
and undertook educational and religious work at the expense of the plantation; and that he had established a company, Mundi Mundi Plantations Ltd., with a nominal capital of £20,000 to develop the property so that forfeiture would result in great financial loss to himself.25

Woodford's reply to these claims shed some interesting light on the missionary's tactics. The Resident Commissioner produced documents that proved Goldie had been informed of the High Commissioner's sanction in April 1908; he pointed out that the survey had been based on Goldie's own plans, and that the only delay Goldie had experienced in obtaining labour had been the result of his employing a well-known arms dealer, Sam Atkinson, as his recruiter. Atkinson's licence had been cancelled because of gun running to Choiseul, and thus he was unable to recruit for Goldie. Goldie then asked that his original area be reduced to 4,000 acres: this would have brought him inside the terms of the improvement conditions. The reason he gave for this reduction was that the original vendors had no right to sell 2,000 acres of the property, and so now he had recognised their claim and surrendered the land. Woodford cynically noted that he had heard of complaints about this before, but that it was the first time Goldie had admitted to their validity.26


26 ibid. WPHC No.1234 of 1914, Woodford to H.C., 11 April 1914. Encl. Goldie to Woodford, 30 March 1914.
Goldie's efforts were fruitless: his holding was reduced to 1305 acres, on the basis of two acres for every one cultivated. His request to lease the land he had lost was refused. In making this decision, the Colonial Office also asked the High Commissioner to ask the Methodist Mission Board if they approved of their missionaries engaging in commercial activities, and that in the Secretary's opinion such practices were 'to be deprecated'. The ball was back in the Board's court: they replied ambiguously that they did not approve of their missionaries engaging in trade, and that they would take action if their members infringed regulations on mission trading. What these regulations were was left unstated. The minutes of the Board reveal that they did not, in fact, exist. It was decided that no action would be taken to enforce the rule against missionary trading, and the entire question was quietly swept under the carpet. It emerged briefly in 1917 when one of the missionaries in the islands, William Leembruggen, objected to the Board about Goldie's commercial interests. Goldie assured the Board that he had no such interests and Leembruggen was transferred to Queensland.

There was no room for independent voices within the Mission: Goldie dominated its deliberations and policy - the annual Synods were little more than a rubber stamp. J.R. Metcalfe, another missionary, wrote in his diary:

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27 WPHC No. 7 of 1914, C.O. to H.C., 19 November 1913.
28 WPHC No. 228 of 1915, Wheen to H.C., 13 January 1915.
MCA Vol. 205, Minutes of the Mission Board, 6 November 1914, 8 January 1915, 3 February 1915, and 23 February 1917.
Goldie's activities as a planter were not challenged again, and he was left to develop his Mundi Mundi property in peace. Both Goldie and the Mission continued to expand their commercial operations through to the 1920s. Despite this, however, their relations with other European settlers in the Group steadily improved. Although opponents of the Mission were still vocal, their number in proportion to the entire white population in the islands declined. They were comprised largely of long-time foes of the Mission, such as Wheatley and Pybus, and of individuals who derived a large part of their income from trading. As Collinson stated:

what antagonises the legitimate white trader more than anything else is the way in which some of the missionaries deliberately set out to compete with him in the acquisition of copra from the natives.

As the numbers of traders declined, to be replaced by settlers who were predominantly planters, opposition to the Mission diminished. Goldie and the Mission ceased to be competitors and became colleagues. When the Solomon Islands Planters

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30 Goldie almost doubled the cultivated area on his Mundi Mundi property between 1913 and 1923. See WPHC No. 73 of 1924, Kane to H.C., 6 December 1923. MCN Minutes for 4 and 5 February 1925.

31 Collinson, op.cit., p. 190.
Association was formed Goldie was its first chairman, and although a number of the planters had doubts about the propriety of a religious concern engaging in business they did not adopt an actively hostile attitude towards the Mission. Metcalfe noted that Goldie had the 'respect if not always the goodwill' of the settlers, and that the same was true of the Mission as a whole. Metcalfe himself was on amicable terms with many of the planters, regularly visiting and helping them, but these were generally the more 'respectable' of the Europeans. At the same time he was careful to avoid the 'shouting enemies' in the bar at Gizo.

At the same time as the Mission was improving its standing with the settlers in the Group, its relations with the administration were steadily growing worse. The Mbava massacre and its consequences had seen the Mission, in Goldie's words, 'come out on top'. The administration had been forced to retract its accusations against the Methodists and to endorse publicly the Mission's work, or else face disclosure of the facts of the affair. The administration had also suffered in the eyes of the islanders. The senseless butchery of bungled punitive expeditions and a general lack of consideration for the welfare of the islanders had left their mark.

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34 ibid., entry for 30 September 1924.
After 1910 the Mission, rather than the government, increasingly became the focus of the islanders' aspirations and respect. The Mission’s following on Vella Lavella grew dramatically after the Zito affair, and they made their first inroads in the Marovo Lagoon in the aftermath of the troubles in that district. One of the islanders arrested, but not convicted, by the administration after the murder of Burns was befriended by the Mission and used to make contact with the people of Vangunu and a mission station was eventually established at Patutiva.  

The standing of the administration was also not helped by the character of some of the officials who had served in the Group: a racketeer such as Hazelton, and drunkards like Sykes and Walsh, did nothing to improve the islanders' estimation of the government. These difficulties were not restricted to the New Georgia Group, and after fifteen years of control, the Western Pacific High Commission finally began to detect some shortcomings in the system of administration in the Solomon Islands. Sir Henry May, after a tour of the Protectorate in 1911, reported to the Colonial Office that there was, indeed, some room for improvement. District Magistrates, he considered, although 'gentlemen' had no administrative or legal education. Their positions were often isolated which rendered supervision difficult, and generally they were prone to undisciplined and irresponsible action. He suggested that they should be required to pass an elementary law examination, and that future District Magistrates should

36 Metcalfe Papers. 'Articles on the Solomon Islands'. 'Methodism in the Marovo', pp. 2-4.
be cadets sent out from the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, he expressed absolute confidence in Woodford, and indeed recommended that the Protectorate be removed from the control of the High Commission in Suva and placed under the Resident Commissioner's direct authority. This latter suggestion was rejected by the Colonial Office.\(^37\)

A memorandum by Mahaffy went further into the role and function of the District Magistrate: Mahaffy recognised that at present the D.M. was basically a police officer, and that apart from maintaining peace the government did little for the islanders. He realised that unless the islanders liked an officer, he would have very little contact with them, and that generally the government did not rate highly in their estimation. To deal with such a situation the administration required 'a quite special type of man'.\(^38\) In 1912 the Cadet system was established in the Solomons, and the prospective District Officers were required to learn a native language and to pass an examination on the laws that they would be expected to administer.\(^39\) These developments were a little late for the Gizo District, and that 'special type of man' was proving to be as elusive as ever.

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37 WPHC No.2161 of 1911, H.C. to C.O., 8 December 1911.

38 WPHC No.1196 of 1911, 'Memorandum on the duties of "District Magistrates" in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and the Solomon Islands', by A. Mahaffy. Dated 16 December 1911.

39 ibid., H.C. to Woodford, 29 January 1912 (two letters).
In late 1909 R.B. Hill was appointed as District Magistrate of the Gizo station. Hill, whose previous experience had been with the army in India, was a man accustomed to obedience, and likely to resort to extreme methods when it was not forthcoming. His actions were to be the centre of a fresh controversy between the government and the Methodist Mission; a conflict in which the Mission again came out on top. By the beginning of 1912 Hill was becoming increasingly frustrated by what he considered to be mission obstruction and the assumption of authority to a degree that was threatening the standing of the administration. When the crisis came he was determined to make a stand. The trouble began with the appointment by Hill of Soso as a district headman at Mbilua. Soso had an interesting background: he was not a lekasa but a big-man who had risen to prominence because of his exploitation of European contacts. He was brought up by his uncle Pulo, another man who spoke good pidgin English and had used his understanding of 'the white man's ways' to rise in the world. Soso followed in his uncle's footsteps, exploiting his familiarity with the language and methods of the white man to amass material wealth. His name appears on a number of deeds of sale for land in the Mbilua area as a 'chief', and owner. In reality he had no claim to the property, but acted as a middleman for others or simply sold land that was not his.

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40 WPHC No.2000 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 11 September 1913.  
41 WPHC No.701 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 15 February 1915.  
42 LC I. Claim No.21, 'Correspondence Before Submission of Claim', Barley to Workman, 26 September 1919.
Soso's prestige was sufficient for Hill to consider him a 'chief of Biloa' and appoint him as a headman. According to Hill, Soso did a great deal to preserve order and settle down the district in the aftermath of the Zito troubles. Unfortunately Soso also appears to have used his position to enrich himself, and he was also inclined to act in an arrogant and arbitrary manner. Nevertheless he retained the full confidence of Hill, perhaps partly because he was not a member of the Mission. This latter fact also helps explain the Methodist's opposition to the appointment. The direct confrontation between the Mission and Hill arose when a native mission teacher interfered with Soso's apprehension of a suspected offender. Hill backed up Soso, had the man arrested and sentenced, and ordered the teacher to leave his home and to go and remain indefinitely at the Methodist Mission station at Mbilua.\(^43\)

The next few years were to see a spate of charge and counter-charge between the administration and the mission. Goldie complained that Hill's hostile attitude to the Methodists gave the impression of a 'determined plan to injure the mission'.\(^44\) He instanced cases where Hill had held court on Sunday near the mission station and compelled people to attend,

\(^{43}\) WPHC No. 958 of 1913, Danks to H.C., 1 May 1913. Encl. Goldie to Danks, 12 April 1913; Goldie to Woodford, 12 June 1912, 2 September 1912, 12 September 1912; Woodford to Goldie, 14 August 1912, 2 September 1912. No. 2020 of 1914, Barnett to H.C., 3 August 1914. Encl. Hill to Woodford, 7 July 1912, 5 February 1912. MCA Vol. 117, Goldie to Danks, 12 June 1912.

\(^{44}\) WPHC No. 985 of 1913, op.cit.
thus preventing them from going to church. He accused the
district officer of making irrational and unjust decisions in
court cases; of requisitioning a canoe and damaging it without
paying recompense; and of striking a man for no reason.45 The
administration replied that the mission was undermining the
government's authority. Mission teachers were initiating
rumours that the administration would be replaced by a 'mission
government', that Goldie was 'the Great Master', and that the
mission would protect the islanders from the government. More
specifically, Tongan and Samoan mission teachers were abusing
their position, acting in an over-bearing manner and over-
exercising authority. They were physically punishing people
for church offences, and threatening them with gaol if they did
not obey requests. Members of the mission were also said to be
smashing hope and other 'tabu' objects, and deliberately
violating traditional customs no matter what the reaction of
the people.46

In his correspondence with the High Commission over
the controversy, Woodford consistently dodged answering the
specific charges against Hill and preferred to make counter-
charges against the missionaries. Even by the time he left
the islands, in July 1914, he had still failed to reply in detail
to the accusations. Woodford saw the issue in terms of

45 ibid.

46 WPHC No.2000 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 11 September 1913.
No.2098 of 1913, Woodford to H.C., 3 October 1913. Encl.
Hill to Woodford, 20 September 1913, 24 September 1913.
No.756 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 23 February 1915.
whether the authority of the government or the mission was to be 'paramount'. Although it was clear that Hill was guilty of misconduct in some matters, he thought it necessary to stand behind him to preserve the integrity of the administration in the face of mission pressure. It was becoming obvious to the High Commission that something had to be done, and so it was proposed that Hill be transferred to another district. The Colonial Office approved this suggestion but insisted that Hill explain his conduct. Hill admitted that in February 1912, when calling at Roviana in search for some escaped prisoners, he had struck a man who had given him an 'impudent message'. Hill was cautioned, and sent to the Malaita District where he resumed his duties as a District Officer in May 1915. Shortly afterwards he was given special leave for military service. The Mission Board in Sydney expressed itself satisfied at this outcome.

It had become clear to the Protectorate administration that something had to be done to remedy the situation in the Gizo District, so J.C. Barley was despatched by the Acting Resident Commissioner, Barnett, to make a 'thorough investigation'. Jack Barley had come to the Solomons as a cadet under the recently introduced system, and he was to serve in the Protectorate until 1933 when he became the Resident Commissioner.

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49 WPHC No.1274 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 19 April 1915. No.2886 of 1915, Wheen to H.C., 10 August 1915.
of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. He was a well-educated (M.A. Oxon), sensitive man with a 'passion for ethnology' and an 'affectionate responsibility for the natives'. He had been Acting District Magistrate at Gizo in 1912, when Hill was on leave. Of that time, he noted that the Methodists had exercised almost complete control over native affairs. When he tried to establish contact with the islanders he had encountered an 'invisible wall of silent suspicions and distrust', and was told when he issued instructions that they would have to be referred to Goldie for approval. He was forced to conclude that it was the 'deliberate policy' of the Mission to maintain and fortify their power by posing as 'heaven-sent intermediaries' between a ruthless and ignorant government and the oppressed islanders. It was extremely difficult for one District Officer to pit his authority against a number of missionaries with superior local knowledge and a better system of transport around the islands: the mission schooner Tandanya as opposed to the open whaleboat used by the administration. When Barley returned in 1915, the situation remained the same. The islanders showed a marked objection to approaching the government, and there were regular reports that mission teachers were telling the people that the Mission was more powerful than the administration. A common rumour stated that the 'great Master', Goldie, had Woodford removed from the Solomons because he was against the Mission and that he was

50 Lambert, op.cit., p. 110.

also having Hill punished. Goldie denied making such statements but admitted that he had told the islanders that the government had no right to do wrong, and that he would act if they did. Apparently these remarks were being construed incorrectly.\(^52\)

There was little the administration could do to remedy this situation; Barnett recommended stationing another officer in the Marovo Lagoon, as had been done between 1908 and 1912. However, some steps could be taken to prevent a recurrence of previous blunders. The Gizo station, it was emphasised by Barnett, required 'an officer of discrimination and action, without causing disaffection among the natives'. To avoid the many blunders and errors made in the past it was necessary to restrict the authority of District Officers to magisterial powers: the authority to hold courts and transact judicial business should be maintained only by the government headquarters at Tulagi.\(^53\) These recommendations were really too little and too late. A decade of administrative stupidity and insensitivity had alienated the people of the New Georgia Group.

The Methodist Mission had benefited from this situation and now had the loyalty of many communities throughout the Group. In 1910 there had been 78 members of the church: by 1915 the membership had increased to 1,239. To be classified as a 'member', an individual had to approach the Mission and profess faith in its teaching, undergo a 'trial' period, and

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52 WPHC No. 756 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 23 February 1915.
53 WPHC No. 758 of 1915, Barnett to H.C., 1 March 1915.
then be baptised. So while membership might not necessarily indicate a permanent commitment to Christianity, it did represent a voluntary identification with the Mission. The Methodists in 1915 also claimed to have 1,075 scholars at 23 schools, and a public worship attendance of 5,490.\textsuperscript{54} The latter figure was an exaggeration, as it represented about 80-90\% of the population of the Group, and the Mission had yet to establish itself in northern and eastern New Georgia, Vangunu and Nggatokae - areas which contained about 30\% of the people in the islands.\textsuperscript{55} Nevertheless, the Methodist Mission was well entrenched in the Group: as planters, politicians, and even as missionaries they had been successful. In 1915 their influence with the islanders was paramount: they had met and defeated challenges from the administration and their religious monopoly was apparently secure. However, the Methodists soon encountered a new rival in the Seventh Day Adventist Mission.

There had been a number of earlier attempts to challenge the Methodist's religious hegemony, but all had failed. In 1904 the Mission expanded its activities to Choiseul, an island considered by the Melanesian Mission to be their 'territory', although they had not begun work there. The following year the Anglicans retaliated by placing teachers from Isabel on Vella Lavella. In 1906 this action was consolidated by the stationing of a European missionary, G.H. Andrews, on the

\textsuperscript{54} MCA Vol.178, Report on Solomon Islands District Synod, 30 November 1910; Vol.183, Report on Solomon Islands District Synod, 4 November 1915.

\textsuperscript{55} WPHC No.274 of 1932, op.cit.
same island. It was not an ideal time for proselytisation on Vella Lavella; even the Methodists made little progress in the area until after 1910. The Melanesian Mission threw in the towel sooner, withdrawing their men from the New Georgia Group in 1907 and ending the confrontation with the Methodists. In 1911, Wheatley, in an attempt to undermine the strength of the Methodists, encouraged the Marists to establish a station in the Roviana Lagoon. Again, this was hardly a good site, as the Lagoon was the headquarters of the Methodists. Isolated on the small islet of Himbi, and unable to purchase land for an alternative site on Kolombangara, they met with a notable lack of success and withdrew in 1912.

After the failure of the Marists, Norman Wheatley did not give up hope of finding a rival worthy of the Methodists. When visiting Sydney in 1913 he approached the Adventists and suggested that they might establish a station in the New Georgia Group. His suggestion was adopted, though it would seem that the S.D.A. would have expanded their missionary activities to the Solomon Islands in any case. Nevertheless, Wheatley's intervention was a spur to action and did direct the attention of the S.D.A. to the western islands of the Protectorate.

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57 Hilliard, op.cit., pp. 296-7.

Adventists' pioneering party, Pastor G.F. Jones and his wife, arrived in the Solomons in 1914. They received some encouragement from Woodford and further advice from Wheatley and eventually decided to establish a station at Viru Harbour, an area previously untouched by mission activity. The S.D.A. strategy was to spend some time at Viru coming to grips with the local conditions and language and to then tackle the much more populous Marovo Lagoon.\(^{59}\)

There had been several previous mission efforts in the Marovo; in 1911 the Marists had made a brief foray into Vangunu, which met with little success, and in the following year the Methodists began work in the area.\(^{60}\) The Methodists' activities were centred on the Pondokana and Vangunu people who had been involved in the Burns murder and had suffered in the ensuing punitive expedition. Ngatu, a Pondokana mbangara, was instrumental in introducing his people to Methodism. He had been arrested and released, and had then spent some time at a mission school in Kokenggolo. He encouraged Goldie to establish a station in the Marovo, and acted as a go-between when the Methodists visited the area.\(^{61}\)

The Methodists' connection with the Pondokana people may have been a factor in their relative lack of success in other parts of the Lagoon. People who had suffered at the

\(^{59}\) AR, Vol.18, No.27 (6 July 1914), p. 3; Vol.18, No. 32 (10 August 1914), p. 4; Vol.18, No.43 (19 October 1914), p.3.

\(^{60}\) Hilliard, op.cit., p. 412.

\(^{61}\) Metcalfe Papers. 'Methodism in the Marovo', pp. 1-4.
hands of the Pondokana and Vangunu outlaws after the Burns murder appear to have been unwilling to associate with their former enemies' new allies. Similarly, traditional foes of the islanders associated with the Methodists saw in the Adventists an opportunity to align themselves with a mission without compromising old hostilities. Although the S.D.A. Mission made slow headway in convincing people to accept the constraints of their doctrines, they nevertheless found many communities in the Marovo Lagoon willing to identify themselves with the Mission and resist advances from the Methodists. With this acceptance, the Adventists were then able gradually to win over converts to their precepts, particularly amongst the young people anxious to secure an education. This pattern was repeated elsewhere in the Group. The Adventists did not attempt to 'poach' Methodist adherents, but made advances amongst the various communities which had resisted the Methodists because of indigenous rivalries. In some cases, such as at Viru, the Adventists gained a foothold when the Methodists had ignored an area because of its isolation and small population. In a few instances islanders who considered themselves to have been slighted by the Methodists turned to the Adventists. The coming of the S.D.A. Mission to the Group provided many communities with an opportunity to exercise an act of choice. Prior to their arrival the only avenue by which an introduction to the knowledge of the white man could be obtained had been the Methodist Mission, for the administration had no educational

facilities. The Adventists not only offered a means of obtaining knowledge without compromising traditional rivalries, but they also provided a choice in the manner of education. Ea, a mbangara of Lokuru, wanted the S.D.A. to establish a school on Rendova because they taught English, whereas the Methodists spoke in Roviana.63

By the end of 1917 the Adventists were well entrenched in the Marovo Lagoon. The First Annual Council of the Mission, held in December 1917 at Sasaghana on Marovo Island was attended by over three hundred islanders, including twenty one big-men.64 The S.D.A. advance in the Marovo had been greatly assisted by the numbers of European staff working in the area. Jones had been joined by O.V. Hellestrand in 1914, D.H.Gray and D. Nicholson in 1915, S.R. Maunder and R.H. Tutty in 1917. In contrast, the Methodists had only three ministers for the entire Group: two were stationed at Roviana, and one on Vella Lavella. The Methodist station on Vangunu was not staffed by a European until 1922, when Thomas Dent arrived. As a result, the Adventists were able to staff a number of elementary schools offering the education that many of the young desired.65 In the accounts of the early years of the Adventist Mission in the Marovo, it is this aspect which stands out. While big-men were willing to tolerate a school, in part for political reasons, it

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63 Interview with Ali Pitu, 23 September 1974, Lokuru.
65 Metcalfe Papers. op.cit.
was amongst the young men that the Mission scored its greatest success. A fully-fledged member of the Mission was expected to abstain from smoking, betel-nut, pork and shell-fish. These obligations were easier for the young, as they had not yet become habituated to the use of tobacco and betel nut. Ironically, it was the Methodists who could take much of the credit for stimulating the young islanders' desire for knowledge, as it was their school at Kokenggolo which first provided the examples of the benefits of education.

There was little the Methodists could do to arrest the growth of the Adventists in the Marovo. They lacked the staff to improve their one school at Patutiva, which was of a poor quality when compared with those of the Adventists. Their attempts to persuade communities to reject the S.D.A. failed, with a number of villages openly declaring that they would have the Adventists, or no mission at all. In addition to the rivalries within the Marovo area, the Methodists strong connections with Roviana were probably a further handicap to them. Many communities in the Marovo had suffered badly at the hands of Roviana head-hunters, and the raids had continued until the late 1890s.

Outright conflict between the Adventists and the Methodists accelerated after 1916, when the former began to expand their activities outside of the Marovo and Viru. From 1916 to


1920 the S.D.A. made significant advances on Rendova, Vella Lavella and Ranongga. On all three islands there were districts which had resisted the Methodists when other communities on the same island had accepted the Mission. On Rendova the Methodists had begun work at Lokuru in 1913 and at Mbaniata in 1915, but the people of the Ughele district rejected their offer of a teacher. This was despite the close connections between Ughele and Nusa Roviana, a Methodist stronghold. The Ughele people had been particularly cautious in their relations with Europeans. The district had a long history of conflict with the white man, beginning with the Marion Rennie massacre in the 1860s and continuing to the murder of the trader Gibbon in 1896. In addition, the Ughele people had suffered badly at the hands of raiders from Mbaniata and Lokuru, and although violence had ended in Mahaffy's time they remained wary of the outside world and did not leave the mountains to settle on the coast until about 1910. Roni, a mbangara of Nusa Roviana, had sent a Methodist teacher, a Roviana man, to Ughele but he had been sent back. In 1916 the Ughele big-man, Romiti, accepted the Adventists and in the following year a missionary, S.R. Maunder, was stationed at the district.

On Vella Lavella the Methodists had made impressive advances since the conclusion of the Zito troubles. Their main strength was at Mbilua, although they had many adherents on other parts of the island. However, the people of the district of Ndovele had continued to resist the Mission. The

Ndovele people considered themselves somewhat apart from the other islanders on Vella Lavella, as they traced their antecedents to Choiseul. Conflict between Ndovele and Mbilua had persisted until 1909, when Ndovele men had participated in the hunt for Zito, who had raided their villages. The S.D.A. made their initial contact with Ndovele through the medium of a Ndovele man who lived in the Marovo. In 1918 the Ndovele bigman Vari asked the mission to come to his district and in March 1919 R.H. Tutty was stationed there. The Ndovele mission was partly responsible for the Adventists also gaining a footing on Ranongga. Since 1918 the S.D.A. had visited the district of Ghanongga, on the northwestern corner of the island but the people had been undecided about accepting the Mission. The Methodists had been established in the two other districts on the island, Lungga and Kumbokota, for some time and were also pressing the Ghanongga people to make a start in their district. Apparently, the Ghanongga people were reluctant to join their former enemies in the one mission, for they eventually chose the Adventists. The turning point came when some Ghanongga people visited the Ndovele mission station and were sufficiently impressed to request a school in their own district. In 1920 a Marovo man, Pana, was sent to Ghanongga as a teacher.


The islanders of the Ughele, Ndovele and Ghanongga districts had taken advantage of the presence of the alternative mission to obtain the educational facilities they desired without compromising the traditional rivalries that existed on their islands. As in the Marovo, the schools were the initial attraction for the islanders, particularly the young. Young men who had served in the police or who had observed the products of the Methodist schools were aware of the benefits of a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, and were anxious to secure them for themselves. The missionaries constantly commented on the eagerness of the young people to learn, and it was generally from the 15-25 age group that they obtained their first converts.\footnote{AR, Vol.22, No.20 (23 September 1918), p. 4; Vol.23, No.17 (4 August 1919), p. 2; Vol.24, No.3 (9 February 1920), p. 4; Vol.24, No.16 (9 August 1920), p. 3; Vol.24, No.22 (1 November 1920), p. 3.}

The hostility between the Methodists and the Adventists which had been accelerated by the latter's expansion was further increased when individuals and villages within the Methodist fold switched their adherence to the rival Mission. This occurred at Lokuru when the big-man Ea and his followers sent their children to the S.D.A. school at Ughele, which Ea considered to be better than that of the Methodists. The movement away from the Methodists at Lokuru increased when Goldie withdrew one of his teachers from the area, and eventually the Adventists established their own school in the district.\footnote{Interview with Ali Pitu, 23 September 1974, Lokuru. Interview with Boaz Bero, 23 September 1974, Lokuru.} A similar thing occurred at Nusa Hope, a small island at the eastern end of the Roviana Lagoon, when the local big-man
invited the S.D.A. to establish themselves because he preferred their schools.\textsuperscript{73}

The steady expansion of the S.D.A. was viewed with alarm by the Methodists, who almost immediately began a campaign of obstruction. The campaign was an impressive combination of brute force and legal pressure: 'raids' were made on new S.D.A. stations, while Goldie attempted to expel the Adventists from their new districts by having their land leases invalidated in court. The result of these efforts was inconclusive: while some victories were scored by the Methodists, the larger objective - the withdrawal of the Adventists from their new districts - was not achieved.

The Methodists' first sally was at Ughele. In reaction to Romiti's acceptance of the Adventists, a Methodist, Muzicolo, was dispatched from Nusa Roviana to establish a village adjacent to that of the rival Mission, and to lay claim to the land which had been leased to the Adventists. Muzicolo had sufficient lineage connections to live at Ughele, but the basis of his claim to Romiti's land was tenuous. Although Muzicolo's great uncle had been a big-man at Ughele, he had been a roving \textit{varani} rather than a \textit{mbangara} of a particular place. Muzicolo himself had always lived on Nusa Roviana and had, in Knibbs' words, 'not a tittle' of authority on Rendova.\textsuperscript{74} In contrast, Romiti had always lived and been recognised as a \textit{mbangara} in the area. Muzicolo's village was established by

\textsuperscript{73} Interview with N. Kera, 29 October 1974, Roviana Lagoon.

\textsuperscript{74} LC I. Claim No.25, 'Copies: Official Correspondence', Knibbs to Workman, 5 July 1920.
Methodists from other islands brought to Ughele by the mission ship Tandanya, although it did eventually attract a few of the local Ughele islanders.

Friction between the adjoining villages soon occurred, with both sides attempting to disrupt each other's Sabbath. In 1919 the District Officer, Barley, ruled that Romiti owned the land on which the Adventist mission stood and thus the lease was valid. However, with respect to other land in Ughele he was unable to determine the rival claims based on nebulous ancestors and so, in an attempt at compromise, gave joint control to Romiti and Muzicolo. This was not the end of the matter, for some months later there was further conflict between the two parties. Barley attributed this to the Adventist missionary, Maunder, whom he accused of fomenting discord. Maunder was found guilty of incitement and ordered to leave the Protectorate. Unlike Goldie, who was always careful to avoid direct involvement in sectarian battles, Maunder had been incautious and the administration was not slow in seizing the opportunity of ridding the Protectorate of a troublesome missionary. After this defeat Pastor Jones advised the S.D.A. adherents to avoid confrontation and the district settled down. Goldie, however, did not give up easily for he again attempted

75 ibid., Barley to Workman, 26 July 1920.
Interview with Leunga and others, 24 September 1974.
WPHC No. 2924 of 1920, Workman to H.C., 1 November 1920;
No.2370 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 26 August 1922. Encl. Extracts
from 'Gizo Occurrence Book'.

76 Maunder had already been in trouble with the administration. In June 1918 he was convicted of perjury after a case involving the dynamiting of fish.
to invalidate the Adventist lease at the hearings of the Land Commission.

Another confrontation occurred in 1919 in the Roviana Lagoon, previously a bastion of Methodism. The big-man Koito invited the Adventists to establish a school amongst his people on the small island of Nusa Hope at the eastern end of the Lagoon, and J.C. Radley, the S.D.A. engineer, visited the area. Koito's brother was Miduru, the mbangara Saikile and a staunch Methodist. Miduru sought Goldie's advice at Kokenggolo and was told that if his people did not want the new mission they could send them away. As a result seventy men from Kalikonggu, Munda and Nusa Roviana went to Nusa Hope and forcibly removed Radley. In the ensuing court case Jones and Radley with twenty witnesses faced Goldie and Nicholson with thirty witnesses. This impasse was resolved when the Adventists withdrew their complaint for the sake of peace. Of course Miduru, though a mbangara, had no authority to impose his preferences on Koito and his followers on Nusa Hope and they, in fact, maintained their adherence to the Adventists.  

Goldie's role in this affair was, as usual, sufficiently ambiguous to preclude the possibility of his prosecution. Throughout the entire course of the sectarian struggles in the Group the administration was continually frustrated in its attempts to obtain tangible proof of Goldie's militant methods, although his objectives were quite obvious.

77 WPHC No.2924 of 1920, op.cit. Interview with N. Kera, 29 October 1974, Roviana Lagoon.
78 WPHC No.2370 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 1922.
The third major mission confrontation was at Ndovele. As soon as it became apparent that the Adventists were intending to obtain a lease to establish a station in the district Goldie protested vehemently to the administration, arguing that the proposed lessor had no right to the land concerned and that the S.D.A. mission would only cause 'perpetual disorder and strife' in the area. The Resident Commissioner, Workman, initially refused permission for the lease on the grounds that there was insufficient demand for the S.D.A. mission, but was forced to reconsider when it became obvious that the Ndovele people did want the Adventists. Goldie again protested, this time producing a counter-claimant to the land that was under consideration for the proposed lease, and in July 1919 Barley convened a Court of Inquiry at Ndovele. The Methodist claimant Olemoa, who had been living at Munda for the previous six years, admitted that he had been told by Goldie to put forward his claim to stop the S.D.A., and that he had no rights to the land concerned. He then withdrew his claim. This defeat did not deter the Methodists, and soon a rumour circulated amongst the islanders that Olemoa had been forced to withdraw his claim under threat of imprisonment. Once again the administration was unable to track this rumour to its source. The Methodists took more direct action in November 1919 when about sixty Methodist islanders from Mbilua stormed Ndovele, cutting down the bush and trees near the S.D.A. station. The expedition was led by Daniel Bula, the head native teacher at Mbilua. This seems to have been a symbolic act of protest, for it was not

79 LC I. Claim No.48, op.cit.
accompanied by more land claims or followed up with further action. Although the S.D.A. missionaries complained about this 'raid', the administration took no action, stating that it was up to the islanders who owned the land to lay a charge of trespass, not the Mission.\(^{80}\)

The government's decision regarding the 'trespass' at Ndovele, along with the deportation of Maunder, the partial acceptance of Muzicolo's claims at Ughele, and the failure to prosecute those involved in the assault on Radley, were considered by the Adventists to be evidence of bias on the part of the administration. In June 1920 the Australasian Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists petitioned the High Commissioner, complaining of their treatment at the hands of the administration of the Protectorate.\(^{81}\) This protest was short-lived, for in September of the same year a delegation of Adventists from Sydney visited the Solomons and after further investigation of the complaints withdrew the petition and apologised to the Resident Commissioner, for the administration was able to demonstrate that all of its actions had a solid legal basis.\(^{82}\) Although it was true that the Adventists had suffered to a degree, this was more the result of their own inexperience than administrative partiality.

\(^{80}\) WPHC No. 2370 of 1922, \textit{op.cit.}; No. 2924 of 1920, \textit{op.cit.}
\(^{81}\) WPHC No. 1428 of 1920, Petition to H.C. by C.K. Meyers (President) and W.G. Turner (Secretary) of Australasian Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists, 10 June 1920.
\(^{82}\) WPHC No. 1428 of 1920, Allum & Turner to H.C., 19 September 1920; No. 2924 of 1920, \textit{op.cit.}
From 1915 to 1920 the Methodist Mission attempted, but failed, to stem the increasing influence of the Adventists. This failure was largely the result of the determination of a number of communities to assert their preference and independence in the face of intimidation. The S.D.A. Mission offered these islanders a means of obtaining the education and self-improvement they desired, without compromising the identities and independence of their various communities. Although Goldie had so far failed to overcome this determination, he had not yet surrendered, for with the establishment of the Land Commission he was to revive his campaign to dislodge the S.D.A. from a number of their districts. More importantly, he also sought to establish himself in a position whereby he could control the direction of the Land Commission's inquiries so as to benefit both the status of his Mission and what he conceived to be the interests of the islanders. This was to once more bring him directly into conflict with the administration.
Although the need for a Land Commission had been accepted in 1917, it was not until December 1919 that it got underway. In that month G.G. Alexander, the former Chief Police Magistrate in Suva, arrived in the Protectorate and was given the following commission by Workman:

To enquire and report upon such specific cases as may be submitted to you by a deputy appointed by me on behalf of the natives of claims to land, including claims to native rights of way, or rights over land, including customary rights, claimed by natives over any land in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate now held by non-natives namely

(a) Land purchased by non-natives.
(b) Waste or unoccupied land (or land assumed to be unoccupied) held under any certificate of occupation.
(c) Land leased under King's Regulation No. 3 of 1914 (or under the previously existing Regulations).  

Alexander's tenure as Land Commissioner was brief, for in August 1920 he resigned the post to take up a position on the Bench of the High Court in Tanganyika. He spent only three months in the Protectorate during which he heard four claims, although he also conducted negotiations in Sydney with a number of companies whose holdings in the Solomons had been the subject of claims.  

Alexander's replacement was F.B. Phillips, a Melbourne barrister and solicitor who had been recommended

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1 LC IV. No.1/26, Copy of Commission given to Alexander.
by the Government of Australia. Phillips was given the same commission in November 1920, and at that time he believed that the work would take four months to complete. This estimate proved wildly astray, for he did not finish his last report until May 1925.3

The work of the Land Commissioner was extremely difficult. The Protectorate's records of land dealings were devoid of system, and when Phillips arrived after the abrupt departure of Alexander he found the affairs of the Commission in a 'chaotic state': the records were in a shambles, particulars of claims were vague or had not been received, and a number of Alexander's decisions were unsatisfactory and the claims had to be reheard. In the following years Phillips travelled 7,500 miles throughout the Protectorate aboard the Wai-ai, a sturdy but hardly comfortable fifteen-tonner for whose navigation and provisioning he himself was responsible. He had no regular clerical assistance for two-thirds of the time.4

The basic procedure of the Land Commission was fairly straightforward. All parties concerned in a particular claim would be given notice of the proposed inquiry, which would then be held on the disputed ground. Phillips would first inspect the land with the native claimants and European owners, or their representatives, to determine the extent of the dispute.

LC IV No. 1/95, Phillips to H.C., 1 July 1924; No. 1/141, Phillips to H.C., 5 May 1925.

4 LC IV No. 1/95, Phillips to H.C., 1 July 1924.
This was followed by the hearing and recording of evidence tendered by both parties, and subject to cross-examination by the representatives of both sides and the Commissioner. In no case were any parties represented by legal counsel and Phillips adopted an informal approach at the hearings. The islanders were represented at the hearings by a 'Deputy for the Natives' appointed by the Resident Commissioner whose duties were to investigate the islanders' claims, put them into a proper form and present them to the Land Commissioner. In most of the New Georgian claims this position was filled by C.C. Francis, who had served in the Protectorate since 1912 and had been District Officer at Gizo since October 1919. The Land Commissioner submitted his recommendations to the High Commissioner through the Resident Commissioner who could state if he agreed with them or otherwise; they were then gazetted and if no objections were lodged within six months they were forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies who had the power to confirm or vary them. King's Regulation No.8 of 1923 provided that after final confirmation all parties had to conform to the recommendations or face a fine of £100 or a six month gaol term.

5 LC IV. No.33P, Phillips to Kane, 26 January 1926.
6 LC IV. No.8/0, 'Extracts', Deputy for the Natives to Resident Commissioner, 1 July 1920; Resident Commissioner to Deputy for the Natives, 20 October 1920.
7 WPHC No.1067 of 1925, Minute by Pilling, 25 May 1925; No. 2969 of 1923, Copy of King's Regulation No.8 of 1923.
All told, the Land Commission investigated sixty-nine claims in the Protectorate. Of these, nineteen were in the New Georgia Group and were, in Phillip's words, the 'largest and most intricate of the Claims'. The New Georgian cases occupied Phillips for twenty of the fifty-four months he spent investigating and reporting on claims in the Protectorate. There were two main reasons for this: seven of the nine claims against the Levers Occupation Certificate were in the Group, and these were to involve time and effort out of all proportion to their number. Phillips spent some six months on inspection and hearings of the Levers concession claims in the Group, and a further eight months on the compilation and writing of the report. Secondly, the Land Commission became the focus of the bitter political and sectarian controversy in the Group. The crux of this conflict was Goldie's attempt to force the administration to recognise him as the islanders' representative before the Commission; in other words, to take the place of the 'Deputy for the Natives'. This of course would have enabled Goldie to control the direction and presentation of all claims, including those of Adventist adherents, in the Group. In Kane's words, this struggle was 'looked upon as a final test of strength between the Government and Mr Goldie both by natives and Europeans'. While Goldie failed to attain his objective in this matter, he continued his attack on the Adventists through the Land Commission by challenging the

8 LC IV. No. 1/141, Phillips to Kane, 6 May 1925.

9 WPHC No. 2671 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 26 August 1922.
validity of their land leases in a number of districts.

In October 1919 Jack Barley, the District Officer at Gizo since 1915, was transferred. Barley had generally maintained much better relations with the Methodist Mission than his predecessors, and his period of office had not seen a major confrontation. He had, however, grown increasingly exasperated with the power of the Mission and in September 1919 voiced his concern over the situation. Barley's attitude was echoed at a higher level: in early 1920 the Mission Board asked the High Commission to consult with the Mission before the formulation of any regulations affecting the islanders, and commented that Goldie's experience would be of great assistance in such matters. These suggestions were taken by the administration as evidence of the Mission's desire to 'share' the government of the Protectorate, and to obtain some sort of veto power. The situation in the New Georgia Group continued to worsen with the appointment of Francis as Barley's replacement. Francis was a capable and conscientious officer, but his manner was a far cry from that of the easy-going Barley. Francis and Goldie were soon accusing each other of a succession of real

10 LC I. Claim No.48, op.cit., Barley to Workman, 16 September 1919.

11 WPHC No.313 of 1920, Wheen to H.C., 19 February 1920. Minutes.

12 WPHC No.1309 of 1923, Kane to H.C., 3 May 1923. Encl. Confidential Reports on Officers.
or imagined slights, presumptions and injustices. These developments coincided with the beginnings of the Land Commission, which got underway in early 1920.

Alexander first visited the Group in February, when he interviewed the claimants to a block of land on Kohinggo owned by Kindar Ltd. (Claim No. 20). This dispute had been festering since 1915, and Alexander's brief investigation did nothing to resolve it. He made no attempt at a detailed examination of the disputed land and misunderstood the islanders' complaints. When the claimants were informed of his recommendations in August 1921 they objected strongly and the case had to be reheard by Phillips. Alexander's next recommendation concerned a dispute over land at the southern end of Mbilua (Claim No. 21). This dispute dated back to 1911 and was extremely complicated. This, however, escaped Alexander's attention for he did not examine it in detail but contented himself with negotiating with the European owners, Union Plantation and Trading Co., for an agreement on compensation. This case also had to be reheard. It was perhaps fortunate that the other two claims concerning the New Georgia Group that were dealt with by Alexander were straightforward. One

13 WPHC No. 1328 of 1921, Wheen to H.C., 2 May 1921; Kane to H.C., 20 August 1921.
LC.I. Claim No. 20, 'Copies of Official Correspondence Before Claim', passim. 'Copy of Correspondence', Francis to Barley, 22 August 1921.
15 WPHC No. 1208 of 1920, Alexander to H.C., 11 May 1920; Barley to H.C., 16 January 1922.
involved a Levers freehold property on northern Rendova; the company admitted the validity of the claim and surrendered the disputed land. The other concerned the island of Mbava, which Woodford had classified as 'waste' and had leased under Occupation Certificate to Joseph Binskin. Although unoccupied, the island had been regularly used for hunting and fishing by members of the toutou Bava whose ancestors had once lived there. Under Alexander's agreement the surviving members of the toutou agreed to sell to the government for £100. This case was an indication of the situation that was to confront Phillips when he examined the Levers Occupation Certificate holdings, which like Mbava had been declared 'waste' by Woodford without adequate investigation.

The Mbava claim also revealed that islanders were quite capable of acting independently to press claims when they realised the possibilities offered by the Land Commission, for the Mbava claimants had come forward on their own accord after learning of the Commission's activities. This situation was repeated elsewhere in the Group as the hearings continued, in contrast to Goldie's claim to be the endorsed spokesman and representative of the islanders. In fact, on a number of occasions during the course of the Commission Goldie was confronted with independent attitudes and initiatives on the part of 'his' islanders and was forced to act quickly to avoid

16 LC IV. No.22/1, Alexander to Workman, 12 April 1920; No.22A/1, Fulton to Alexander, 16 April 1920. LC I. Claim No.18, Alexander to Workman, 9 August 1920.
At the outset of the Commission the Methodist Mission approached the administration, expressing their concern regarding the islanders' land rights and requesting to be informed of the negotiations between Levers and the government on the Occupation Certificate. This request was denied, and the Mission did not pursue the matter. Alexander's period of office was free of controversy, probably because he did not touch upon the claims against the Adventists or Levers Occupation Certificate, which were at the centre of the Methodist Mission's interest in the Commission. The unsatisfactory nature of some of Alexander's recommendations did not become apparent until after his resignation, and even then does not seem to have attracted any adverse comment from the Mission.

The situation changed with the resumption of the Commission under Phillips, who affirmed that claimants must be represented by the 'Deputy for the Natives' or legal counsel, and not by missionaries interested in their claims. In February 1921 Goldie wrote to Phillips stating that the claimants had strong objections to having a government Deputy 'forced on them' and that if he was not allowed to represent them, they would require time to obtain legal assistance. In the following month these demands were repeated in a petition from thirty-one 'chiefs' of the New Georgia Group and Choiseul, which Goldie urged Phillips to accept in a number of interviews

18 WPHC No. 2623 of 1919, Workman to H.C., 30 December 1919.
at Tulagi. Phillips refused, and the petition was then sent to the High Commission. The petition was accompanied by a number of complaints concerning the behaviour of the administration towards the Mission and its adherents. Goldie specifically accused Francis of unjustly arresting Methodists, of declining to take action in cases of offences against Methodists, and of encouraging the destruction of Church buildings. Goldie also stated that many of the land disputes in the district were the result of recommendations by officials who had deliberately refrained from obtaining information that would have prevented the occurrence of mistakes. The implication was clear: government officers were not fit to represent the islanders before the Land Commission. The question of representation had thus become part of the broader conflict between the Mission and the administration and when Francis successfully rebutted Goldie's charges against him, it became the focus of that conflict.

Goldie visited Fiji in July 1921 to press his case, and was successful in obtaining a number of concessions, unconnected with the charges against Francis. The concessions included the exemption of native teachers and scholars from head tax and an easing of the procedure whereby islanders could accompany missionaries outside of the Protectorate. However,


21 WPHC No.1328 of 1921, Wheen to H.C., 2 May 1921.

22 WPHC No.1952 of 1921, Memorandum of Interview with Goldie by the Acting High Commissioner, 29 July 1921.
he did not obtain satisfaction on the question of representation, and was told that it was the responsibility of the Land Commissioner to accept or refuse, on application, any request to represent claimants. In August, Phillips, Goldie and the Melbourne Secretary of the Methodist Mission Board, Burton, met in Australia. Phillips suggested that Goldie assist the 'Deputy for the Natives' by providing information and suggesting questions. Although Burton considered this proposal fair, Goldie rejected it, stating that he wanted official recognition of his position and that he was not prepared to put his information through the Deputy.

Goldie was determined to press ahead with his demands, and on his return to the Solomon Islands began organising another petition, this time to the Colonial Office, at the same time warning of a possible boycott of the Commission. The administration reacted quickly to these threats, warning the Colonial Office of the impending petition and possible boycott, and stating that there were strong objections from both officials and non-officials to Goldie representing the islanders before the Commission, particularly from the adherents of the S.D.A. Mission. It also stated that an acceptance of Goldie's demands could lead to the resignation of the Land Commissioner. The administration also communicated with the Methodist Mission Board in Sydney, relaying the rebuttals of Goldie's

23 WPHC No. 1328 of 1921, Note of Interview between Greene and Goldie, 14 July 1921.
24 WPHC No. 26 of 1922, op.cit.
25 WPHC No. 2970 of 1921, H.C. to C.O., 24 September 1921.
charges against Francis and stressing the inadvisability of both the petition and boycott. In October 1921 the High Commission again warned the Colonial Office that Goldie might go to any lengths to achieve his objectives, and in anticipation of an attempt to excite public opinion against the Protectorate administration they supplied the Secretary of State with the details of a sordid incident in which Goldie had been involved.\(^\text{26}\)

In November a petition from forty-two 'chiefs' of the Western District of the Protectorate was forwarded to the Colonial Office. It requested that Goldie be allowed to represent them before the Land Commission. In a covering letter Goldie stated that the petitioners had desired that the Commission be delayed until their petition had been answered, but as this had been refused they would decline to appear before the Commission.\(^\text{27}\) In May 1922 Goldie and the petitioners were informed of the Secretary of State's rejection of their request. However, at the same time the Resident Commissioner reiterated Phillips' suggestion that any 'assistance' offered by Goldie to the official Deputy would be welcomed. When asked by the 'Chiefs of the Western Solomon Islands' to define 'assistance' he replied that Goldie might present and give evidence, help in the preparation of cases, direct the Deputy's attention to possible witnesses and suggest points of examination or cross-examination to the

\(^{26}\) WPHC No.1328 of 1921; Haskess to Wheen, 7 October 1921; H.C. to C.O., 12 October 1921. In the incident referred to, Goldie was said to have assisted the trader Collinson in exhuming and decapitating the body of the Choiseul big-man and head-hunter, Lilliboi.

\(^{27}\) WPHC No.26 of 1922, Barley to H.C., 6 December 1921. Encl. Goldie to Barley, 19 November 1921.
Deputy. This offer was rejected by the 'Chiefs', who then listed a long series of complaints about the administration's conduct, stated that they refused to recognise the Land Commission, and that Goldie was going to London to lay these matters before the Colonial Office. The complaints mentioned included instances of unjust alienation of land, Alexander's unsatisfactory recommendations, the Zito affair, and the administration's 'bitter personal animosity' to Goldie.

In August 1922 Phillips visited Gizo to meet the islanders and attempt to remove any misunderstandings that might exist. Goldie had previously told the Resident Commissioner that he would advise the petitioners to see the Land Commissioner, but according to both Francis and Phillips several of the islanders who had intended to meet the Commissioner changed their minds after talking to Goldie. Phillips, however, did manage to meet a few of the petitioners who expressed themselves satisfied with the administration's position. Phillips made it clear that the Commission would go ahead, and to this end posted a preliminary notice of claims to be heard from March 1923. These developments did

28 WPHC No.26 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 22 May 1922. No.2352 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 20 July 1922. Encl. Chiefs of the Western Solomon Islands to Kane, 21 June 1922; Kane to Chiefs of the Western Solomon Islands, 19 July 1922.
29 WPHC No.2371 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 8 August 1922. Encl. Chiefs of the Western Solomon Islands to Kane, 21 June 1922.
30 WPHC No.2671 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 26 August 1922. Encl. Francis to Kane, 22 August 1922. LC IV. No.25/24, Phillips to Francis, 22 August 1922.
not affect Goldie's attitude, and the Methodist Mission went ahead with preparations to send Goldie to London, to secure the support of other missionary bodies, and to lobby influential Methodist members of the House of Commons. However, in December Goldie reported to the Mission Board that the London trip might not be necessary, as he was going to meet the Land Commissioner to discuss matters. Goldie did not go to London, and in June 1923 the Mission Board congratulated him for the 'favourable results' he had obtained from the Land Commission.\(^{31}\) It is not known what transpired at Goldie's meeting with Phillips, but he certainly did not secure any further concessions or come to an agreement with the Commissioner. For when Phillips began hearings in March 1923 he still considered that the boycott was a possibility, and Francis remained the official Deputy. In fact, Goldie retreated and agreed to offer his 'assistance' to the Deputy on the terms that he had previously rejected, for this was the role he adopted during the subsequent hearings.\(^{32}\)

There were several possible reasons for Goldie's uncharacteristic backdown. In previous confrontations with the administration, such as the Zito affair and the question of District Officer Hill's conduct, Goldie had solid evidence of misconduct on which to base his case, and was thus eventually able to force the government to retreat. However, in his

\(^{31}\) MCN Minutes for 14 August 1922, 12 December 1922, 24-25 January 1923, and 11 June 1923.

stand on the Land Commission, there was no such evidence. He had no answer to the rebuttals of the charges he had made against Francis, which in any case did not directly bear upon the Land Commission. The list of complaints that Goldie supposedly was to take to London did not bear up to examination. The charge that the administration had been responsible for the unjust alienation of land was true - but the Land Commission had been established to deal with this matter. It was also true that some of Alexander's recommendations had been unsatisfactory - but the administration had already ordered rehearings of these cases, without the prompting of the Mission. The threat to drag out the details of the Zito affair was an empty one: the officers involved had all retired or left the Protectorate, and Goldie himself had been content to sit on the truth for over a decade. Goldie had been bluffing, and when his hand was called he lost the game.

Throughout the entire course of the argument over representation Goldie maintained that he was merely acting in accordance with the islanders' wishes, taking no active part in the formulation of policy, and that he had no ambitions or motives apart from the protection of the islanders' interests. Goldie considered himself to be 'not in any way an interested party'. This latter statement was demonstrably untrue: three of the claims were sectarian in origin and

33 WPHC No.26 of 1922, Memorandum: from the Land Commissioner to the Acting Resident Commissioner, 10 December 1921.

34 LC IV. No.33P, Goldie to Barley, 21 October 1921.
directed at Goldie's evangelical rivals, the Adventists. In addition, there was a non-sectarian claim against a Methodist holding on Ranongga, a claim on Vella Lavella which affected Goldie's property at Mundi Mundi, and another claim against the property of a deceased planter who had appointed Goldie as his executor, a position which obliged the missionary to negotiate with the claimants. Although Goldie was clearly an 'interested party' in all of these cases, there still remained his claim to be the desired representative of the 'native claimants' and the 'Chiefs of the Western Solomon Islands'. Goldie never specifically defined the number and nature of those who had supposedly given him their endorsement, but preferred to speak generally of the 'claimants' or 'native owners of land' in the Western Solomons, without excluding any particular group or individual. Obviously, Goldie did not have the support of those Adventist adherents whose ownership of land they had leased to the S.D.A. Mission was being challenged by Methodist claimants. The Adventists stenuously denied Goldie's unqualified claim to be representing the wishes of the people of the New Georgia Group, and their objections were probably the strongest argument against accepting Goldie's demands.

35 Claim Nos. 25, 26, 27, 50, 52, 53, respectively.
37 WPHC No.2370 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 8 August 1922. Encl. Blunden to Kane, 8 August 1922. No.2970 of 1921, H.C. to O.C., 24 September 1921.
Goldie's status as a representative of the 'claimants' ultimately rested upon the signatories of the petitions, which provided the only hard evidence to substantiate his position. The largest petition, that sent to the Colonial Office in November 1921, contained the signatures (or marks) of forty-two 'Chiefs of the Western Solomon Islands', of which three were from Choiseul, two from Mono, and the remainder from the New Georgia Group. While not 'Chiefs', most of the signatories were the recognised leaders of 'lines' or mbulu mbulu, and thus would have been entitled to speak with authority on matters concerning land, after consulting with their kinsmen. The thirty-seven New Georgian signatories were all Methodists. Twenty-four were from the Roviana Lagoon area, of which nineteen were from the western end of the Lagoon, in the vicinity of the Methodist headquarters at Kokenggolo. Of the remainder, seven were from Vella Lavella, three from the Marovo, two from Kusaghe, and one each from Rendova and Kolombangara.38

Of the thirty-seven New Georgians who signed the petition, sixteen are mentioned in the records of the Land Commission as claimants; twenty-four other claimants so mentioned do not appear on the petition. The petition was thus endorsed by 40% of those who had lodged claims to be heard by the Land Commission. However, there is evidence to suggest that some of the signatories did not know, or were misled, about the contents of the document. Francis obtained statements from Aqo and Iqolo, two of the signatories, that they had

38 WPHC No.26 of 1922, Barley to H.C., 6 December 1921. Encl. Petition.
been told to 'touch the pen' and that they were unaware of the meaning of the petition. Phillips also claimed that he had been told by signatories of the petition that they thought it was merely a request for Goldie to help them at the Commission. Thus Goldie could only legitimately claim the support of less than half of the claimants, and it is by no means clear that these were fully informed of the nature of their endorsement. Two-thirds of the signatories came from Roviana, where Goldie was stationed and his influence was at its strongest. There is no evidence to suggest a widespread feeling throughout the Group in support of Goldie's efforts. Once armed with the petitions, Goldie acted as though he was the arbiter in the matter. He rejected the compromise offered by Phillips at the meeting in Australia without reference to or consultation with the petitioners. He appears to have been reluctant to allow the islanders to discuss the matter on their own behalf with either Phillips or the administration: he advised the islanders against seeing Phillips in August 1922, and admonished others who talked to Francis about land questions.

Ultimately, it was the sudden resolution of the affair which revealed that Goldie's stance was not an accurate reflection of the wishes of the islanders. In February 1923 the Methodist Mission Board was preparing itself for Goldie's

39 WPHC No. 2671 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 26 August 1922. Encl. Francis to Kane, 22 August 1922.
40 WPHC No. 3658 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 10 January 1927. Encl. Phillips to Kane, 4 December 1926.
41 WPHC No. 2671 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 26 August 1922. Encl. Francis to Kane, 22 August 1922.
trip to London: this was to be the culmination of two years of sustained opposition to the form of the Land Commission. In March Phillips convened his first hearing in the Group, and it was conducted on the terms of the administration. This hearing was at Kohinggo, a few miles from Munda and in the neighbourhood of the majority of the petitioners. It was attended by the eight claimants (six of whom had signed the petition), fifty other islanders, and Goldie. In the next three months Phillips heard a further four claims, and his inquiries were attended by over five hundred islanders. Phillips had predicted that nothing would hinder the islanders from participating once the hearings commenced, and events proved him right. The Land Commission had created tremendous interest amongst the islanders of the Group, and it is doubtful whether Goldie would have been able to organise and sustain a boycott of its proceedings. If the missionary had gone to London, the hearings would have gone ahead in his absence and he would have forfeited any chance of influencing their outcome. Neither could Goldie now refuse to assist the islanders before the Commission, for such an action would make a mockery of his claim to be only concerned with their interests.

42 LC I. Claim No.20, 'Notes of Proceedings at Inquiry'.
44 WPHC No.2671 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 26 August 1922.
The dispute over the terms of the Land Commission was the culmination of over a decade of conflict between administration officials and the Methodist Mission in the Group. To the Resident Commissioner, Kane, it was a "final trial of strength" from which the government had to emerge victorious or else "forfeit all prestige". Goldie also saw the dispute as part of a continuing struggle in which the beleaguered Mission had sought to restrain a misguided and unjust administration. Only in Goldie's mind, his own and the Mission's prestige had become indistinguishable from the welfare of the islanders, which was ostensibly the objective of his actions. According to Phillips, Goldie was even prepared to guarantee Levers and other planters acceptable settlements if they would support his campaign to be the representative of the islanders at the Land Commission. While there is no reason to believe that Phillips fabricated this story, its validity must remain open to doubt, for it is not known who were the Commissioner's informants. Levers had no love for Goldie, as they considered him to have been responsible for promoting many of the claims against their holdings. Whatever the truth of Phillip's allegation, it is nevertheless clear

45 ibid.
46 LC IV. No.33C, Goldie to Barley, 27 September 1921.
47 WPHC No.3658 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 10 January 1927. Encl. Phillips to Kane, 4 December 1926.
48 Unilever Archives. MFP. TT3734.112A 'Sunlight Works Sydney 1906-23', Meek to Leverhulme, 5 November 1923.
that Goldie had assumed an authority to speak and act for the
islanders which, in reality, he did not possess. In his
determination to secure a victory over the administration
Goldie had not reflected the desires of the islanders, whose
first consideration was their land rather than the prestige
of Goldie and the mission.

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In contrast to the friction generated by the dispute
over representation on the Commission, which seems to have been
confined to the European participants, the actual hearing of
the claims in the New Georgia Group proceeded smoothly and
without difficulties. There was no apparent reluctance on the
part of the claimants to work with the official Deputy and the
Commission. With the exception of the Levers Occupation
Certificate cases, which were in a different category, Phillips
attempted to get both claimants and defendants to negotiate
settlements acceptable to all parties. By encouraging conciliation, Phillips hoped to foster lasting settlements which
would not be the cause of further acrimony and debate. This
approach was largely successful, and the Commissioner was
able to make his recommendations on the basis of negotiated
agreements in all but one case. In the Levers cases, there
were no 'defendants', as it was the government, and not the
company, which had declared the land 'waste'. Thus it was
Phillips' duty to determine the validity of the islanders'
claims to have occupied or owned the 'waste' land, and if
satisfied of their truth, to recommend to the government that such land be withdrawn from the Certificate.

There were ten non-Levers claims in the New Georgia Group listed for Phillips' consideration. Two of these were settled in 1922, before the dispute with Goldie had ended. Interestingly, both directly involved the missionary. The first concerned a Methodist Mission block at Kundu, on Ranongga. Goldie had purchased this property in 1907 for £5 from the islander, Sondo. The original deed contained a rough description of the boundaries of the block and estimated its area at 15 acres. In July 1920 two men, Maipio and Tukejama, complained to Francis that the Methodist property encroached on the land of their clan. Sondo supported their claim, stating that the mission had occupied more than he had sold, and that furthermore, he had not been paid the £5. When the block was eventually surveyed, it was found to be 150 acres rather than the 15 acres stated in the deed. When Goldie was confronted with the claim, he was at first inclined to bluster, demanding that the administration compensate the islanders as it had approved the transaction. However, this approach ignored the disparity in acreages, and in March 1922 Goldie reconsidered and came to an agreement with the claimants, thus obviating the necessity of an inquiry by the Land Commissioner. Sondo was paid the £5 and the block was reduced to about 15 acres.49 Goldie could hardly afford to be placed in the position of a

defendant in a public inquiry, as he was at that time arguing that he was the desired representative of the 'native claimants'.

A similar situation arose with another claim: this involved a property at Mumea, Mbilua, that was part of the estate of a deceased planter, Julius Oien. Oien had appointed Goldie as his executor, and thus the missionary once more found himself in the embarrassing position of being the opponent of the claimants. Phillips inspected the land involved in the claim in March 1922, but a formal inquiry was not necessary, as Goldie, the claimants, and the official Deputy, Francis, reached an agreement which was satisfactory to the islanders. Both of these cases were in stark contrast to Goldie's claims at the time. Goldie had written without qualification, that the 'natives' would never accept an official Deputy, yet the Kundu and Mumea claimants had worked with Francis quite readily. These claimants were not Adventists, but came from Methodist villages. Goldie had cooperated with the Commission to produce two successful settlements, despite his description of it as an 'instrument of injustice'. These contradictions were ignored by the missionary, and he persisted with his campaign to alter the terms of the Commission for another year.

In the four months following March 1923 Phillips dealt with the remaining eight non-Levers cases. These comprised four claims against planting companies, three against the S.D.A. Mission, and one claim by a European concern, the Union

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51 LC IV. No.33P, Goldie to Barley, 8 December 1921.
Plantations Co., to land at Ndovele. It is difficult to see how this last case came within the terms of the Commission, which specified 'native' claims to land. In any event, the question did not arise for the company withdrew its claim in June 1923. The first case considered, at Kohinggo, involved a freehold 1,600 acre block purchased in 1911 and owned by Kindar Ltd. The dispute centred on a misunderstanding concerning the boundaries of the property. In 1915 the islanders had complained that the company was clearing land they used for gardens, and the dispute had continued from that time. Alexander had recommended a cash compensation and the establishment of a ten acre 'native reserve' for gardens. The claimants, who included the original vendor and other representatives of his mbutu mbutu objected 'in no uncertain manner' when they were fully informed of Alexander's recommendations. Phillips inspected the ground with the claimants, the manager of Kindar Ltd., Francis and Goldie and a settlement was eventually made: the company surrendered the land used for gardens, but was compensated with other land to bring its holdings back to 1,600 acres.

The next three cases heard by Phillips were all on Vella Lavella, and the basis of the claims in all three was the same: that the original vendor had had no right to sell all, or part, of the land. Again, the Land Commissioner managed

52 LC I. Claim No.48, Copy of Gazettal No.20 of 1923.
to secure agreements that were satisfactory to all the parties concerned. One of the cases was straightforward: the representatives of a toutou which had not been consulted in the sale of a block of land at Simbilando, in the Njava district, and two islets offshore, claimed an interest in the land. A settlement was reached whereby the European owners, the Union Plantations Co. returned the islets to the claimants, and retained the remainder. 54

The other two cases were more complex, and had their origins in developments that had occurred in the previous century. One of these, concerning land at Liapari, at the southern end of the Mbilua district, had already been the subject of a brief inquiry by Alexander. His recommendation, a straight cash compensation, was unsatisfactory to both parties. The Liapari claim had its origins in the rise of the big-man Tulo in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Tulo had attracted a non-cognatic following through the acquisition of wealth and prestige in dealings with European traders. Tulo was not a traditional lekasa in Mbilua with rights to the land, but he did acquire a reputation amongst Europeans as a 'chief' of the district. Tulo's nephew and heir, Soso, continued in his uncle's footsteps. He too was regarded by Europeans as a chief, and eventually was appointed a headman by the administration. One of Soso's main sources of income was the sale of land, and it was these transactions which were at the centre of the Liapari claim. Tulo had been given permission to live on the Liapari land by the Mbilua

toutou, in return for acting as a middleman in their dealings with Europeans. In 1908, after Tulo's death, Soso sold this land to Husen & Co., and it was eventually transferred to the Union Plantations Co. The position was further complicated by the fact that some of the company's land overlapped with the adjacent holdings of the Methodist Mission, at Sikuni, and there had been violent disputes between the two concerns. Phillips approached these problems with great tact, and the eventual agreement settled all the disputes in the Liapari/Sikuni area, satisfying the company, the Mission and the claimants. There was an interesting sidelight to this case. During the inspection of the area, Phillips noted that the claimants seemed disposed to dispute part of the Methodist holdings, as well as those of the company. This was hardly surprising, as Soso had also been one of the vendors of the Mission's land. Goldie seems to have been successful in quietening these stirrings, for the Methodist's property emerged intact in the final settlement which was accepted by the claimants.55

The third case investigated by Phillips on Vella Lavella was another tribute to his diplomacy. This involved land on the northern end of the island, at Vorambari. In 1918 the Ruruvai Plantations Syndicate applied for a Crown Lease of a block of land at Vorambari. In 1920 the representatives of the Sorejaru toutou disputed the right of the lessors, the

WPHC No.1208 of 1920, Alexander to H.C., 11 May 1920; Barley to H.C., 16 January 1922.
Zondo toutou, to convey the land. The basis of this claim was traditional: the Sorejaru toutou had not lived at Vorambari in living memory, but according to tradition their clan had originated in the area. The lessors had migrated from Choiseul 'generations ago', and had settled in northwest Vella Lavella, then unoccupied. Phillips had to tread carefully in this case, as there was the possibility of exacerbating sectarian tension, as the two sides were adherents of different missions. After hearing the evidence Phillips suggested the basis for a comprehensive agreement, which would not only cover the Vorambari land, but also settle the disputes between the Sorejaru and various other toutou. Phillips then left the islanders to discuss the matter. The eventually produced an agreement much the same as that suggested by the Land Commissioner: it involved the foreshore, hinterland and adjacent islets of a coastal stretch seven miles long, and was agreed to by the representatives of eight separate toutou. It confirmed the right of the Zondo toutou to let Vorambari, but also conceded certain areas to the Sorejaru toutou. This case was a tribute to the diligence and tact of the Land Commissioner: he produced a workable agreement from a mass of contradictory and obscure evidence, and then wisely allowed the islanders to determine its justice.

Phillips abilities were to be further tested by the last three non-Levers cases he heard; these were the claims

by Methodist adherents against certain holdings of the S.D.A. mission, which were a continuation of Goldie's campaign to curtail the expansion of the Adventists. In 1919 he had unsuccessfully attempted to have the S.D.A. leases in Ndovele and Ughele invalidated, although in the latter district the Methodists had been able to establish their land rights in some parts of the area. The Ughele claim was revived at the Land Commission. The other two claims were against the Adventist leases at Viru, in southeastern New Georgia, and on Telina Island, in the Marovo Lagoon. The passions roused in these disputes, particularly on the part of the European participants, was vastly disproportionate to the amount of land in question - a mere 73 acres. It was perhaps ironic that the Methodist Mission, whose holdings hugely exceeded those of the Adventists in size and which were all held under freehold title, should attack the small leaseholds of the rival mission. Of course, as the Adventist properties were leases, the claims were in fact against the lessors, who were accused of having no right to the land. This prompted one Adventist missionary to comment sarcastically that as soon as an islander joined his mission, it was 'found' that he had no land. 57 The S.D.A. Mission was prepared to engage counsel to defend the cases on behalf of its adherents, but fortunately for Phillips, the prospect of protracted legal battles before the Commission was averted when both missions agreed to do without such

Phillips heard the three Adventist cases in succession, beginning with the Ughele claim in early June 1923. This inquiry, over a piece of land worth £2-3, was attended by four Adventist missionaries, Goldie, and 200 islanders. Phillips concluded, unsurprisingly, that the dispute was essentially a sectarian struggle, and he drily noted that there was less tension and more friendliness amongst the islanders by comparison with the manner of the European participants. Phillips was determined to avoid sectarian difficulties and he appealed to the islanders to come to an agreement amongst themselves which would settle all disputes in Ughele. He considered that if free from the influence of the rival missionaries, the islanders would probably come to an understanding. This expectation was fulfilled, and an agreement was reached by the islanders. Under its terms the land of the mbutu mbutu of both Methodist and Adventist adherents, represented by Muzicolo and Romiti respectively, was defined. Romiti's land included that which had been leased to the S.D.A. mission, whose title was thus confirmed. The only obstacles to a total acceptance of the agreement were the Europeans of both missions. Muzicolo refused to sign the agreement until Goldie had assented, which he did although believing that the Methodist islanders had conceded too much. Pastor Turner of the Adventists had similar thoughts:

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he considered that the agreement was too favourable to the Methodists and that it might jeopardise the expansion of his own mission. However, in January 1924 the agreement was eventually confirmed, and appears to have contributed to a marked decrease in sectarian conflict in the district.\footnote{LC I. Claim No.25, 'Report of the Land Commissioner 4 June 1924'. 'Land Commissioner's Preliminary Report 30 July 1923'. AR, Vol.28, No.27 (7 July 1924), p. 2. LC IV. No.3A/7, Phillips to Turner, 21 June 1923. No.3A/8, Phillips to Goldie, 22 June 1923. No.3A/8A, Goldie to Phillips, 23 June 1923.}

The second Adventist case, at Viru, was a much simpler affair. The two claimants, Lukata and Vundere, were members of the Galasa 'line' that had leased the land to the S.D.A. Mission. They were both Methodists who no longer lived on Viru, but at Saikile, in the Roviana Lagoon. As the remainder of the Galasa 'line' lived at Viru and had consented to the lease, there was little chance of it being overturned. Francis, the Deputy, encouraged the claimants to withdraw their claim on the understanding that they would be consulted in the future land dealings of their 'line'.\footnote{LC I. Claim No.27, 'Report of the Land Commissioner', dated 27 June 1923. LC IV. No.3C/5, Phillips to Turner, 26 June 1923.} Interestingly, both Lukata and Vundere were both signatories of the petitions, in which they had been designated 'Chiefs' of Saikile.

The final non-Levers case heard by the Land Commissioner was the claim against the Adventist lease on Telina, a small island in the Marovo Lagoon to the north of Vangunu. This was the only case heard by Phillips that was not settled by agree-
ment. The claimants were Mbareke 'bush' people, who had lived in the mountains of Vangunu until the cessation of conflict in the Marovo. The defendants were 'salt-water' people who had lived on Telina for several generations. The two groups were traditional foes whose animosity had continued with their respective adherence to the rival missions. Both sides ultimately based their cases on events that had occurred three or four generations beforehand. As the evidence was at total variance and incapable of proof either way, Phillips decided against the claimants as they had not been able to explain the admitted fact of the defendants' occupation of the island. Thus the S.D.A. lease was confirmed.  

The success of the Adventists before the Land Commission increased their prestige and confirmed them as an established force in the New Georgia Group. The spheres of influence of both missions were now firmly established and demarcated, and although there were to be recurrent skirmishes between the two, their basic areas of support were to remain unchanged. By the mid-1920s practically all of the islanders in the Group were committed to either of the missions; thus while Goldie could no longer hope to roll back the Adventist advance, neither could the latter expect to make further large gains.

Phillips' hearings of the non-Levers cases in the New Georgia Group had been an exceptional piece of work. He had constantly striven for consensus, attempting to encourage settlements that would encompass all aspects of the disputes

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and be successful in the long term. Wherever possible he had allowed the islanders to be the determinants of the agreements, realising that their cooperation and satisfaction were the key factors in guaranteeing the success of a settlement. He had tried to act as a conciliator, and not as a judge. The Levers cases were to be much more difficult: here there was no scope for negotiation and conciliation, and the Land Commissioner's only option was to judge. As a consequence, Phillips' performance was more open to adverse criticism. However, considering the restrictive terms of his Commission, the Land Commissioner's handling of the Levers cases was commendable.

When Phillips commenced duty as Land Commissioner in November 1920 he was informed that consideration of the Levers claims would be deferred until the issue of a new licence to replace the Occupation Certificate that had been signed in 1914. King's Regulation No. 3 of 1921 empowered the High Commissioner to grant the new certificate, which was embodied in its schedule. Clause 6 of the schedule gave the High Commissioner the right to withdraw any land determined to be owned, occupied or cultivated by the islanders at the date 1 January 1904. Such land would revert to the islanders without compensation to the holder of the certificate; however, Clause 3 allowed for a reduction in rent in the event of a

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63 This was the date of the first Certificate of Occupation.
withdrawal of land. Levers agreed to the withdrawal of any land recommended by the Commission, on the condition of a proportional adjustment of rent. The company adopted the attitude that as the government had granted the concession, it was its responsibility to determine the validity of the claims, and settle them. They made no attempt to defend the cases, but did send a representative to watch the proceedings. In any event, there was no chance of an agreement being reached between the islanders and either Levers or the government, for the claimants were all unwilling to sell or lease any land that was returned to them. This attitude was maintained throughout all the hearings of the Levers cases. This was not surprising. In some areas, most notably the Vona Vona Lagoon and southwest New Georgia, Levers had caused great resentment amongst the islanders when it began to develop parts of its concession, of which the islanders were totally unaware. In other districts, such as Kusaghe and Hoava, the Levers concession incorporated all the coastal land that was available to the islanders, and its loss would have denied them access to the sea.

The uncompromising attitude of the islanders surprised Phillips when he returned to the Group in September.

64 LC I. Documents Accompanying 'Lever Report' File 'C', Printed Copy of King's Regulation No. 3 of 1921.
65 LC IV. No. 22C/35 (1), Fulton to Kane, 16 June 1923. No. 22C/35 (15), Fulton to Kane, 1 August 1923.
66 LC I. 'Lever Report', p. 73.
1923 to begin hearing the Levers cases, for several months earlier he had commented on the 'conciliatory mood' of the islanders and had expressed a hope that it might facilitate a quick settlement of the Levers claims. The Land Commissioner appears to have mistakenly assumed that because the islanders were willing to negotiate on the smaller claims, then they would be happy to do so with regard to the Levers cases, which involved tens of thousands of acres.

The mode of inquiry adopted by Phillips was much the same as that employed in the previous claims, only on a vaster scale. The land was first inspected by the Commissioner with the claimants: the area under dispute was thus clearly demarcated, and signs of previous occupation or use could be verified. The inspections also had the effect of further advertising the hearings of evidence that followed. With few exceptions, the islanders testified in their own languages, which were translated into pidgin English by interpreters. Even islanders who could speak English generally seem to have preferred this procedure, apparently fearing possible misunderstandings. The interpreters were all islanders, and ambiguities were eliminated by cross-examination. The unique feature of the Levers cases was that the claimants were required to prove that the land had been either 'owned', 'occupied' or 'cultivated' some twenty years earlier, in 1904, and then to establish a definite connection between the former 'owners' and themselves. Phillips adopted a broad definition of occupation and allowed a reasonable latitude in the question of dating. The whole

67 LC IV. No.22C/32, Phillips to Kane, 12 July 1923.
zone of land surrounding areas which had been used for gardens and which was likely to be used for more cultivation was regarded as 'occupied'. Phillips did not consider land which might have been vacant in 1904, but which had been formerly occupied and not definitely abandoned, as 'waste land'.

Practically the entire Levers concession in the New Georgia Group, some 216,000 acres, was the subject of claims by islanders. The claims were in conglomerate form; that is, each separate claim referred to an entire island or district, and was put forward by a group of representatives of all the people concerned. There were seven claims, referring respectively to those parts of the concession on Kolombangara, Vona Vona, Kohinggo, the southwestern coast of New Georgia from Noro to Enoghae Bay, the Kusaghe-Lupa district (from Enoghae Bay to Lever Harbour), the Hoava district (from Lever Harbour to the Niva River), and Ghizo. Phillips began work on the claims in September 1923, and concluded the hearings in April 1924. The result of his inquiries was the recommended return of about 77,500 acres to the islanders; this area was comprised of about 40,000 acres from Kolombangara, 25,000 acres from New Georgia Island (Kusaghe-Lupa and Hoava), and 12,000 from Vona Vona and Kohinggo. None of this land had been developed by Levers.

69 LC I. Claims Nos.30-37, 55. 'Particulars of Claims'.
70 WPHC No.2951 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 30 April 1926.
The basis of the Land Commissioner's decisions was his conception of customary land tenure. Phillips considered that land was communally owned by 'lines' or cognatic groups. He was somewhat confused by the diversity of evidence on what constituted a 'line': different witnesses stated that the descent system was matrilineal, patrilineal or bilateral. Phillips concluded that this multiplicity of opinion was the result of a continuing swing away from a strict matrilineal system, such as that on Vella Lavella, to a bilateral form of descent. However, this surmise did not affect his recommendations in any way, for he did not assert that matrilineal descent was the only legitimate determinant of an individual's interest in land, but accepted the islanders' own variable criteria.

Phillips believed that in pre-European times a descent group occupied a locality - a tract of land not usually defined by boundaries - and that demarcation would have only occurred in the event of conflict, or perhaps in the definition of garden areas. Outside of these localities were vast residual areas of bush which were used for pig-hunting, nutting or as a source of material by the islanders of different 'lines'. Thus the use of the bush was not exclusive, and such land was not regarded as belonging to any 'line' in particular until it was definitely appropriated through settlement or cultivation.\(^7\) It was these residual areas of bush that Levers were to retain on Phillips' recommendations, and which were to be the centre of later controversy.

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\(^7\) LC I. 'Lever Report', pp. 44-61.
The first Levers claim investigated by Phillips was at Kolombangara, and his approach to this case typified that employed on all the subsequent hearings. Kolombangara was the site of Levers largest single block, almost 150,000 acres. The only land retained by the islanders was a small sector in the southwest of the island, between Hambere and Sambira. This area was the only part of the island where the smooth slopes of the extinct volcano were broken by spurs and hills, and it provided the islanders with some protection in the head­hunting era. However, they had kept canoes on the shore and were accustomed to use the coastal plain for coconut plantations, camping and fishing. By the time of the Commission all of the Kolombangara islanders, some two hundred to two hundred and fifty people, had settled on the coast. Their representatives now claimed the entire island.

The physical and oral evidence examined by Phillips indicated that the Kolombangara islanders had occupied and used extensive areas contained in the concession. There were established coconut plantations and old village, garden and hope sites scattered throughout all the south western quarter of the island. The Commissioner accordingly recommended that the entire southwestern quarter of the island, from Varu to Paparaka, be declared 'native land'. This had the effect of removing some 40,000 acres from the concession. The remaining northern and eastern parts of the island were retained by Levers. There were traces of former occupation in this area, and witnesses claimed that it had been inhabited before their lifetimes. However they were unable to establish a connection between the former occupants and themselves, as
they could not provide any detailed information about them. The area had also been used occasionally for pig-hunting and fishing, but such activities had been infrequent during the head-hunting era due to the risks involved. Phillips did not consider this sufficient evidence of exclusive ownership of the land, although he did set aside six ten acre blocks scattered around the northern and eastern coasts to be returned to the islanders as bases for fishing and camping.\textsuperscript{72}

The Land Commissioner approach to the Kolombangara claim was repeated throughout the remaining hearings. If there was evidence of occupation or cultivation of an area, and the claimants could demonstrate a connection between the former inhabitants and themselves, then that entire locality would be declared 'native land'. To establish a connection it was necessary for the claimants to describe who the former occupants were, what 'lines' they belonged to, and how these 'lines' were related to those of the claimants. Phillips accepted statements of relationship in good faith, and did not demand genealogical records or evidence of direct descent. Outside of the occupied localities were the bush areas that may have been used for fishing, hunting or nutting, but which were not 'owned', 'occupied' or 'cultivated' exclusively by any particular group. Accordingly, Phillips did not classify these areas as 'native land', and they were retained by Levers.

The second claim heard was at Vona Vona Island, of which some 7,770 acres were included in the concession. The

\textsuperscript{72} ibid., pp. 93-112.
evidence indicated that this area had been used for planting and gardening by Munda islanders since the late nineteenth century. Fear of head-hunting raids had forced the islanders to live at Munda, but they had continued to use Vona Vona and after the cessation of raiding had begun settling in the district. Phillips recommended that the entire area be returned to the islanders. The next claim, at Kohinggo, was more complicated, for Levers had already established a plantation on the island. The land involved was a strip along the eastern and northern coast of Kohinggo, with adjacent islets, some 6,700 acres in all. The land had not been settled, but had been used for pig-hunting, camping and fishing. In 1911 Levers had paid Veo, a representative of the various mbutu mbutu with an interest in the land, £25 to settle the claims against the holding. While Levers claimed that this payment had been for the entire block, Veo maintained that it had been only for the land already cleared by the company. Phillips compromised and returned 4,100 acres to the islanders, while allowing the company to retain their plantation and some additional land, 2,600 acres in all.

The fourth claim, the only one to be almost entirely rejected, involved 7,615 acres on southwest New Georgia Island, between Noro and Enoghae Bay. This land was claimed by Kasa, representative of the Munda mbutu mbutu which considered themselves to be of Kazakuru origin. The claim was based on

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73 ibid., pp. 112-22.
tradition: the area was said to have been the home of the Kazakuru before they migrated to Munda and were absorbed by the Roviana speaking people. No-one had lived on the land within living memory, although it was occasionally used for hunting and fishing expeditions. Even these were infrequent, as the area was well exposed to raiders from Kolombangara and Kusaghe. Even in Mahaffy's time visits to the area had been made with great caution and only in daytime. In 1911 Levers had paid £25 to Gumi, the father of Kasa, to settle claims which were made after the company began clearing operations at Noro. Phillips concluded that the land had been unoccupied in 1904 and rejected the claim, although he did set aside a small block for the islanders at Lambete Kopi, a place which had been the base for fishing expeditions. 75

The remaining Levers land on New Georgia Island consisted of a coastal stretch from Enoghae Bay to the Niva River, some 38,400 acres in area, and the subject of two separate claims. The first of these was made by representatives of the Kusaghe and Lupa people, and covered the land from Enoghae to Lever Harbour. The Kusaghe and Lupa people were small in number (about 300 in 1923) and had become united under the big-man Vilingi in the late nineteenth century. Both Kusaghe and Lupa seem to have been in conflict with the neighbouring islanders of Hoava, Roviana and Kolombangara. These pressures, combined with their numerical weakness, probably prompted their unification. The Kusaghe-Lupa people had lived in the mountainous bush, but had used the coastal

75 ibid., pp. 129-37.
land regularly for fishing and planting. They had begun to settle on the coast in 1908-9 and this migration had accelerated when they had learned of the Levers concession and had been anxious to buttress their claim to the land. Phillips found extensive evidence of former occupation and use of the land between the Hanggorana River and the Tutuna Lagoon, and he recommended that this area be returned to the islanders. However, from Enoghae to Hanggorana and from Tutuna to Lever Harbour there was no such evidence and this land remained with Levers. None of the new settlements were in these areas, for the coastal villages had been established along the shores adjacent to the mountains that had been formerly occupied.\(^76\)

The remaining Levers land on New Georgia Island, from Lever Harbour to the Niva River, encompassed the Hoava district. Also included in the concession were the islands of the lagoon opposite the mainland. This land was the province of the Ndekurana (or Hoava) and Ramata people, who had lived together since the 1880s, when they had joined to protect themselves more effectively against raiders. The evidence clearly indicated that the land had long been occupied and Phillips accordingly recommended that it revert to the islanders.\(^77\)

The final Levers claim heard by Phillips was on Ghizo, two-thirds of which was included in the concession. Ghizo had been abandoned before 1900, its inhabitants moving to Vella Lavella, Roviana and Kolombangara. There were only two

\(^76\) *ibid.*, pp. 137-54.

\(^77\) *ibid.*, pp. 155-63.
surviving Ghizo islanders, and they had not lived on the island since their childhood. The only signs of former occupation or use of the island were several small stands of coconut trees. Phillips set aside these areas (a total of 270 acres) for the claimants and confirmed the remainder (6,920 acres) as Levers land.  

Although the hearings into the Levers cases concluded in April 1924, it was not until May of the following year that Phillips completed his report. A further sixteen months passed before the claimants were given a detailed explanation of the Land Commissioner's recommendations. Their reaction was unfavourable, and in October 1926 a petition from the 'Chiefs' of the New Georgia Group criticising Phillips' decisions was forwarded to the High Commissioner. Like the previous petitions, the signatories were all Methodists and predominantly from the Roviana Lagoon: both Phillips and Kane considered it to have been inspired by Goldie. The petition made four major points: that the recommendations were against the weight of the evidence; that the Land Commissioner was inexperienced in 'native affairs' and had refused to accept assistance from the islanders to help him arrive at an understanding of the nature of the claims; that the 'Deputy for the Natives', Francis, was antagonistic to the islanders' interests and that they had not been allowed to have their own representative, Goldie; and that the Land Commissioner assessed the claimants requirements rather than ownership.  

78 Ibid., pp. 195-200.  
79 WPHC No. 3658 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 23 November 1926. Encl. Native Chiefs to Barley, 15 October 1926.  
Kane to H.C., 10 January 1927. Encl. Phillips to Kane, 4 December 1926.
While Goldie may have framed the petition, and the signatories may well have been unaware of its precise contents, there was no doubt that it did reflect their unhappiness with the outcome of the Commission. Barley, at the time District Officer at Gizo, noted the 'undeniably bitter feeling' of the claimants, and reported that objections would be lodged against most of the recommendations. The points contained in the petition were easily rebutted by Phillips: his recommendations had been clearly based on the evidence he had collected, and had been concerned with the question of ownership and not the requirements of the islanders. The personal criticism of Phillips and Francis was not borne out by the proceedings of the hearings. Kane advised the High Commissioner that the petition did not set forth any new grounds for not confirming the Land Commissioner's recommendations, and in June 1928 they were confirmed by the Colonial Office. This was followed by another protest signed by seventeen 'chiefs'. Barley reported that fourteen of these were unaware of what they had signed, and the Colonial Office saw no justifiable reason for reopening the matter. The decision remained final and in September 1931 a new Certificate of Occupation incorpor-

80 WPHC No.3658 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 9 November 1926. Encl. Barley to Kidson, 30 September 1926.

81 WPHC No.3658 of 1926, H.C. to C.O., 12 May 1927; C.O. to H.C., 13 June 1928.

82 WPHC No.244 of 1929, Kidson to H.C., 3 January 1929; Barley to H.C., 22 March 1929; C.O. to H.C., 2 July 1929.
ating the recommendations was signed and registered.\textsuperscript{83}

At the centre of the claimants' discontent with the recommendations were the tracts of residual bush land which, although they may have been used by the islanders generally, had not been exclusively owned, occupied or cultivated by any particular 'line' or group.\textsuperscript{84} Frequently these areas had been stretches of 'no man's land' between hostile districts: for example, the land between Roviana and Kusaghe, and that between Kusaghe and Hoava. Or, as in the case of Kolombangara and Ghizo, open and accessible country unsuitable for settlement in the time of the head-hunters. Phillips had rejected the claims to these areas because there had been no evidence that the land had been regarded as the territory of any particular group or 'line' in 1904. Under the terms of his inquiry, this decision was a logical necessity.

Phillips' commission stipulated that he was to enquire and report upon 'specific cases ... of claims to land'. He was further bound by King's Regulation No.3 of 1921, which stated that land 'owned', 'occupied' or 'cultivated' on 1 January 1904 was to be withdrawn from Levers Occupation Certificate. The Land Commissioner was required to apply the latter criteria to the specific claims presented to him. There was no room for him to consider the general, non-exclusive use of land by the islanders: his task was to assess the cases presented by the Deputy on behalf of particular

\textsuperscript{83} WPHC No.2953 of 1928, Barley to H.C., 28 August 1932.

\textsuperscript{84} WPHC No.3658 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 23 November 1926. Encl. Barley to Kidson, 7 November 1926. Sub-encl. Excerpt from Gizo District Quarterly Report, 17 October 1926.
claimants. Unfortunately, the Land Commission had been established to resolve a number of pressing land disputes, and not to investigate generally the islanders' relationship with the land. The whole question of indigenous land tenure, and its application in a time of rapid social change, needed to be thoroughly examined and discussed. Instead, the Colonial Office, anxious to secure the resolution of existing disputes had rejected a broad inquiry in favour of the narrow commission.\(^{85}\) It was a stop gap measure which merely postponed the consideration of the more fundamental problems confronting the administration. Eventually, in the 1950s, a full investigation of customary land tenure was instituted.

Despite its shortcomings, the Land Commission was not a failure. A number of long-standing disputes were settled, and the more blatant injustices of the Levers concession were redressed, although the discriminatory assumptions which lay behind the Waste Land Regulation and the Occupation Certificate remained unaffected. The administration had assumed that the population of the islands would decline or at best remain static, and that the islanders would have neither the need nor the desire to expand their subsistence and commercial activities. By its action, the administration had abrogated the islanders' choice and placed restrictions on their future courses of action. By the 1920s, the people of the New Georgia Group were beginning to appreciate this. The alienation of large tracts of land without their knowledge

\(^{85}\) Allan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 45-6.
or consent had caused uneasiness and created doubts about their future. Phillips had noted that they no longer wished to part with land unless they were absolutely sure that they would never require it again, and that they were now claiming land that they had never before considered as their own to ensure that they had enough for the future.  

While the Land Commission may not have totally reassured the islanders about their future, it did confirm that the days of irresponsible land alienation had passed. Land disputes were to continue, but most did not involve land alienated to Europeans, being between the islanders themselves. The Land Commission had presaged this development: several of the non-Levers cases had involved the claimants disputing the right of other islanders to sell certain land. In the following years, as more and more islanders sought to establish their rights to particular areas, disputes with rival claimants occurred. The questions and difficulties created by these disputes eventually necessitated the 1950s inquiry into customary land tenure. The 1920-25 commission had marked the end of the period in which the focus of land problems was the acquisitions of Europeans. The disputes engendered by the careless alienation of land, and the Land Commission itself, further increased the 'land consciousness' of the islanders, which was to manifest itself in the increasing number of disputes amongst themselves over land. Thus

87 Allan, op.cit., p. 49.
while land remained a basic issue, the tenor and direction of the problem changed.

The Land Commission was a turning point in other ways, not directly related to the land question. It marked an end to a period of turbulence in the relations between the Methodist Mission and its temporal and spiritual rivals, the administration and the S.D.A. Mission. Goldie's attempt to stall the expansion of the Adventists had culminated in the attack on the latter's leaseholds before the Commission. The challenge had failed, and it was to be the last full-blooded assault against the rival evangelists. The S.D.A. were now firmly established in the New Georgia Group and there was little or nothing that the Methodists could do about it. Goldie had not fared much better with the administration. His attempt to impose his conditions upon the Commission had been unsuccessful, and he had been forced to accept it on the terms of the administration. Where Woodford and Mahaffy had been forced to back down in the aftermath of the Zito affair, and Hill had been removed from Gizo, Francis had withstood the campaign mounted against him and had remained both District Officer and Deputy for the Natives, and the Commission had proceeded without incident. Goldie had asserted that he was the voice of the islanders, but his claim had not been substantiated. While he remained a figure of immense prestige and influence amongst the Methodist adherents, he was no longer a fundamental challenge to the authority of the administration. The success of the Adventists, and the government's increasing acceptance of its responsibilities towards the islanders, of which the Land Commission was the first major indication, had eroded his position.
CHAPTER NINE
THE STATE OF THE ISLANDS: CONCLUSION

By the mid-1920s the New Georgia Group was, in European eyes, one of the most 'civilised' areas in the Solomons. There had been no signs of resistance to the colonial order from the islanders for over a decade, nor were there any indications that there would be violence in the future. The Group had reached a situation of stability and order, after thirty years of turmoil under the Protectorate administration. This applied to both islanders and Europeans, for although the Melanesian population had been at peace since the conclusion of the Marovo and Zito troubles, discord had continued amongst the Europeans as missions, administration and the settler community strove to secure their prestige and influence. At the heart of these conflicts was the Europeans' obsession with status and power, not the welfare or aspirations of the islanders. The most persistent of these confrontations, those between the administration and the Methodist Mission, and the latter and the Adventists, had their culmination in the Land Commission. After 1925, although there were occasional outbursts of antagonism, the protracted confrontations of the previous years subsided. There were a number of reasons why this was so.

During the 1920s the missions reached the limit of their expansion. In the census of 1931, only six adult males described themselves as 'pagan': the remainder expressed
an adherence to either of the missions. While it was still possible to 'poach' converts, it was unlikely that more than the odd individual could be obtained in this manner, for both missions had entrenched themselves in the communal life of the islanders. In 1931, the population of the group was settled in about 90 villages, with an average number of 80 inhabitants each. There were no multi-denominational settlements: every village was either Methodist or Adventist, with its own 'native teacher' or minister. Religious services would be held in the mornings and evenings, and 'school' conducted for two to three hours each weekday. The education offered by these village schools was primarily religious. Higher education was provided by colleges at the mission headquarters - the Methodists at Kokenggolo, and Adventists at Mbatuna. In short, for either of the missions to make significant increases in their numbers would entail the conversion of entire communities - a difficult undertaking when a village was already committed to the rival denomination. In consequence, both missions seem to have concentrated on cementing the faith of their adherents, rather than challenging the hold of their rival. While there were occasional outbursts over 'poaching' incidents, on the whole there was less and less

1 WPHC No.274 of 1932, 'Census of the B.I.S.P. for 1931', 'Return for Gizo District'. The details of the Census, together with a map showing the distribution of the villages according to the Census (Map VIII), can be found in Appendix IV.

2 ibid.

antagonism between the two denominations during the 1930s.\footnote{ibid. WPHC No.1214 of 1932, Ashley to H.C., 5 March 1932. Encl. Annual Report on Gizo District, dated 14 January 1932. WPHC No.1770 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 13 May 1926. Encl. Quarterly Report from D.O. Gizo. Barley to Kane, 7 April 1926.}

The early 1920s saw a significant change in the nature of the administration of the islands. In these years the government began to shoulder some of its responsibilities towards the indigenous inhabitants of the Protectorate. Before 1920 the administration had done little more than keep the peace. Practically the only contact the islanders had with the administration was through the District Officer, who was essentially a combination of policeman, magistrate and gaoler. There was little or no continuity or regularity in the impact of the administration: the tenor of government depended a great deal on the character and aptitude of the District Officer, and his contact with the various communities in the islands was intermittent. In these circumstances it was natural that many islanders should regard the administration as an authority secondary to the missions, whose influence was immediate, consistent and pervasive.\footnote{WPHC No.3808 of 1933, Memorandum on Mission Influences in the B.S.I.P., J.C. Barley, 24 November 1933.} The innovations of the early 1920s gave a consistency and continuity to the administration that it did not have before. The administration became, in fact, a system whereas previously it had been a person. This had obvious consequences with regard to relations between the missions and the government. In the past, when Goldie had challenged the administration it had been in the form of a direct conflict with an individual.
officer in which considerations of 'face' and personal prestige predominated. With the establishment of a system of administration whose continued operation and existence was not dependent on the individual officer at Gizo, these personal conflicts lost much of their meaning. In addition, the system itself was not disagreeable to the missions, for it recognised their influence and, to a certain extent, utilised it.

The first initiative of the administration was, perhaps predictably, the introduction of taxation. King's Regulation No. 10 of 1920, the Native Tax Regulation, imposed a poll tax on all adult males. The tax varied from 5/- to £1, according to the individual's ability to pay and the degree of established authority in the various districts of the Protectorate. As the New Georgia Group was both stable and comparatively wealthy, its population was required to pay the full tax as soon as it was introduced. The first collection was in 1921-2, and £1,274 was taken from the Group. This figure was an understatement of the Group's eventual contribution, for a further £622/10/- had been levied on the people of the Marovo Lagoon, but the District Officer had been unable to collect this money on time due to lack of transport, although the people had had the money ready for payment. The final amount paid by the Group, £1,896/10/-, was about 20% of the total collected throughout the Protectorate, although the Group comprised only about 8% of its population.

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Virtually all the adult males in the Group paid the full £1 tax.\(^7\)

The tax does not seem to have caused economic hardship amongst the islanders, who were described by one official as an 'exceptionally prosperous community', due to their extensive coconut groves, and the availability of trochas shell on the many reefs in the district.\(^8\) The New Georgians certainly appeared to have been able to accumulate the money without compromising their traditional distaste for employment on the plantations, for labour recruitment in the Group continued to be negligible. However, it is possible that the tax resulted in a decrease in mission contributions: between 1920 and 1921 donations to the Methodist Mission were halved, although this may have been in part due to a fall in copra prices.\(^9\) In subsequent years, the taxation contribution from the Group varied considerably in accordance with the prevailing economic conditions. In 1931, when copra prices were extremely low, the average payment per adult male was about 8 shillings.\(^10\)

The imposition of taxation was hardly a progressive step for the islanders who, at that time, were receiving little in return for their contribution to the revenue of the

\(^7\) WPHC No.1680 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 12 May 1922.

\(^8\) WPHC No.2352 of 1925, Kidson to H.C., 12 April 1926.


\(^10\) WPHC No.1103 of 1931, *op.cit.*
Protectorate. However, it did provide the administration with a lever to obtain more cash from the Colonial Office. In 1922 the Resident Commissioner pointed out to his superiors that in return for their taxation contributions, the islanders got 'the blessings of a settled government' and that 'Practically nothing else is done for them'. He accordingly requested £150 to be spent on medicines for the islanders. This munificent sum comprised exactly 2% of 1921-22 tax collection; it was, however, a start in the right direction. In 1923 a doctor was stationed at Gizo and a rudimentary hospital constructed. While the post of District Medical Officer was not continually occupied in subsequent years, there were at least regular visits each year to the Group by a doctor, and a large number of islanders received treatment. In 1926, for example, 76 in-patients and 1,029 out-patients were treated.

The imposition of taxation established the administration as a direct and inescapable factor in the economic lives of the islanders. After 1922 the administration also began to impinge upon the day to day existence of the islanders to a much greater extent. Prior to that year there had been no specific legal provision for the administration of 'native affairs'. While regulations had been enacted to deal with particular matters that had become pressing, there had been no attempt to formulate legislation that would allow an overall approach to the question of the domestic and

11 WPHC No. 1690 of 1922, Kane to H.C., 22 May 1922.

12 WPHC No. 3675 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 15 November 1926. Encl. Crichlow to Kane, 10 November 1926.
communal affairs of the islanders. King's Regulation No. 17 of 1922, the Native Administration Regulation, remedied this situation. This regulation provided for the creation of districts and sub-districts, the appointment of 'native officers' (headmen and constables), and the promulgation of rules relating to the good order and well-being of the islanders. Under the latter provision, a set of 'Native Rules' were formulated: these involved such matters as abusive language, the spreading of slanderous and damaging reports, disorderly conduct, the confinement of pigs, the non-performance of communal services, absence from a village for more than two months without the permission of the District Officer, and the notification of births and deaths. Penalties for the breaking of these 'Rules' included fines from 5/- to 10/- or imprisonment for a week to a month.  

There were three classes of 'native officers'. At the top were the district headmen, who were appointed by the Resident Commissioner on the recommendation of the District Officer, and could be dismissed in the same manner. These officers could receive up to £12 p.a. for their services. Second were the village headmen, who were appointed and dismissed by the District Officer, and who could receive up to £3 p.a. Third were the village constables, whose pay was up to £1/10/- p.a. and who were also appointed and dismissed.

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13 WPHC No. 266 of 1925, Minute by H. Pilling, 25 July 1925.
14 WPHC No. 849 of 1924, Kidson to H.C., 22 July 1924. Encl. Hill to H.C., 28 April 1924.
by the District Officer. Generally, only those officers who had proved themselves reliable and efficient were paid, and then not necessarily the full amount. The New Georgia Group was divided into eight sub-districts: Simbo, Ranongga, Kombangara, Vella Lavella, Roviana and the Vona Vona area, Rendova, the Marovo Lagoon, and the northwestern New Georgia. However, this division did not have much administrative significance, for each sub-district did not necessarily have a district headman, and several of the sub-districts had more than one. The system was a fluid and adaptable one. The creation of a district headman was not a matter of filling a bureaucratic niche, but of finding an individual with sufficient influence and ability to warrant the appointment. Thus the number of headmen varied over the years, but once a suitable man for a position had been found, he remained in it for a long time. For example, of the thirty-nine 'native officers' working in 1937, thirty-five had held their jobs for over a decade.

The missions supported the headman system. The only trouble that occurred was at Simbo, where a Malaitan, the ex-warden of Tulagi gaol, was appointed district headman. This man's efficiency and zeal antagonised some of the Simboese, who were Methodists, and Goldie objected, stating that headmen should be 'chiefs' of their own villages and districts, rather

15 WPHC No. 266 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 26 September 1925. Encl. Memorandum on Headmen. Gizo District.

than outsiders. The administration agreed with this principle, and subsequent district headmen were generally big-men in their own right. Moreover, they were usually strong supporters of the particular mission whose influence in the district was paramount. The system recognised the spheres of influence of the two missions, and may well have reinforced them. In the Marovo Lagoon there were two district headmen: Nipolo for the S.D.A. at Telina, and Ngatu at Patutiva for the Methodists. On Vella Lavella, the strongholds of the rival missions, Mbilua and Ndovele, each had their respective district headmen. The missions also benefited from the administration's policy of encouraging the establishment of larger conglomerate villages, so that a single village headman could be appointed over a reasonable number of people, rather than a multiplicity of officers presiding over scattered hamlets. The missions themselves had long supported the same policy, in order to bring the islanders together in convenient, accessible groups. By the 1930s, twenty three village headmen presided over communities whose average size was 107 people.

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17 WPHC No.266 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 9 January 1925. Kane to H.C.; 20 April 1925. Encl. Crichlow to Kane, 31 March 1925. Kane to H.C., 26 September 1925.
18 WPHC No.1852 of 1937, op.cit.
19 WPHC No.266 of 1925, Kane to H.C., 26 September 1925.
20 WPHC No.274 of 1932, op.cit.
The introduction of taxation, and the creation of an administrative system had given the government a stability and consistency which it had not previously possessed. It now intruded upon most aspects of island society. This transition had been accomplished without the sort of confrontation with the Methodist Mission which had characterised their relations in the past, for the expansion of the administration's influence had not been at the expense of the mission's authority, but largely in conjunction with it. The wrangle over the Land Commission had been the last of the protracted, bitter struggles between the two bodies. Increasingly, both the administration and the missions were to act together, and to assist each other in their objectives. In 1924 after correspondence with the various missionary societies in the Solomons, the government enacted legislation to provide for the punishment of adultery.21 In 1927 it introduced grants for those missions which were undertaking technical education courses for the islanders. The Methodists and Adventists, whose courses were the most advanced in the Protectorate, received £50 each.22

As the 1920s had seen the dilution of sectarian strife, and the subsidence of acrimony between mission and administration, it also saw the decline of agitation and controversy concerning the third European interest in the islands - the planter/settler community. As has already been

21 WPHC No.190 of 1923, Hill to H.C., 10 January 1924. Copy of King's Regulation No.7 of 1924.

22 WPHC No.2366a of 1925, Kane to H.C., 28 September 1926 and 23 November 1926.
described, the planter/settler's campaign for political and economic concessions reached a peak in the early 1920s, with the activities of S.I.P.A., the Planter Gazette, and the 1923 petitions for crown colony status and adjustments to the conditions of leaseholds. By 1925 this agitation had died down. The political demands had been emphatically rejected by the Colonial Office, but the other requests had been received favourably: improvement conditions and leasehold rentals had been relaxed, alterations had been made to the labour regulations, and an Advisory Council established. With these concessions, relations between the administration and the planting community steadily improved. In 1925 the High Commissioner visited the Protectorate and reported that the settlers' attitude to the government was loyal and respectful. In the late 1920s and 1930s the predominant concern of the settler community was not their political rights, but their economic survival as copra prices crashed to catastrophic levels. The number of operating plantations in the New Georgia Group remained static, little development work was undertaken, and the quantity of labour employed declined. The confidence and aggressive optimism of the earlier years was a thing of the past.

By the late 1920s the struggles for power, prestige and wealth which had characterised the activities of the various European interests in the New Georgia Group throughout

23 WPHC No.2366 of 1925, H.C. to C.O., 26 October 1925.
the previous decades were largely dissipated. The state of
stability and order that had been reached was also reflected in
the lives of the islanders. About 7,900 New Georgians lived in
90 odd villages scattered around the coasts of the islands.
The last bush-dwellers, in Kusaghe, had come down to the shore
in the early twenties, and the fortified and concealed settle­
ments of the head-hunting days were but things of memory.
Villages had been rebuilt to conform with the white man's
passion for symmetry and order. Most of the larger villages
were presided over by a headman appointed by the administration
whose duty was to report infringements of the 'Native Rules',
help settle minor disputes, assist in the collection of tax and
to generally act as a channel of communication to the District
Officer. However, in the event of lesser problems, if a
European's advice was thought necessary, it would most likely
be the local missionary who would be first approached. The
influence of the missions was pervasive, but not suffocating.
Attendances at church services and day schools could fluctuate
considerably, and the missions were not notably successful in
imposing their view of morality on the islanders. The
Methodist missionary, Metcalfe, exasperatedly wrote:

The general attitude to fornication and
adultery has been, and still is, very
lax, and is one of the most difficult
problems the church has to confront.

25 WPHC No. 1770 of 1926, Kane to H.C., 13 May 1926. Encl.
Quarterly Report for Gizo District.

26 WPHC No. 849 of 1924, Kidson to H.C., 22 July 1924. Encl.
Middenway to Kane, 8 April 1924.

27 Metcalfe Papers. 'Methodism in the Marovo', p. 4.
The New Georgian Christians were not so unlike their fellows elsewhere: they may have subscribed to the faith, but it did not necessarily inhibit their enjoyment of life.

The education offered by the missions was improving. Although the village schools gave little more than religious instruction and perhaps, depending upon the ability of the teacher, some rudimentary reading and writing, the central schools at the mission headquarters were expanding their activities. The Adventist school at Mbatuna had an enrolment of about 100, and had begun to offer some technical courses. So too with the Methodist school and college at Kokenggolo, which gave instruction in engineering, boat building, carpentering, wireless telegraphy, typewriting and agriculture. The Kokenggolo establishment had an average attendance of about 185, although only about 30 boys were undertaking the technical courses. The early educational work of the missions bore fruit in later years, when the New Georgia Group maintained a consistently higher rate of literacy than other parts of the Protectorate.

The health of the islanders was also improving. Although the Group suffered from epidemics in 1925 and 1931, the death rate in the islands up to 1940 was amongst the lowest in the Protectorate, and the population steadily increased.

Predictions about the decline and inevitable extinction of the

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28 WPHC No. 2366a of 1925, Kane to H.C., 28 September 1926. Encl. Wicks to Kane, 30 July 1926 and Goldie to Kane, 6 September 1926. No. 1103 of 1931, op. cit.

29 Groenewegen, op. cit., pp. 87-8.

30 ibid., pp. 4-8.
population, so confidently made by Woodford and others earlier in the century, were revealed for what they were: convenient justifications for European development, massive land alienation, and indifference to the welfare and future of the islanders.

Economically, the islanders were comparatively well off: they produced for sale between 800 and 900 tons of copra per year. In 1930, when copra prices were at an unprecedented low level, their income from this source was between £5,000 and £6,000, of which £1,098 was taken in tax. However, they continued to be exploited by the European retailers in the Group, whose mark-up was generally 100%, and who insisted on using the shilling as the lowest unit of currency. Nevertheless, they were not dependent on their income for survival, and never felt constrained to seek employment on the plantations in any numbers. Their diet, while it could be supplemented by the purchase of sugar, bully beef and rice, was still comprised basically of traditional foodstuffs, with some introduced European vegetables. While some crops might fail, it was extremely rare that all should do so: there are no reports of food scarcity or famine in the Group. Ultimately, despite over a century of involvement in the

31 WPHC No.1103 of 1931, op.cit.
32 WPHC No.827 of 1930, H.C. to C.O., 13 October 1931.
economy of the white man, the islanders remained self-sufficient. To this degree, at least, they had preserved their independence; and that it was not a trivial independence was amply demonstrated in 1942, when the European administrative, missionary and economic presence in the islands scuttled as rats on a sinking ship in the face of the Japanese invasion and the islanders were once more left to fend for themselves. They did not collaborate with the new invaders, and displayed a courage and loyalty that their former colonial masters had done little to deserve.

By 1940 the islanders of the New Georgia Group had been in contact with Europeans for 150 years. For the first century they had controlled and exploited this relationship. The society which Europeans first encountered was neither static nor fragile; it had within itself the capacity for change and development. It was not the coming of the European that changed island society, but the islanders' response to the opportunities created by the arrival of the white man and his technology. These opportunities were utilised and exploited within an indigenous frame of reference. Big-men seized upon the iron technology to enhance their prestige and power in traditional terms: in New Georgian society religious belief, and warfare found much of their expression through the practice of head-hunting and its associated ritual, and this was the chief avenue through which the new circumstances were to be exploited. The island of Simbo was at the centre of these developments. It was the focus of much of the early European contact with the Group, and the Simboese endeavoured to ensure that it would remain so. They attempted, quite
successfully, to monopolise the economic relationship with the white man, acting as middlemen for the rest of the Group. In the same process, they expanded their power and prestige as head-hunters.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the nature of contact changed. The itinerant whalers and other casual visitors were replaced by traders who lived and worked on the islands, or who spent most of the year touring amongst them, and Simbo was replaced by Munda as the centre of European activity, although other parts of the Group also began to deal more regularly with the traders. The more durable European presence in the islands was not accompanied by a strengthening in the security of its participants. Periodic attacks on Europeans, inspired by both the desire for goods and the demands of island society, emphasised the weakness of the white man's position. The activities of the Royal Navy did not alter this situation, and nor did they affect the islanders' preoccupation with head-hunting which continued as before, with big-men utilising their European connections to enhance their strength as raiders and leaders. However, in the persistence of large-scale raiding lay the seed of future land problems, for much of the population of the islands dwelt deep in the bush for protection against raiders, giving the appearance that the land was uninhabited or, as Europeans described it 'waste'.

The establishment of the colonial administration at the turn of the century and the subsequent pacification of the islands, accompanied by a series of serious epidemics, marked the end of the islanders' capacity to determine
substantially the nature of their relationship with the white man. The way was now open for the development of a plantation economy and the exploitation of the islanders to a degree that was not possible in the previous century. The massive alienation of 'waste' land proceeded apace, along with the adoption of extortionate and coercive 'trading' methods. The colonial authority did little to improve this situation; in fact, it was responsible for much of the injustice concerning the land, and its inept behaviour towards the islanders worsened matters. These years also saw the establishment of the Methodist Mission, which made slow headway - its growth being mainly expressed in acres, rather than souls - until the outbreak of violence in the Marovo and on Vella Lavella in 1908-10 period.

The Marovo and Vella Lavella troubles were the culmination of a decade of irresponsible and insensitive administration; they were also the last occasions in which the islanders would take up arms in an attempt to influence directly the changing course of their lives. The government's brutal but effective response to this challenge marked the final stage in the 'pacification' of the islands, and was a further spur to the commercial development of the Group. The planter-settler community became more numerous, stable and increasingly vocal in its demands for political and economic concessions and policies which envisaged the islanders as little more than as a cheap and quiescent source of labour, or as a dwindling race confined to ever-diminishing reserves. The settlers had little need nor time for the New Georgians, who refused to work on their plantations and who had increasingly
turned towards the missions as a vehicle for their hopes and aspirations in response to an administration which had offered them little more than retribution.

The decade after 1910 saw the intensification of ill-feeling amongst the Europeans in the Group as the Methodist Mission struggled for power and influence with the administration, and competed with the Adventists for adherents. The arrival of the second mission had given many of the islanders an alternative source of the education they desired. It provided an opportunity to make an independent decision of fundamental importance - a commitment to the white man's belief and knowledge - without compromising traditional hostilities by aligning themselves with the mission of their former enemies and rivals, although the Methodists fought hard to subvert the choice. The conflict between the missions, and between the Methodists and the administration reached a climax in the Land Commission which had been instituted to deal with the disputes engendered by the earlier cavalier alienation of land. The Commission was an indication that the administration had at last realised that it had responsibilities towards the islanders beyond the punishment of 'outrages' and the facilitation of European commercial development, and that it was prepared to do something about the abuses of the past. In the 1920s other measures were taken to improve the government of the inhabitants of the islands, whose needs, desires and welfare had previously been submerged in the European competition for power, prestige and wealth.
The history of the New Georgia Group from the late eighteenth century to the 1920s provides an alternative view of the contact process between a so-called 'primitive' society and the culture of the European to that sometimes given. Island society did not disintegrate as a result of European intrusion. For over a century the islanders largely controlled their relationship with the white man, and exploited it on their own terms. The imposition of colonial rule was not a remedy for disorders engendered by contact, but was responsible for much disorder itself.
The following lists detail the various land transactions that occurred in the New Georgia Group up to 1925. It is to be noted that many of the acreages given are approximations, as in numerous cases no survey was undertaken. The location of the land involved is indicated on Map VII, at the end of this Appendix.

A. FREEHOLD LAND

The information below has been obtained from the 'Red Book' and 'Deeds and Claims to Land' Books A and B in the Department of Lands and Surveys in Honiara, and from the WPHC Inwards Correspondence, the files of the Land Commission, and the Registers of Land Claims in the Western Pacific Archives.

Each entry is in the following form:

Location. Acreage. Date of sale.
Comments.

The statement of the price in money terms did not necessarily mean that the vendor was paid in cash. Frequently purchasers paid for the land in trade goods and then supplied an approximate cash value for registration. Entries have been arranged chronologically; all transactions noted occurred before 1926.

   F. Wickham. ?. ?.
   No deed known.

2. Nusa Zonga Is., Roviana Lagoon. c.3. 15 October 1881.
   Kelly, Williams & Woodhouse. Condo. £7.
   Transferred to the Methodist Mission by Kelly in 1902.
L. Nielsen. 'Lapa' (Lepe?). ?.
Sold to the Methodist Mission on 15 December 1902 for £2.

Later sold to T.J. Marks.

5. Ozama Is., off southeast Vella Lavella. 4.5. 13 February 1885.
J. McDonald & J. Davis. Pulo. £17/14/4 in goods.
Sold to G.J. Waterhouse, then to Edmund Pratt, then Husen & Co. (1908), mortgaged to Burns, Philp & Co. (1909), sold to Union Plantation & Trading Co.

6. Inazaru Is., off east Ranongga. c.6. 15 September 1885.
Edmund Pratt. Mattara. trade goods.

Sold to N. Wheatley, who later made it over to Sabe Vido.

8. 'A-ra-ro', Marovo Lagoon. c.5. 16 December 1892.
F. Wickham. Rakko. £6 in goods.
Unable to identify.

9. Tombi, Simbo. c.100. 31 December 1893.
Jean Pratt. Silanana. trade goods.
Sold to F. Green, and surveyed at 67.25 acres.

10. Logha Is., off Ghizo. c.300. 27 November 1899.
N. Wheatley. Songer. trade goods.
Sold to Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd.

Sold to T.R. MacBarron in 1922, and later sold to W.R. Carpenter & Co.

Methodist Mission. Ingava, Gumi, Mia. £15.
Acreage later listed as 176.

13. Njiruundu and Inia Is., off Mbava. c.6. 7 April 1903.
J. Binskin. Morrow, Tapola, Geroe. trade goods.

Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. Tula, Simbisama. £50.
Acreage given as 2,745 in 1926. It was before the Land Commission and reduced by 770 acres, and also apparently reduced for non-cultivation.

15. Kenelo, Rendova. c.1000. 7 April 1905.
F. Wickham. Brodie, Kia. £20.

F. Wickham. Tomi Tomi. £10 in goods.

   Methodist Mission. Soso, Sami. £10.

19. Simbo. c.100. 19 June 1907.
   Methodist Mission. Sojaviri. £10.

20. Kundu, Ranongga. 16.5. 21 June 1907.
   Methodist Mission. Sando. £5.

   J.F. Goldie. Suvo, Paikalasi. £75.
   Reduced to 2505 acres for non-cultivation.

22. Sikuni, Vella Lavella. 745. 9 July 1907.
   Methodist Mission. Soso, Sami, Magara, Timbe. £10.

   Methodist Mission. Moro, Qugasa, Lululu. £10 trade goods.

   Methodist Mission. Tokai, Borui. £3.

   Later sold to H. Clennett.

26. Tetepare Is. c.33220. Late 1907.
   Burns, Philp & Co. ?. £100.

27. Njuno, east Vella Lavella. 520. 4 May 1908.
   Acreage reduced to 415 by Land Commission. This acreage
   includes an adjacent block bought by Oien in 1910 —
   see below No.35.

    31 August 1908.
    Husen & Co. Soso, Sasa. £90 goods.
    Mortgaged to Burns, Philp & Co (1909); conveyed to
    H. Barnett (1910); conveyed to Union Plantation & Trading
    Co. (1910).
    Before Land Commission.

    H. Wickham. Reri, Lani. £20 trade.
    Later sold to Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd.

    19 November 1908.
    J. Binskin. Moro, Moroo. ?.

    J. Binskin. Morro. £30 trade goods.


46. Njorio, Vella Lavella. c.700. 3 April 1912.
H. Martin. Vallambulli, Londo. £100.

47. Nusa Siri Is., Vona Vona Lagoon. 68. 15 October 1912.


49. Ngarengare Is., Marovo Lagoon. c.80. 6 December 1912.
A.A. Austen. Lepi. £27/2/-.

50. Njoroveto, Vella Lavella. 143. 16 October 1913.
Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. Harry Troiro. £20.

B. CROWN LAND (LAND ACQUIRED BY THE GOVERNMENT UP TO 1925)

The following information has been obtained from the published
B.S.I.P. List of Lands Leased to March 1917 (Suva, 1917),
WPHC Inwards Correspondence, and the Registers of Crown
Conveyances in DLS.

The form of entries is as follows:

Location. Acreage. Date of Sale.
Vendor. Price.
Comments.

For many of the purchases the name of the vendor was not
recorded, and the date of sale unknown. In the latter cases,
the date of the first lease has been used to place the entry
in chronological order.

51. Gizo, Ghizo. 300. -
Occupied by Government as waste land. This was the
site of Gizo township, and the land was leased in
small allotments.

Tasso. £20.
5 acres leased to Malayta Co. for 10 years at £3 p.a.
(1910). Lease later cancelled.

?. £10.
Leased originally to R.F. Ericsen, then later to
T.J. Marks for 99 years.
   ?. £40.
   Leased originally to R.C. Smithers from 1 January 1912 for
   20 years. Then to T.J. Marks for 99 years.

55. Emu Harbour, Ranongga. 640. 1912.
   ?. £110.
   Leased to Emu Harbour Plantation Ltd. 1 July 1912 for
   99 years.

56. Emu Harbour, Ranongga. 160. 1912.
   ?. £25.
   Leased to P. Pratt from 1 July 1912 for 99 years.

57. Sakasakuru, Vella Lavella. 1250. 3 April 1912.
   Voki. £200 (paid in annual instalments of £10).
   1000 acres leased to Pybus and Collinson 1 July 1915
   for 99 years.

58. Goava (Ruruvaï), Vella Lavella. 640. 19 August 1912.
   Vilaila, Valu. £50 cash, plus boat (valued at £50).
   Leased to A.M. Turnbull 1 January 1913. Later leased
   to Ruruvaï Plantations Syndicate for 99 years.

   Zuruwumi, Wumuvulli, Hitu, Eki, Kebo. £45.
   Originally leased to F. & E. Abercrombie, then to
   W.R. Carpenter & Co. 1 July 1913 for 99 years.

60. Kukundu, Kolombangara. 2500. 23 October 1913.
   Gori, Kuki, Bombuli, Govira, Peuga. £100.
   Originally set aside as 'waste land'. Government forced
   to acquire it when it was discovered to be owned.
   Later leased to N. Wheatley (1850 acres) 1 January 1920
   for 99 years.

61. Seghe, southeast New Georgia. c.800. 6 December 1913.
   Ngatu, Nguru. £150.
   Originally leased to A. Austen and H.A. Markham, then
   solely to Markham 1 January 1920 for 99 years.

62. Timberina, Vangunu. 300. ?.
   ?. £50.
   Leased to R.F. Ericsen 1 January 1914. Later cancelled.

63. Mbareho Is., Kolo Lagoon. 50. ?.
   ?. £25.
   Leased to R.F. Ericsen; then to T.J. Marks 1 January 1914
   for 99 years.

64. Njai, southeast New Georgia. 800. ?.
   ?. £150.
   Leased to J. Clift 1 January 1914 for 99 years. Later
   cancelled.
65. Tinge Is., Kolo Lagoon. 120. ?.
   ?. £40.
   Leased to R.F. Ericsen; then to T.J. Marks 1 January 1914 for 99 years.

66. Nono, southeast New Georgia. 100. 7 February 1914.
   Wussi, Barutu. £20.
   Leased to W. Wilmot 1 January for 99 years. Later cancelled.

67. Viru, New Georgia. c. 400. 16 May 1914.
   Jomoro, Mianjama. £40.
   Leased to N. Wheatley; then to W.R. Carpenter & Co. 1 January 1915 for 99 years.

68. Tatama & Avavasa Is., Marovo Lagoon. 500. 2 June 1914.
   Mapuru. £80.
   Leased to G.L. Tacon 1 July 1914 for 99 years. Later cancelled.

   Vangora. £40.
   Leased to G.L. Tacon 1 July 1914 for 99 years. Later cancelled.

70. Ruruvai, Vella Lavella. 320. 21 August 1914.
   Rimbi, Valu. £50.
   Leased to Ruruvai Plantations Syndicate 1 January 1915 for 99 years.

71. Kai Pt., northeast Ranongga. 640. 26 November 1914.
   Vatabunduru. £100.
   Leased to Emu Harbour Plantations Ltd. 1 January 1915 for 99 years.

72. Ena, Ranongga. 300. ?.
   ?. £50.
   Leased to C.P. & H. Beck 1 January 1915 for 99 years.

73. Nianga, Vella Lavella. 500. ?.
   ?. £50.
   Leased to McEachran Bros. & Musgrave 1 January 1915 for 99 years.

74. Vangunu. 500. ?.
   ?. £60.
   Leased to R.F. Ericsen; then to T.J. Marks 1 January 1915 for 99 years.

75. Renard Cove, Rendova. c. 100. 13 March 1915.
   Diki. £20.
   Leased to F. Abercrombie; then to N. Wheatley 1 July 1915 for 99 years.

   Nenda. £64.
   Leased to Ruruvai Plantations Syndicate 1 July 1918 for 99 years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Date of Commencement</th>
<th>Lessor</th>
<th>Period of Lease</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Renard Cove, Rendova</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>4 April 1920</td>
<td>W. De C. Browne</td>
<td>99 years</td>
<td>£70</td>
<td>Leased to W. De C. Browne; then E. De C. Browne 1 January 1920 for 99 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Mindi Mindi Is., Marovo Lagoon</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12 April 1920</td>
<td>E. De C. Browne</td>
<td>99 years</td>
<td>£50</td>
<td>Leased to E. De C. Browne 1 January 1920 for 99 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Chemoho, Vangunu</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>16 July 1923</td>
<td>Lepi</td>
<td>99 years</td>
<td>£40</td>
<td>Leased to L. Austen 1 July 1920 for 99 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Mbatumbosi Is., Nono</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>A. Cant</td>
<td>99 years</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>Leased to A. Cant 1 January 1924 for 99 years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. LAND LEASED ON BEHALF OF NATIVE OWNERS (UP TO 1925)

The following information has been obtained from the List of Lands (1917) and WPHC Inwards Correspondence.

The form of the entries is as follows:


SR refers to the standard rent paid on cultivation leases. This was 3d per acre for the first five years, 6d per acre for the second five years, 3/- per acre for the eleventh to twentieth years, and 6/- per acre for the twenty-first to thirty-third year. Rent was then reassessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Date of Commencement</th>
<th>Lessor</th>
<th>Period of Lease</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Latitude Is., off Ghizo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 April 1911</td>
<td>E. Schultz</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>£4 p.a.</td>
<td>Expired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Ndovele, Vella Lavella</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 July 1912</td>
<td>S. Mackay</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>£2/4/- p.a.</td>
<td>Transferred to F. Hasselgren. Expired.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
84. Paraso, Vella Lavella. c.1. 1 July 1912.
G.H. Statham. 10 years. £4 p.a.
Cancelled.

85. Ranongga. c.1. 1 July 1912.
Beck & Green. 10 years. £4 p.a.
Cancelled.

86. Viru Harbour, New Georgia. 500. 1 January 1913.
Transferred to W.R. Carpenter & Co. 1918-22: £1/ 5/- p.a.
1922-25: £7/10/- p.a.

87. Viru Harbour, New Georgia. c.1. 1 January 1913.
R.G. Smithers. 10 years. £6 p.a.
Cancelled.

88. Samarae & Repi Is., Vona Vona Lagoon. 100. 1 January 1913.
N. Wheatley. 99 years. 1913-22: £2/2/- p.a. 1922-25:
£3/3/- p.a.
Transferred to Kindar Ltd.

89. Tangapanga Is., 10. 1 July 1913.
W. Anderson. 10 years. £5 p.a.
Cancelled. Location unknown.

M.V. Shorter. 99 years. 1916-20: 17/3 p.a. 1921-25:
£1/14/6 p.a.
Cancelled.

91. Haduani, Marovo Lagoon. 160. 1 July 1916.
A.A. Austen & H.A. Markham. 99 years. 1916-20: 4/- p.a.
1921-25: 8/- p.a.

H.T. Fairbrother. 99 years. 1916-20: 12/6 p.a. 1921-25:
£1/5/- p.a.

F. Hazelgren. 99 years. 1917-20: 5/- p.a. 1921-25:
10/- p.a.
Transferred to S. Marks.

1921-25: £1/10/- p.a.

95. Malasoga, Vella Lavella. 500. 1 July 1917.
R. Mckerlie. 99 years. SR.

96. Lambulambu Harbour, Vella Lavella. c.1. 1 January 1918.
Ruruvi Plantations Syndicate. 30 years. £2 p.a.

97. Kachi Kachi, Marovo Lagoon. 360. 1 January 1918.
G.H. Statham. 99 years. SR.
98. Kachi Kachi, Marovo Lagoon. 266. 1 January 1918. 
   G.H. Statham (for Marovo Syndicate). 99 years. SR.

99. Viru, New Georgia. 60. 1 January 1918. 
   Australasian Conference Association Ltd. (S.D.A.) 
   20 years. 10/- p.a.

100. Telina Is., Marovo Lagoon. 12. 1 January 1918. 
    S.D.A. 20 years. 10/- p.a.

101. Sasaghana, Marovo Lagoon. 10. 1 January 1918. 
    S.D.A. 20 years. 10/- p.a.

102. Ughele, Rendova. 11. 1 July 1918. 
    S.D.A. 20 years. 10/- p.a.

    S.D.A. 20 years. 10/- p.a.

104. Tomia, Vella Lavella. 230. 1 January 1922. 
    J. McEachran. 99 years. SR.

    S.D.A. 40 years. SR.

106. Mbolu Is., Ranongga. 10. 1 July 1925. 
    L.C. MacMahon. 20 years. £5/11/- p.a.

D. OCCUPATION LICENCES

     Granted to J. Binskin for 99 years from 1 May 1902.

108. Islets off Ghizo. 200 acres. 
     Granted to N. Wheatley for 99 years from 1 January 1903. 
     Transferred to Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. (1911).

109. Ghizo. 400 acres. 
     Granted to F. Wickham for 99 years from 1 January 1903. 
     Transferred to British Solomons Proprietary Ltd. (1909). 
     Transferred to F. Snowball (1909).

110. Ghizo. 14 acres. 
     Granted to Burns, Philp & Co. for 20 years from 1 January 
     1904.

111. Islets off Ghizo. 400 acres. 
     Granted to N. Wheatley for 99 years from 1 January 1908. 
     Transferred to Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. (1911).

112. Mbava (south). 1000 acres. 
     Granted to J. Binskin for 99 years from 1 April 1908.
113. THE LEVERS CONCESSION

a. Certificate of Occupation granted to the Pacific Islands Co. (1902) Ltd. for 189,490 acres in the B.S.I.P. for 99 years from 1 June 1903.
Estimated acreages for the New Georgia Group land included in the concession were:
Kolombangara: 70,000
New Georgia Is.: 22,780
Vona Vona Lagoon: 7,000
Ghizo: 5,000

**TOTAL: 104,780**

b. Certificate of Occupation dated 19 October 1914 granted to Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. for 200,000 acres in the B.S.I.P. for 999 years from 1 January 1904.
Acreages for New Georgia Group land were:
Kolombangara: 90,470
New Georgia Is.: 48,030
Vona Vona Lagoon: 14,910
Ghizo: 7,460

**TOTAL: 160,870**

c. Certificate of Occupation incorporated in King's Regulation No. 3 of 1921 (dated 4 February 1921) granted to Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. for 280,000 acres in the B.S.I.P. for 999 years from 1 January 1904.
Acreages for New Georgia Group land were:
Kolombangara: 148,010
New Georgia Is.: 46,330
Vona Vona Lagoon: 14,470
Ghizo: 7,190

**TOTAL: 216,000**

d. Certificate of Occupation signed and registered on 8 September 1931 incorporating the recommendations of the Land Commission, which reduced the New Georgia Group land included in the concession to the following:
Kolombangara: 107,830
New Georgia Is.: 20,470
Vona Vona Lagoon: 2,600
Ghizo: 6,920

**TOTAL: 138,090**

The total size of the Levers concession after the Land Commission was 154,480 acres.

E. CANCELLED, REJECTED AND DOUBTFUL CLAIMS TO FREEHOLD LAND

Deutsche, Handels & Plantagen Gesellschaft der. Sudsee Inseln zu Hamburg claimed possession.
Pacific Islands Co. purchased these 'rights' 5 August 1902 and surrendered them to the government.
b. West Ghizo. ?. 2 February 1886.
Deutsche, Handels. Mengo. trade goods.
As for (a).

c. Simbo. 1. 15 May 1887.
Edmund Pratt. Mavo. trade goods.
Not known if claim was confirmed.

Apparently not confirmed.

e. Sosolo, northwest New Georgia. c.500. 15 June 1893.
Edmund Pratt. Lipe, Kondo, Tuita, Koomba, Mea, Enbunbo,
Veto. trade goods.
Disallowed.

f. Ndovele, Vella Lavella. c.375. 11 July 1893.
Jean Pratt. Aniboy, Jonji. trade goods.
Union Plantation Co. may have acquired this claim, which
was then cancelled by the Land Commission.

g. 'Bui-ha' Is. & Pelasare Pvt., Vella Lavella. c.450.
16 July 1893.
Jean Pratt. Olalava, Biki. trade goods.
Claim disallowed.

h. Saraporo, Vella Lavella. ?. 21 July 1893.
Edmund Pratt. ?. £3/18/- goods.
Sold (with Ozama Is.) to Husen & Co. on 23 December 1908.
Claim rejected by Land Commission.

i. Narovo, Simbo. c.1. 27 January 1896.
Jean Pratt. Kea, Mate Sindara, Coupele. trade goods.
Not known if accepted.

Jean Pratt. Vomi. trade goods.
Not known if accepted.

k. Viru, New Georgia. 4350. 4 January 1905.
Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. Kokotona, Dulo, Tava,
Bara. £40 goods.
Disallowed by High Commissioner on 17 December 1910.

F. SUMMARY

The figures given below are necessarily approximations,
as many properties were not surveyed. They represent the
situation in 1925, but take into account the recommendations
of the Land Commission and surveys made after that date.
The New Georgia Group

Total Freehold land: 51,500 acres.
Total Crown Land: 13,370 acres.
Total 'Native leases': 4,530 acres.
Total Occupation Certificate land: 141,100 acres.
Total land purchased, appropriated or leased: 210,500 acres.
Percentage of land purchased, appropriated or leased to total land area of New Georgia Group: 16.4%

No attempt has been made to exhaustively check the figure for the Protectorate as a whole in the same manner as was done for the New Georgia Group. However, as a basis for the following comparison, the figures given in the 'Memorandum: Information desired by the High Commissioner', dated 14 May 1925 (WPHC No. 1065 of 1925) have been used. These figures use the 1914 Levers Certificate, do not take the Land Commission's recommendations into account and represent the situation as it was in 1924. Adapting the New Georgia Group figures above to these factors gives the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Georgia Group</th>
<th>B.S.I.P.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total land area (square miles)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>11,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Freehold land (acres)</td>
<td>50,500</td>
<td>188,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Crown Land (acres)</td>
<td>13,370</td>
<td>39,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 'Native leases' (acres)</td>
<td>4,520</td>
<td>12,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Occupation Certificate land (acres)</td>
<td>163,870</td>
<td>313,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total land purchased, appropriated or leased (acres)</td>
<td>232,260</td>
<td>552,521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Georgia Group land expressed as a percentage of that for all B.S.I.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Georgia Group</th>
<th>B.S.I.P.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total area</td>
<td>17.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freehold</td>
<td>26.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown</td>
<td>34.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Native leases'</td>
<td>37.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation Certificate</td>
<td>52.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total land purchased, appropriated or leased</td>
<td>42.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of land purchased, appropriated or leased to the total land area of the New Georgia Group was 18.14; the corresponding figure for all of the B.S.I.P. was 7.53%.
Land owned and leased by Europeans

- **Dark area**: Land owned and leased by Europeans up to 1925
- **Light grey**: Levers concession (1931 certificate)
- **Light area**: Levers concession land included in the 1921 certificate but withdrawn after the Lands Commission

The numbers refer to the list in Appendix I.

**MAP VI** The New Georgia Group – Land
APPENDIX II
PLANTATIONS AND LABOURERS IN THE NEW GEORGIA GROUP

Under the Labour Amendment Regulation of 1923 a medical officer was required to submit a monthly list of plantation estates with the average daily number of labourers, together with details of any illnesses and injuries. The Medical Districts for the Protectorate were defined and proclaimed in September 1924. The Gizo District (Medical) included all of the New Georgia Group, plus some islands in the Manning Straits. The list of plantations and labourers below has been drawn from the Quarterly Medical Returns for the first half of 1925 (found in WPHC No.1191 of 1925). The number of labourers given for each estate is the monthly average from January to June 1925, to the nearest whole number. The list is arranged in descending order of number of labourers employed. The form of each entry is as follows:

Name of Estate. Location. Number of labourers. Employer. Form of tenure. Date of commencement of plantation. Comments.

It is to be noted that the exact date of commencement for most of the plantations is not known; in these cases the year of purchase or first year of lease has been given, for example, 'After 1916'. The abbreviations used are:

F Freehold
C Crown Land leasehold
N Native Land leasehold
O Occupation Certificate

The map at the end of the Appendix indicates the location of each plantation.
1. Kenelo, Rendova. 84.
    Gizo Solomons Plantations Ltd. F. After 1905.
    This land was apparently purchased from F. Wickham, who
    had bought it in 1905-6. The company also owned Mbarakihi
    Is., in the Roviana Lagoon, on which it had a plantation
    and which was also worked by the labourers from Kenelo.
    (Mbarakihi. F. After 1910).

2. Stanmore. Kolombangara. 56.
    Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. O. October 1912.

    Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. O. December 1912.

    Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. O. March 1912.

5. Lilihina. Marovo Lagoon. 47.
    T.J. Marks. F. After 1885.
    Marks also held 99 year Crown leases on Mahoro Is.
    (After 1912), Karanohu Is. (After 1912), Tinge Is. (After
    1914), Mbareho Is. (After 1914), and a block on Vangunu
    (After 1915). All of these were in the Marovo Lagoon
    locality and would have been worked by the labour based
    on Lilihina.

    Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. F. After 1905.
    The company had cultivated about 450 acres by 1911. Also
    included in this estate were the neighbouring islands of
    Kukurana, Tambusolo, and Mbarambuni, all freehold. Work
    on these had begun about 1911.

7. Mundi Mundi, Vella Lavella. 40.
    Associated Plantations Ltd. F. After 1907.

8. Tetipari. 40.
    Solomon Islands Development Co. F. After 1908.
    By 1921, 907 acres had been cultivated by the company, a
    Burns Philp concern.

    Union Plantation and Trading Co. Ltd. F. After 1908.
    The company also had freehold title on Simbilando, Vella
    Lavella and the islet of Ozama, in the neighbourhood of
    Liapari.

    J. Binskin. O. After 1902.
    Binskin also had freehold title on four islets near Mbava,
    Njuruundu and Inia (After 1902), Sirikazo and Ziolo Undu
    (After 1908), and a block at Njorio, Vella Lavella
    (After 1909).

    Burns Philp & Co. Ltd. O. After 1903.
    The company also held the lease on the government plantation
    at Gizo for some years (1917-21).
   Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. 0. 1909.

   Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. 0. March 1915.

   Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. 0. 1908.

   Kindar Ltd. F. After 1911.
   The company also held Samarae and Repi Is. in the Vona
   Vona Lagoon (N. After 1913).

   Ruruvai Plantations Syndicate. C. After 1914.
   The Syndicate had two other crown leases on Vella Lavella,
   at Goava (After 1913) and Vorambari (after 1918).

   Emu Harbour Plantation Ltd. C. After 1912.
   The company also held the crown lease for land at Kia Pt.,
   Ranongga (After 1914).

18. Simbo. 23.
   Pybus & Collinson. F. After 1893.
   This old plantation was on land originally bought by Jean
   Pratt, and later sold to F. Green, who appears to have
   leased it to Pybus and Collinson. The latter also held
   a crown lease for land at Koriovuku near Emu Harbour,
   Ranongga (After 1912), and at Sakasukuru, Vella Lavella
   (After 1915).

   H. Wickham. F. After 1910.
   Wickham lived on the islet of Hombu Peka, which had been
   owned by his family since the 1870s; he also had freehold
   title of two other islets in the Vona Vona Lagoon, Nusa
   Siri and Kolo Hite (both after 1912).

   Levers Pacific Plantations Ltd. F. After 1900.
   Levers also held an Occupation Certificate for the other
   islets surrounding Ghizo. These had been developed by
   Norman Wheatley in the early 1900s.

    R. McKerlie. N. After 1917.

    Jurio Plantation Ltd. ?. ?.

23. Liangai. Vella Lavella. 16.
    S. Marks. N. After 1917.
N. Wheatley. F. After 1910.
Wheatley also had freehold title for several islands in the Roviana Lagoon: Hombuhombu, Karapata Lapata and Hite, Hopei and Himbi (all 1910). He had crown leases for land at Kukundu, Kolombangara (After 1920) and Renard Cove, Rendova (After 1915).

Methodist Mission. F. After 1902.
This labour was also used on the plantations of the Mission's many other freehold properties.

H. Martin. F. After 1911.
Martin also had freehold land at Njorio, Vella Lavella (After 1912).

S. Ashley. F. After 1913.
This property was owned and let by Levers.

H.A. Markham. C. After 1920.
Markham also had land at Haduani, Marovo Lagoon (N. After 1916).

F. Green & Co.
It is not known if Green was operating a plantation at this time, or employing the labour at his store and depot at Gizo.

A.A. Austen. F. After 1912.
Austen also had land at Haduani (N. After 1916).

These leases were held by W.R. Carpenter & Co.

32. Lokuru (Rendard Cove). Rendova. 9.
W. De C. Browne. C. After 1920.

C.P. & H. Beck. C. After 1915.

34. Hamerai (Rovana), Marovo Lagoon. 7.
Mrs Newall. F. early 1900s.
This property was owned by W.R. Carpenter & Co., who purchased it from Wheatley, who had originally begun cultivation.

H. Clennett. F. After 1907.
   McEachran & Musgrave. C. After 1915.
   Also had land at Njorio (N. After 1917).

37. Batu Bosse. Nono. 5.
   H. Cant. C. After 1924.

   L. Austen. C. After 1920.

   Mrs Statham. N. After 1918.
Plantations

- Plantation employing labour in the mid 1920s.
- Numbers refer to the list in Appendix II.
APPENDIX III

GOVERNMENT OFFICERS STATIONED IN THE NEW GEORGIA GROUP TO 1925

(in alphabetical order)

BARLEY, Jack Charles
Born 4 December 1887. Attended Oxford University where he obtained an M.A. Came to the B.S.I.P. in December 1911 as a Cadet. From 1 November 1912 to 21 February 1913 was Acting District Magistrate at Gizo. On 22 October 1913 was appointed Acting District Officer in the Marovo Lagoon. In July 1914 he was sent to Lord Howe Is. (Ontong Java), and on the 12 February 1915 was appointed District Officer at Gizo, a position he held until 13 October 1919 when he was transferred to the Eastern Solomons. However, he was not at Gizo from 27 July 1915 to 8 March 1917 (special duty at Lord Howe Is. and leave), from 19 April to 9 September 1917 (Acting Resident Commissioner), and from 10 August to 8 September 1918 (leave). He was once more appointed District Officer, Gizo on 1 July 1925 and served there until 1928. In 1933 he became the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.

BLAKE, William Vere Jardine
Born 1 February 1892. Came to the B.S.I.P. in 1921 as Sub-Inspector of Constabulary. He was appointed Acting District Officer at Gizo from 6 October to 23 November 1922.

CRICHLOW, Nathaniel
Born 25 January 1889. Came to the B.S.I.P. as Medical Officer in 1914. From 23 July to 7 December 1915 he was Medical
Officer and Acting District Officer at Gizo. From 5 January to 11 October 1925 he was Medical Officer, Gizo District, during which, from 8 January to 6 July, he was also Acting District Officer.

CURRY, Horatio Douglas
Born 30 April 1893. Came to the B.S.I.P. in March 1915 as a Cadet. He was Acting District Officer at Gizo from 25 May to 24 June 1915, from 6 December 1915 to 8 March 1917, and from 19 April to 9 September 1917. He was transferred to Tanganyika in 1922.

EDGE-PARTINGTON, Thomas William
Born 28 August 1883. From December 1896 to March 1898 he attended Dartmouth naval school. From February 1899 to June 1902 he served on HMS Orlando. He joined the Royal Naval College but failed to pass for Lieutenant in June 1904. He met Mahaffy in London and decided to come to the Solomons to take up planting. He stayed with Mahaffy at Gizo for several months and when the latter left for Fiji he was appointed Peace Officer in Charge at Gizo. In December 1904 he was made a District Magistrate, and in August 1905 a Deputy Commissioner. His period at Gizo was interrupted from August 1905 to January 1906 (when he was Acting Resident Commissioner), from 13 May to 20 July 1908 (sick leave), and from 1 June to 12 August 1909 (vacation leave). In September 1909 he was transferred to Malaita, and in 1915 he resigned.
FRANCIS, Clifford Claude
Born 10 January 1889. After service with the Government of Fiji he came to the Solomons in June 1912 as a Cadet. On 13 October 1919 he replaced Barley as District Officer, Gizo. Apart from a period as Acting Resident Commissioner (6 October to 23 November 1922), he remained at Gizo until 20 October 1923, when he took leave. In 1925 he was seconded to the New Hebrides.

GILLAN, Frank
Came to the Protectorate in February 1900 as provisional Assistant to the Resident Commissioner. From 21 September 1900 to 31 January 1901 he was Acting Officer in Charge at Gizo, after which he left the Protectorate.

HAZELTON, William Henry
Arrived in the B.S.I.P. as Assistant to the Resident Commissioner in January 1901. He was Acting Officer in Charge at Gizo from 10 December 1901 to 14 March 1902, and from 21 January to 7 June 1903, when he left the Protectorate because of ill-health. He returned in October 1903, and appears to have resumed his position as Acting Officer in Charge at Gizo. He resigned on 8 April 1904 to go into trading.

HILL, Robert Brodhurst
Came to the B.S.I.P. in 1909 after having served with the Army in India. He was appointed District Magistrate at Gizo, began work there in December 1909, and continued in that position until 13 February 1915, when he was transferred to
Tulagi. Hill was absent from Gizo (on leave) on the following occasions: 8 February to 17 April 1911, 1 November 1912 to 21 February 1913, 19 February to 13 April 1914.

MacDERMOT, ?
Born 1869. Spent sixteen years in Australia cattle droving and fruit growing before coming to the Protectorate. From 16 March to 10 June 1903 he held a provisional and temporary appointment as mate of the Government vessel Lahloo. On 15 June 1903 he was made Acting Officer in Charge at Gizo, and seems to have remained there until Hazelton’s return in October 1903. He resigned in June 1904.

MAHAFFY, Arthur William
Born 22 October 1869. Educated at Marlborough and Oxford, where he obtained a B.A. in 1891. Spent four years as a subaltern in the Royal Munster Fusiliers, and in 1895 was appointed a Government Agent and Resident Officer in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. In December 1897 he accepted a temporary appointment as Assistant to the Resident Commissioner of the B.S.I.P., and arrived in the islands in January 1898. In December 1899 he was stationed at Gizo as Resident Magistrate and a Deputy Commissioner of the Western Pacific. He retained this position until September 1904, when he was appointed Colonial Secretary of Fiji. Mahaffy was absent from Gizo on leave on the following occasions: 21 September 1900 to 4 February 1901, 10 December 1901 to 14 March 1902, 23 January 1903 to 26 May 1904.
MIDDENWAY, Arthur
Born 26 February 1878. Served with Government of Fiji from 1913 to 1921, when he was appointed a Deputy Commissioner for the B.S.I.P. On 10 December 1923 he was appointed District Officer, Gizo, and remained there until 8 January 1925 when he took leave. He was transferred to Isabel when he returned in September 1925.

PATTISON, Charles Richard Maitland
Born 8 November 1879. After previous service in Fiji he was appointed a District Medical Officer in the B.S.I.P. in January 1923. On the 23 March 1923 he was stationed at Gizo as District Medical Officer. He remained there until 5 January 1925, when he took leave. He was later removed because of excessive drinking.

SYKES, A. Tasman
Born 29 March 1864. Arrived in B.S.I.P. in December 1906 as a Labour Inspector (probationary). He was Acting Officer in Charge at Gizo from 13 May to 20 July 1908, and from 18 October to 28 November 1909. He was suspended, and then dismissed, for drunkenness in 1910.

WALSH, Allen W.
Born c.1870. On 27 April 1910 he was stationed in the Marovo Lagoon as a Police Officer. He took leave from 6 September to 12 November 1911, and in February 1912 was transferred to Malaita. He resigned in 1913.
There are no reliable figures for the population of the islands prior to the late 1920s. After having spent some time in the area in 1893-4, Somerville estimated the population of the Roviana Lagoon to be between three and four thousand people. Hocart estimated the population of Simbo to be about 400 in 1908. These appear to be the only attempts to calculate numbers based on observation, rather than wild guesswork. In the late 1920s the administration began to keep tally with births and deaths and made rudimentary counts of population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Births</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>6,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>6,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>6,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>6,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>7,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7,866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first detailed description of the population and its distribution was in 1930; the District Report for that year gave the following figures:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of Villages</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North New Georgia, Marovo Lagoon, Vangunu &amp; Nggatokae</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>1,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vella Lavella</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>1,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roviana Lagoon</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolombangara &amp; Vona Vona Lagoon</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simbo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranongga</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rendova</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3,478</td>
<td>2,997</td>
<td>6,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1930 total of 6,475 represented an increase of 145 over the 1929 figure (6,330), while the natural increase for 1930 had been 55. The extra 90 were explained as being the result of the return to the Group of local islanders who had been elsewhere in the Protectorate, and of emigration from Choiseul.

In 1931 the first proper census was taken. This produced the following figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males over 16</th>
<th>Females over 16</th>
<th>Males 6 to 16</th>
<th>Females 6 to 16</th>
<th>Males under 6</th>
<th>Females under 6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>6,424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Census also enumerated the occupation and religion of all males over 16:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Employees</td>
<td>1,268 Methodists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Labourers</td>
<td>630 Adventists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boats Crew</td>
<td>6 Pagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Servants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>1,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan Priest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convicts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 1931 Census was by no means entirely accurate. Not only are there inconsistencies in the figures, but it also appears that a considerable number of people were not counted. In 1935 the District Officer made a careful check of the population. The net increase (births over deaths) from 1932 to 1935 had been 303, which when added to the 1931 Census total of 6,424, gave a result of 6,727. In 1935 the District Officer counted 7,203 people in the Group, and concluded that the Census had missed about five hundred people. However, he does not seem to have made any attempt to determine the extent of emigration to the New Georgia Group in the 1932-5 period; this may have accounted for some of the discrepancy.

Despite its inaccuracies, the 1931 Census is the only detailed pre-war description of the distribution of the population of the Group: it lists each village in the islands and gives the number of its inhabitants. The following table gives this information. The numbers given to each village have been duplicated on Map VIII as a guide to their location. The asterisk (*) indicates that the exact location of the village is not known, although its general location has been given and it has been placed on Map VIII accordingly. The religious adherence of each village has been indicated by the letters M (Methodist), A (Adventist) and P (Pagan).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Location (Island)</th>
<th>Pop.</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Penjuku</td>
<td>Nggatokae</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sombiro</td>
<td>Nggatokae</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kavolavata</td>
<td>Nggatokae</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mbiche</td>
<td>Nggatokae</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mbili</td>
<td>Minjanga</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mbopo</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Hinatakisi</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Saira</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Location (Island)</td>
<td>Pop.</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kokoana</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Jopulopa</td>
<td>*Vangunu</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Mamburana</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Tombulu</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Mbisuana</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Cheke</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Matagaga</td>
<td>*Vangunu</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Patutiva</td>
<td>Vangunu</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Telina</td>
<td>Telina Island</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Huleo</td>
<td>Huleo Island</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Mbambata</td>
<td>Marovo Island</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Sasaghana</td>
<td>Marovo Island</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Viru</td>
<td>SE New Georgia</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Limbo</td>
<td>SE New Georgia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Govaro Makato</td>
<td>SE New Georgia</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Nono</td>
<td>SE New Georgia</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Chuchulu</td>
<td>SE New Georgia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Mbambana</td>
<td>*SE New Georgia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Mbuini</td>
<td>Mbuini Tusu</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Mburongo</td>
<td>Mburongo Island</td>
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<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Keru</td>
<td>Keru Island</td>
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<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Mbuombokuko</td>
<td>Ramata</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Tusumine</td>
<td>Tusumine Island</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Kolumbaghea</td>
<td>N New Georgia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Mase</td>
<td>N New Georgia</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Menakasapa</td>
<td>N New Georgia</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Hambere</td>
<td>Kolombangara</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Vavanga</td>
<td>Kolombangara</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Ghatere</td>
<td>Kolombangara</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Hunda</td>
<td>Kolombangara</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
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<td>Kolombangara</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Nusa Simbo</td>
<td>Nusa Simbo</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Patusoghara</td>
<td>Simbo</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Ove</td>
<td>Simbo</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Karivara</td>
<td>Simbo</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Tapurai</td>
<td>Simbo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Masuru</td>
<td>Simbo</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Kundu</td>
<td>Ranongga</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Lungga</td>
<td>Ranongga</td>
<td>214</td>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>Mburi Mondo</td>
<td>Ranongga</td>
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<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Sambala</td>
<td>*Ranongga</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Kumbokota</td>
<td>Ranongga</td>
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<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Sosolokamu</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Ndovele)</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Kaukoasi</td>
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<tr>
<td>53.</td>
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<td>Vella Lavella (Ndovele)</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>Tambama</td>
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<td>57.</td>
<td>Paraso</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Ndovele)</td>
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<tr>
<td>58.</td>
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<td>59.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60.</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Niaroval</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
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<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>Eleoteve</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>Maravari</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Pakeveto</td>
<td>*Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Location (Island)</td>
<td>Pop.</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>Mbarakoma</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Vonunu</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Esorolando</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>Sambora</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Mbilua)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.</td>
<td>Supato</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Supato)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.</td>
<td>Mandejavanga</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Njorio)</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>Bangarangara</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Njorio)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>Timbala</td>
<td>Vella Lavella (Iringgila)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>Mbomboe</td>
<td>Kohinggo</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>Sambana</td>
<td>Vonavona</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>Mamburana</td>
<td>Mamburana, Vonavona Lagoon</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td>Sipisai</td>
<td>Sipisai, Vonavona Lagoon</td>
<td>111</td>
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<td>77.</td>
<td>Londo Maho</td>
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<td>112</td>
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<td>78.</td>
<td>Kekehe</td>
<td>SE New Georgia (Munda)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
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<td>79.</td>
<td>Ndunde</td>
<td>SE New Georgia (Munda)</td>
<td>216</td>
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<td>80.</td>
<td>Kakia</td>
<td>Kakia, Roviana Lagoon</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>81.</td>
<td>Nusa Roviana</td>
<td>Nusa Roviana, Roviana Lagoon</td>
<td>107</td>
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<tr>
<td>82.</td>
<td>Ndoki Ndoki</td>
<td>Bethlehem, Roviana Lagoon</td>
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<td>83.</td>
<td>Mbaraulu</td>
<td>Honiavasa, Roviana Lagoon</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Nusa Hope</td>
<td>Nusa Hope, Roviana Lagoon</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>85.</td>
<td>Saikile</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>86.</td>
<td>Mujama</td>
<td>*E Roviana Lagoon</td>
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<td>87.</td>
<td>Vanga</td>
<td>Rendova (Ughele)</td>
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<td>92.</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Villages (1931 census)

- Village site
- Location uncertain.

Numbers refer to the list in Appendix IV

MAP VIII  The New Georgia Group — Villages
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