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THE KWATO COMMUNITY : MISSION  
INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION AND PLANTATIONS

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What did bother Abel, in 1906, was the Royal Commission's report which advocated the encouragement of white settlers, the declaration of all native land as crown land and the enlargement of the native labour system, for the purpose of rapid economic development.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Murray, who had castigated Barton so severely during the Commission, had also expressed views which indicated his sympathy with such recommendations. As Abel feared,<sup>2</sup> Murray was eventually appointed Lieutenant Governor. For the first few years of the twentieth century, Abel was obliged to push his industrial training policies against a background of uncertain government policies, in-fighting in the public service, missionaries' objections to being involved in trade and the tendency of white settlers or transients to treat Papuans as units of labour with no rights to the fruits of their own country's resources.

Abel returned from furlough in England in 1901 with the L.M.S. Foreign Secretary's blessing to continue with his industrial work. He had also received an offer of £150 to buy a new sawmill, from friends in Sheffield, one of whom was an LMS Director, Talbot Wilson.<sup>3</sup>

The LMS Australian agent Joseph King was also very active in seeking funds for the Society, and a great piece of luck came Abel's way when King persuaded J.H. Angas, a South Australian pioneer pastoralist and well known philanthropist<sup>4</sup> to donate a substantial sum for an industrial mission in New Guinea. King, realising that by being specific he would be more persuasive, used Kwato as an illustration of what could be done. Angas thereupon promised Kwato £200 a year for five years.<sup>5</sup>

Abel was overjoyed and bought materials for a workshop.

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1. Royal Commission 1906 op cit.
  2. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, 4 Sept. 1907, PL 11. Copy in AP 1.21.
  3. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, 5 July. 1901, PL 11.
  4. Sally O'Neill. "John Howard Angas" Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne, University Press 1969, Vol 3, p. 36-38
  5. J. King to R.W. Thompson, Melbourne, 4 Feb. 1902, AL 17.

A larger gift was a further £10,000 which King also obtained from J.H. Angas in 1903.<sup>6</sup> It is unlikely that King was the sole persuader. Le Hunte, the former Administrator of Papua who by this time was governor of South Australia claimed credit. Writing to Abel about Angas' death a few months later he said,

He came to see me twice here and (privately)  
I think the LMS owe that last £10,000 he so  
liberally gave, in part to me for it followed  
very shortly after a talk we had together about  
your & Schlencker's good works.<sup>7</sup>

In order to keep the industrial work separate from religious work, the money and work provided by Angas' first gift was called Angas Industrial Mission. (AIM). King visited New Guinea in March-April 1905, partly to discuss how the new bequest was to be used. Angas had left the decision entirely to King, who had wanted the directors to make a ruling but they insisted the PDC should decide. There was a long discussion at the meeting and as usual, it was Abel who was full of ideas on how to spend it, while nobody else had any concrete proposals. Lawes did suggest that a lay missionary, who was a skilled mechanic, could be appointed to go around all the stations.<sup>8</sup> When Abel spoke he suggested that £5000 be sent aside to develop the industrial branches. Kwato could be brought into the general scheme under a sub-committee. The money would only be spent as the need arose. The stations at Moru and Isuleilei should form agricultural departments so as to give Papuans some idea of scientific gardening. The Port Moresby and Orokolo districts could work together along the lines of the Hiri.<sup>9</sup> As 30,000 pots had been sent to the Gulf the previous year, and

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6. J. King to R.W. Thompson, Melbourne, 21 November 1903. AL 17.

7. G. Le Hunte to C.W. Abel, letter enclosed in C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Kwato, 30 July 1904. PL 10.

8. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, 4 April 1905, PL 11.

9. The Hiri was the trading voyage undertaken by the Motu people of Port Moresby area, on large sailing canoes (lakatois) to the Gulf district each year. They were away for several months. Motu pottery was exchanged for sago and timber.

the Hiri disrupted the work of both districts, here was an industry to hand that could be greatly improved. People could be taught better pottery making for example. The Mailu could develop a weaving industry, making hats, baskets and other things. Kerepuna could set up a printing plant.<sup>10</sup>

Despite all this general good will at the meeting, most of the ideas did not in fact eventuate. Once the missionaries were away from this good fellowship their own pressing needs seemed always to occupy their attention. An industrial sub-committee was formed, but it continually bogged down with indecision. Abel, always impatient with committee indecision, never allowed it to curb his own activities.

At this point, let us examine in more detail what Abel had actually been advocating with regard to the Industrial Mission question since 1901. The scheme was that firstly, Kwato be recognised as an industrial mission, secondly that a grant of £200 a year be made for three years, thirdly that Abel should employ a carpenter or boatbuilder with this grant, and fourthly that the scheme should be reviewed at the end of three years.<sup>11</sup> This was before Mr. Angas came into the picture.

Abel had sent the directors a further ten point plan early in 1902... as soon as he got back with Angas' first £200 he got on with erecting a workshop and building a whaleboat. He planned next year's £200 to build a slip and buy more tools for the workshop. Boatbuilding was a very good occupation for skilful boys, but he wanted something simpler for the less skilful and had decided on a timber industry. Samples of timber had been sent to Sydney for testing and the result showed that a saw mill plant was needed.<sup>12</sup> Six weeks later he sent photos of the completed boats which had brought further orders from Samarai.<sup>13</sup> Lawes continued to worry about all this. "I am afraid

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10. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, 4 April 1905, PL 11.

11. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, 25 June 1901, PL 11.

12. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Kwato, 31 July 1902, PL 9.

13. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Kwato, 15 Sept 1902, PL 9.

lest our workshops and trading stations obscure the cross and our message of love and life be stultified.<sup>14</sup>

The directors seemed to be willing enough to go along with boatbuilding, carpentry and the like, but when it came to trading copra they balked.<sup>15</sup>

Abel put up a spirited argument!

I cannot see how I can help my district - apart from Kwato - without copra. For some reason or other you ban this innocent thing as if it were opium. I regard copra as exactly the labour I want to start upon with unskilled labourers. It is something everybody can learn to do.<sup>16</sup>

What difference was there in selling a boat for £3 profit and selling and copra? The only actual competition he had were the murderers of McLean, and Joe-one-arm who had allowed a white man to rape a small girl. It was in fact missionary service of the highest order to provide such competition. "I'll sweep the Bay clear of these blackguards in three years if you don't hinder me."

He went on I rather itch to go deeply into the question of competition with white men. In the light of a white Australia, do the Directors really take stand against our converts competing in their own country with foreigners?<sup>17</sup>

The PDC was held at Vatorata in March 1903, and Abel by this time had marshalled all his arguments for an industrial mission in a long paper he read to the Committee The Aim and Scope of an Industrial Branch to the New Guinea Mission. Some of his arguments were repetitions of those already given above. Here they were gathered together for all to see, comment on and discuss. At the outset he emphasised he would use Kwato as an example,

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14. W.G. Lawes to R.W. Thompson, Catorata, 1 Aug 1902, PL 9.

15. R.W. Thompson to C.W. Abel, 19 December 1902, SOL 23.

16. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, 7 February 1903, PL 10.

17. Ibid.

but the paper referred to the whole mission. The New Guinea Mission was not the only one that needed an industrial branch. India, a society that ostracised its Christian community, had needed it. In New Guinea natural indolence was encouraged by Christian restrictions, and replacements were needed for these prohibitions. He compared the planting of a good seed in barren soil to planting Christianity in a savage society where it had no chance to flower. Dr. Barnardo and General Booth had recognised this by paying attention to the degraded environment of the people they wished to help, and the principle was the same in New Guinea. "It is as much part of our work to till the ground, and make it fit to receive the seed, as it is to plant the seed itself."<sup>18</sup> Here Abel declared, that he would have preferred to come to New Guinea as a lay missionary and that he still felt that "reverend" was a useless title. "We are not here to make savages religious: we are here to make these weak, foolish, superstitious-bound people, strong Christian men."<sup>19</sup> If working with tools is a better way of achieving this than the singing of hymns, then it should not be looked down upon. He questioned the "cut-and-dried" ideas they had brought from England regarding methodology because these methods had been successful elsewhere. For instance, the Mays<sup>20</sup> merely engendered competition amongst the people. The gifts given were by no means spontaneous. £250 from Port Moresby two years ago only indicated a prosperous community, not that the people were spiritually advanced.

Abel went on to ask whether the system should be a comprehensive one for the whole mission, or whether the advancement should be as and where indicated. He preferred the latter alternative. Secondly he asked whether the control should be under the missionary or an independent organisation, and he preferred missionary control. The point about the last is that a smart businessman may

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18. p 8.

19. p 11.

20. The annual collection of funds from church members.

cause friction with a missionary and the first consideration was still the moral character of the people. By supervising his own people as they worked, he could be perpetually developing their characters at the same time.

Mere hard work will never make men morally stronger or better. It is the application of Christian teaching to the useful, industrious life, which is going to regenerate our young people.<sup>21</sup>

If they as missionaries took any notice of the frequent criticisms of people of low character who called them "canting sharks" they were not worthy of their calling to work for God. He disposed of the arguments that trading exposed the missionary himself to a demoralising influence, and that the missionary had not time for both sorts of work. It was quite possible to arrange priorities. For instance, how important was copper-plate writing and the parroting of multiplication tables in a society which had little practical application for them?

Having stated the aims, the rest of the paper dealt with scope and is nearly all about Kwato. He outlined the work done with the AIM since they had started in May 1902, less than a year before. They had built six boats, repaired one for Isuleilei and taken apart and rebuilt two English houses. The six boats on hand were valued at £40. The profit on three dinghies, which had been special orders was £12.15.6 but for the LMS it was cost price plus labour. For example, Saville's boat of £15.0.0 came to £9.3.8, nearly £6 saved. Local businessmen, Bunting and Whitten had expressed satisfaction with the quality of the work. Five Papuans were engaged in the work, four of them, excepting Josia, apprentices. They had recently started making furniture. He was trying to keep AIM funds separate from LMS so the store dealt only in money, not trade, and profit went back into AIM capital.

All this was fine for Kwato island itself but in the district the only possibility for industrial work was copra. The Directors and PDC were against it but Abel disagreed as the profits would go to AIM funds not LMS funds.

The Directors wish us to engage in no trading operations which teach no new art. So far as my district is concerned, copra-making is a new art. Hitherto... the traders... bought the nuts, and did the skilled work themselves. Making coconut into copra is a very simple art certainly, and this is exactly why it meets our necessities amongst people, who can at present only engage in the simplest possible occupations.<sup>22</sup>

Abel's converts did not wish to trade with such men as Lindsay and Morley. They did not wish to go anywhere near them. The directors were both misinformed and prejudiced against a clean industry.

Under our industrial branches, there should be no truckling to the miserable, selfish, unchristian sentiment, which has recently painted Australia white. If we do not boldly champion the cause of these natives, whom we are here to befriend and help in every way, and insist upon their right, in their own country, to competition with the white man, we shall lend our hand to their destruction and a white New Guinea will, at no distant date, reward our pains.<sup>23</sup>

The PDC passed a resolution congratulating Abel on his AIM work, and asking the directors to waive their objection to copra. Dr. Lawes's was the only dissenting voice and that was recorded as only about the copra.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, the directors were still not moved to approve of copra trading though they had the paper printed and circulated.<sup>25</sup>

It must not be thought that Abel's ideas were unique for his day and age. It is patently evident that he read widely in his subject and selected

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22. p 43.

23. p 52.

24. p 57.

25. R.W. Thompson to C.W. Abel, 11 March 1904. SOL 24. A copy of the printed paper is in Papua Odds Box 2 and is not on microfilm. The one in Papua Letters is the handwritten one of 57 pages. It is not Abel's writing. Abel added in his own hand the NGDC resolution regarding it at the end.

from world trends of thought concerning the uplift of disadvantaged people, methods that could be suitably introduced to his own situation at Kwato. One book that impressed him was Booker T. Washington's autobiography entitled Up from Slavery<sup>26</sup> published in 1901. Abel read it in 1904 and discussed it at length with his students.<sup>27</sup> He began to correspond with Washington<sup>28</sup> and much later, in 1923, Abel published a small pamphlet, mainly for American circulation, called Up from Savagery.<sup>29</sup>

The LMS Home Secretary, A.N. Johnson visited Papua in 1908 and reported that the Industrial Missions in New Guinea are very varied and widespread. They include coconut planting and making of copra, manufacture of sago, rubber-tree planting, lime burning, lace making and plaiting, cabinet making, boat and house building, and a very complete saw mill, admirably managed by natives. They are found in some form at nearly all the stations.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile Frederick Walker branched out into christian industry. Gathering support in England, he founded Papuan Industries Ltd. which was to be a Christian trading company, and by January 1905, he resigned once more from the LMS to become the managing director of Papuan Industries.<sup>31</sup> One might think that the missionaries in Papua would applaud this way out of the difficult situation regarding an industrial branch, but far from it.<sup>32</sup> Abel, surprisingly was more against it than anyone, except perhaps Lawes. Abel did not want to have Papuan Industries in his District.<sup>33</sup>

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26. Booker T. Washington Up from Slavery N.Y., Doubleday, 1901. Reprint in the Booker T. Washington Papers, Vol.1. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1972.
  27. C.W. Abel. Excerpts from diaries, 16 and 17 July, 1904, op cit.
  28. C.W. Abel to B.T. Washington, 6 May 1906, AP 2.25
  29. C.W. Abel Up from Savagery: a wide open door of missionary service in a new country. No publisher or date given, but the final paragraph suggests it was distributed by W.R. Moody who indicates that donations can be sent to the Northfield Extension Movement.
  30. A.N. Johnson, Report on Deputation to New Guinea, February 28 - April 19, 1908. p. 47 C.W.M. Archives.
  31. Tony Austin "F.W.Walker and Papuan Industries Limited." Journal of the Papua and New Guinea Society Vol 6.
  32. W.G. Lawes to R.W. Thompson, 17 June 1903; 23 February 1904; 20 June 1904, PL 10.
  33. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Kwato, 30 July 1904, PL 10.

Kwato was indeed much admired as an example, even by one who was frequently critical of Abel. Rev. Joseph King, the Australian agent, as has already been mentioned, visited New Guinea in March and April 1905. His report gives a contemporary look at Kwato.<sup>34</sup> There was a corrugated iron saw mill and a log shelter for timber. The mission house had a space at the back of it between two wings, and this had been roofed and floored, and the area, open at one end, served for school hall, dining room for the Papuan members of the household and for a temporary church.

This mission had no teachers, only preachers.

In educating New Guineans our methods must be determined by the occupations which they are likely to pursue as the resources of the country are developed under Anglo-Saxon enterprise. As things are certain to go in this bustling age, the only way to conserve New Guinea natives is to preserve for them an industrial career. They must be workers, or like other drones, they will perish, and this fact must be clearly recognised in considering the question of education.<sup>35</sup>

He went on to explain that the mission settlement consisted of abandoned or destitute children or sometimes those who have simply left the village and been adopted by the missionary. At that time there were 110 children mandated to four mission societies in New Guinea.

Regarding plantations Abel, however, had another card up his sleeve. He put before the directors an offer of help for industrial work from the Young brothers, of Bundaberg in Queensland.<sup>36</sup>

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34. J.King. LMS New Guinea Mission Report, March-April 1905. C.W.M. Archives.

35. Ibid p 24-5.

36. For the activities of this missionary family see Florence S.H.Young, Pearls from the Pacific, London Marshall [1925], and D.L.Hilliard, Protestant Missions in the Solomon Island 1849-1942. PhD. Thesis, ANU, 1966. They and their relatives the Decks are frequently mentioned in Abel family private correspondence, mainly with regard to the social activities of the young Abels. The two families were on very friendly terms according to Cecil Abel and held many views in common.

A friend of mine Mr. Horace Young... has purchased and presented to the LMS... two valuable sites of freehold land in Milne Bay - one at SALAONI (100 acres), and the other at GILGILI (sic) ( $72\frac{3}{4}$  acres). This gift has cost Mr. Young £278. He has offered these to the LMS with a view to the extension of industrial work - agriculture - in my district.<sup>37</sup>

and he went on to tell of a further offer from Mr. C. Ernest Young, brother to the above.

If you are able to get the sanction of your Directors, I would let you have £10,000 sterling withing five years, and this you could use in planting cocoanuts, rubber etc and in finding occupation for your Christian youths, and in generally helping the natives of your district to habits of industry under Christian influences. The land planted to be held by me.<sup>38</sup>

The Committee found these offers presented problems. Mr Horace Young's offer could not be accepted both because of financial difficulty and because of the general principles of the Society. However, with Abel's concurrence, they thanked Mr. Horace Young for his generosity and agreed that Abel might make any arrangement he pleased with him with regard to transferring small parcels of the land to the Society for mission purposes.

Mr. Ernest Young's offer of £10,000 was allowed to be accepted in view of the exceptional circumstances obtaining in Milne Bay, but with certain conditions. If Abel was suprintendent then the Society must be

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37. Quoted from a letter from C.W. Abel to the Southern Committee in report LMS Directors' meeting op cit p 10.

38. Ibid.

allowed to determine the appointment of a business manager. Mr. Young must agree that he would not endeavour to change the management of at least ten years. The business manager to be appointed and the steam launch to be provided, must both be entirely at Mr. Abel's disposal.

Abel was also authorised to lease the mill and other industrial machinery to Mr. Ernest Young for a term not exceeding five years for the work, and when this term had expired and the management was returned to the mission, £1000 from the Angas Bequest would be granted as a working capital. Annual statements of receipts and expenditure, of course, would be expected by the Board. When the industrial work of the mission came once more under the control of the LMS, then it would be expanded into a general scheme for Papua.

These minutes concerning Kwato were concluded with the recommendation

That the Directors take this opportunity of expressing to the Rev. C.W. Abel their appreciation of his unswerving loyalty to the Society in all his negotiations with Messrs. Young in the interests of Industrial Mission work in his district.<sup>39</sup>

Abel returned from furlough triumphant, but this was shortlived. Immediately on arrival in Australia he tried to contact Mr. Ernest Young. Not only was he unavailable, being in the Solomons, but Mr. Horace Young explained that Abel had apparently misunderstood his brother's intentions. Thus the offer had fallen through. However, within a few days, another mutual friend of this group, Mr J.B. Nicholson, sought out Abel and asked him for the details of the scheme worked out in London. Abel told him, and Nicholson suggested they meet again a couple of days later.

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39. Ibid p 11.

At this second interview, he told me that he was quite in sympathy with the Directors' views, and that he was prepared to support me on the lines of my interpretation of Mr. Young's offer, if I cared to substitute his name for Mr. Young's... The matter stands exactly where it did when it passed the Board, except it is entirely free from any complication with our present work, which is a great advantage... The A.I.M. can now fall into line with other stations under the D.C. Mr. Nicholson simply gives his capital for the planting of land which I choose for this purpose, taking all the risks... Mr. Stewart, Mr. Young's partner, is also interested in this and the enterprise will be termed N.S. with an i added to make it easy for the natives to pronounce the term - ENESI.<sup>40</sup>

This all sounds as if Abel's luck was too good to be true. The Enesi plan was simpler than the Young plan as it meant no handing over of AIM business. Abel therefore assumed that the £1000 floating capital from the Angas Bequest would be forthcoming straight away and not at the end of five years.<sup>41</sup>

Abel went ahead with clearing plantations for the Enesi scheme. He started with Kanakope (KK), Mr. Young's block. Most of the workers were outsiders, but they showed them slides, organised sport and the people seemed to be absorbing Christianity. Coleman was there with a hundred young fellows. The Kwato converts were acting as overseers,<sup>42</sup> Koeabule (KB) was also being cleared while Abel and his family were at Duabo, and Josia was holding the fort at Kwato. They had just finished building their own launch, the Mamari, which was the Tavara word for "greeting."<sup>43</sup> It was 1911. At this time, Papuans would not have been accorded overseer status on plantations

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40. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Sydney, 16 June 1910, PL 12; Copy in AP 1.21.

41. Ibid.

42. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Kwato, 24 September 1910. PL 12; C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Duabo, 10 Feb. 1911, PL 13.

43. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Duabo, 10 Feb. 1911, PL 13.

owned by Europeans, nor would a Papuan have been left in charge of a head-station while the missionary was away.

By 1912 Abel had planted 250 acres for Enesi plus another 100 acres for the LMS.<sup>44</sup> This was about one third of the total plantation area in Milne Bay. The Resident Magistrate reported 11,901 acres in the Eastern Division for 1912-3, of which 400 acres belonged to Enesi.<sup>45</sup> As Abel commented

In this part of Papua, the change which 20 years has wrought is alarming. It was a long time before the native appeared to see what was happening & we marvelled at his unconcern, but his eyes are open now to the fact that at least locally, Papua is fast becoming a white man's country, & the question he is beginning to face is whether he, the Papuan, will find it possible to live in it.<sup>46</sup>

Everyone was at the 1912 meeting of the P.D.C. except Holmes (who attended meetings even more rarely than Abel.) The resolutions concerning industrial work were passed unanimously. There were four of them, numbers 12 to 15. No.12 intimated that all members would submit to the rule of the PDC and it reiterated the objection to Directors making any private arrangements with individuals. No. 13 considered the needs of the industrial work on the various stations, and recommended that £3300 from the Angas Fund be divided by £2500 for Kwato, £1000 of which was to be floating capital, £50 for Daru, £50 for Vatorata, £20 to Hula, £40 to Mailu, and £100 to Isuleilei. Another £4300 would be needed over the next five years and it was suggested that this be raised by an appeal to the

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44. C.W. Abel, Kwato District Report 1912. PR 2.

45. C.B. Higginson, Papua Annual Report 1912-3. p 107.

46. C.W. Abel, Kwato District Report 1912. op cit.

public. Resolution No. 14 asked the Directors to grant permission for PDC members to appeal for industrial funds during deputation work in England. No. 15 resolved that Abel should ask Nicholson and Stewart to transfer all investments to the LMS, as the PDC objected to an outside body controlling any part of its operations.<sup>47</sup>

Abel was well please "I feel greatly relieved and thankful."<sup>48</sup> Dauncey explained this change of attitude that once the industrial work was placed in the hands of the PDC the need for £1000 was recognised. £1500 was needed to finance the work started by Enesi, and the appeal was to buy the plantations.<sup>49</sup>

But what were Enesi to say to such cavalier treatment? Abel was optimistic.

If Enesi took the matter up from a business standpoint nothing I can say in Dec. will move them, but if a s they aver & I choose to believe, they had a higher purpose in view I can't see that they will refuse to let me have my way & wish to hold in face of a united appeal on the part of the DC backed by the Directors & then ultimately supported by me. I hardly think it is a legitimate argument - tho' perhaps I have used it for convenience - to say the LMS would take no risk, but now they see the thing is a success they want to have the plums. That would be sound reasoning if any individual was to make a profit by the transation, but the thing is for God's work, & the Enesi should be proud to have advanced the money & taken the risk.<sup>50</sup>

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47. H.M. Dauncey to R.W. Thompson, 26 March 1912. PL 13.  
48. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Daru, 28 March 1912. PL 13.  
49. H.M. Dauncey to R.W. Thompson, Delena, 19 July 1912, PL 13.  
50. C.W. Abel to B.Abel, 3 September 1912, AP 2.34.

Nicholson did agree in much the same spirit as Abel had anticipated.

Now that the LMS is prepared to follow the lead which Enesi has given and to develop the industrial side to the Mission, there can be no objection on our part to handing everything over. I trust that these plantations will yet become a considerable source of income to the mission.<sup>51</sup>

There was a little bit of jockeying about the price to be paid for the plantations, but on the whole negotiations were amicable. Enesi first asked £2,600 for 356 planted acres, whose market value was £3,500.<sup>52</sup> However it all took a little time. The money had to come out of the Angas Bequest which was still banked in Australia with Thomas Pratt, the Sydney agent, and Joseph King as trustees. Pratt always refused to hand any money over without direct instructions from London, which was often a matter of annoyance with the missionaries, particularly Abel. In May 1913, Pratt paid Nicholson £2368 but said it should have been £2586,<sup>53</sup> and this discrepancy was eventually sorted out.

THE DEPUTATION of 1915-16, led by Lenwood, accompanied by Rev. A.J. Viner and G.J. Williams, who joined them in Australia,<sup>54</sup> was the first firm stand by the LMS against Abel's ever expanding plans. It is unlikely that the industrial and plantation question in Papua was the only reason for the Deputation. All other stations in the South Seas were visited, and since Lenwood was just commencing his term as Foreign Secretary, a familiarisation tour would be in order. The John Williams was used as far as possible to transport the delegation.

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51. J.B. Nicholson to C.W. Abel, 19 December 1912, AP 2.30.

52. C.W. Abel to R.W. Thompson, Turrumurra, Dec 1912. PL 13.

53. T. Pratt to W.F. Bradford (Asst. Treasurer LMS) 28 May 1913, AL 21.

54. A.J. Viner, G.J. Williams and F. Lenwood. Report of Deputation to the South Seas and Papua, June 1915 - June 1916. London, LMS, 1916. p 175.

The Deputation was almost lyrical in its description of Kwato Mission and the work done there, and yet it found it could not support the further growth of the work. Most of the Mission stations from Daru to Fyfe Bay had plantations which averaged about 100 acres and this was recommended as the maximum for any district in the future.<sup>55</sup> The point made was that it was far too much work for any one man to cope with, when in fact the missionary was appointed to guide the spiritual welfare of the people. They rejected the idea of appointing industrial managers on the grounds that the manager might come into conflict with the supervising missionary, especially if he was more competent. When the missionary died or retired, his replacement would have a very difficult time asserting his authority.<sup>56</sup> Going through the other stations one by one, they made suggestions either for continuance work started if it was not on a large scale, or slight reduction of holdings if necessary.

Kwato is the most perplexing problem of all. At Kwato itself, on Killerton Island, and at three centres in Milne Bay, Mr. Abel has magnificent plantations... We cannot speak too highly of the condition in which we found the plantations. We can well believe that they have brought certain villages into touch with Christian influence, and work amongst the children and dwellers near by, such as that of Miss Parkin at the Koebule plantation, must be of the utmost value.

The arguments previously stated apply as much to the 500 acres of the Kwato plantations as to any large extension which might be proposed in future. We are clear that valuable as is this work, it should not be done on such a scale by a Missionary Society.<sup>57</sup>

They went on to discuss the actual value of these plantations and concluded that it was too great a trust for the PDC.

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55. Viner et al, op cit. p 228.

56. Ibid. p.232.

57. Ibid. p.236-7.

Yet for all practical purposes this great trust depends on a single life. The Society must realize that in Mr. Abel they have a man of very exceptional ability. We doubt whether three average men could have contrived to carry the diverse interests which Mr. Abel has controlled with success.<sup>58</sup>

Abel's health was also discussed. He was under medical orders to go on furlough for two years but there was nobody to take his place. They recommended that the least developed plantation, Giligili be sold, that the others be brought into bearing, and when such a point was reached they would be sold in order to be sure of their capital value, retaining only 100 acres.<sup>59</sup>

The report in fact spelt out in detail the principles firmly laid down by the LMS, and which the missionaries of that Society followed until it became an independent church fifty years later. In essence, it insisted that the Society should not become the chief employer of its converts. Apart from the fear that in time of disaster, or famine they would have to maintain all their employees, they considered "The position of spiritual guide is in the long run incompatible with that of paymaster."<sup>60</sup>

The Kwato mission finally broke away from the LMS, and a new governing body had to be established; all the former governors of Papua agreed to go on Abel's directorate, though MacGregor, who had agreed to become President, died in 1919, before the Kwato Extension Association was incorporated on 16 January 1920.<sup>61</sup> The first mention of the change of name from Kwato Association to Kwato Extension Association occurred December 1918,<sup>62</sup>

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58. Ibid. p.237.

59. Ibid. p.239.

60. Ibid. p.233.

61. The Incorporated Kwato Extension Association. Memorandum and articles of Association, Incorporated 16th Day of January 1920.

62. F.H. Hawkins to Whitton Bros of Samarai, 4 December 1918. PO 2.

though both forms were being used up to 1920. It was MacGregor who had insisted on including the word "Extension" because he considered it was an idea that could not be confined to one place.<sup>63</sup>

Captain Barton was enthusiastic enough to want to publicise the Association. He wrote thanking Abel for the prospectus which he thought

excellent - not the less so for its modesty and restraint. But these are qualities which - though they make a strong appeal to me personally - are not understood in these days of pushing & bragging... don't you think a polite puff in a respectable journal might be profitable, such as the "Spectator" for instance?<sup>64</sup>

Barton offered to do something about it if Abel agreed.

An Australian committee was also formed, and one of its members (William Williamson) visited Kwato in 1920. The work in the whole of the Kwato District was carried on without paid Papuan pastors, Williamson observed. The men were trained to be plantation managers or had other skills, they took up their positions and were paid for that work, and were also responsible for teaching Christianity in their neighbourhood. Consequently, he said "their Christianity [was] of a very healthy type."<sup>65</sup>

Williamson compared the conditions of indentured labour on plantations, with those operating at Kwato. On the former, large crowds of single men from other districts were herded into quarters. Lacking women, they became a menace to women in nearby villages. Indenture was the only way the plantations could keep labour. At Kwato indenture was not necessary. The work force was drawn from local villages and their wives and children lived with them. Although they were not pampered, over fed or over paid, few ever went away, indeed there was a waiting list to be allowed in.

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63. Cecil Abel personal communication.

64. F.R. Barton to C.W. Abel, 8 December 1917. AP 3.17.

65. W.Williamson's notes, in Abel papers.

Koebule plantation consisted of about 280 acres, and by the following year there should be 100 tons of copra produced. It had rich soil and its value should be around £20,000. There were about fifty workers on the estate, managed by a Papuan, Faraiki. In Ceylon, a plantation of this size would have three white supervisors. Faraiki also supervised religious instruction.

Williamson considered that Kwato's trading activities did not conflict with other traders, but supported and assisted them. He was obviously aware of antagonism from some quarters, particularly the newspaper for European residents, the Papuan Courier, which described the formation of the Kwato Extension Association as "Commercial Christianity." Kwato, this newspaper considered, could always undersell the legitimate trader by the use of what it called "Cheap nigger labour."<sup>66</sup>

If Abel could never get the full-throated approbation of either traders or missionaries, he seemed always to get much praise and practical support from Lieutenant-Governors and Administrators. As has been noted, MacGregor, Le Hunté and Barton were all foundation members of KEA. They, of course, saw Abel's work in terms of community education, education that suited the needs of the people at that particular time.<sup>67</sup> It did not take J.H.P. Murray and Abel very long, after Abel's first suspicions were laid to rest, to come to the conclusion that they had many aims in common too. In 1920, Murray had to face severe criticism from a majority of European residents on account of his policies. Abel, never minding being in a minority, was one of Murray's firmest supporters.

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66. See also Papuan Times 25 June, 1913 and 20 August 1913.

67. Tony Austin. Technical Training and development in Papua, 1874 - 1941. Canberra, ANU, 1977, deals with this question at length.