

NOTES TAKEN AT MEETING WITH BANABANS

ON 24th January, 1931.

The Resident Commissioner introduced Mr. Neill to the meeting and then withdrew.

Mr. Neill addressed Banabans.

(Interpreter, Morning Star.)

PEOPLE OF BANABA

You have been informed by the Resident Commissioner that I have been appointed to arbitrate on your behalf in assessing the amount of compensation payable to you for the lands which were acquired this month and which have now been leased to the British Phosphate Commissioners for the mining of phosphates and other purposes connected with the work of the Commission. It is not my intention today to deliver to you a lengthy speech. I want, as your arbitrator, to hear your views and I shall listen carefully and sympathetically to any representations you may wish to make. You will remember that I am here as the arbitrator acting on your behalf and that it is in your own interest to render me all the assistance you can. Though a stranger to you I have served for many years among the Fijians and Tongans and the ideas and thoughts of the islands of the Pacific are known to me. It is unnecessary to refer at any length to the conferences which have taken place over a period of years in connection with the land which has lately been leased. You have discussed, time and again, the value of the surface rights and the amount of royalties. Finality was once almost attained and an agreed

settlement reached but the negotiations broke down. This month possession was taken of the land after you had declined the terms offered.

I want to inform you definitely that we are now concerned only with the compensation for the land which has been acquired. Let us therefore dismiss from our minds the question of royalties. Royalty is prescribed by the Crown through the Resident Commissioner. With the amount of royalty I, as arbitrator, have nothing whatsoever to do. In assessing compensation the Arbitrators have to take into account the following factors -

- (1) The market value of the land excluding any increase in that value by reason of the fact that there are phosphates on it.
- (2) The improvements on the land.
- (3) Damage caused by severance.
- (4) The amount due to any land-owner who resides on the land and who is compelled to vacate his holding by reason of the acquisition of the land.

I wish to keep my words to you as simple as possible. Points (3) and (4) are questions of fact and present no difficulties. No Banaban resides within the acquired area.

(The meaning of a "question of fact" was here fully explained.)

There remain for consideration the question of market value and of improvements. Before I explain the meaning of these words to you I would ask you to remember that the right to work the phosphate deposits cannot be granted to any other person than the British Phosphate Commissioners. The Commission holds an exclusive licence.

Now what does "market value" mean? In

respect of property it means the value the property would fetch in the market under the state of things for the time being existing.

(This statement was explained in detail and examples, understandable by the people, given)

Now, in the Colony law, market value of land is not increased because there are phosphates or minerals under the land. The law says so. Please also remember that nobody can mine phosphates on this Island but the Commission. You will see therefore that no other Company can come in and offer you a price for the phosphates. I ask you to remember this point and keep your minds free from confusion. As your Arbitrator I am only permitted by law to value the land, not the land with the phosphates under it. This states the position simply.

Now there is the question of improvements. You can reasonably raise the question of the value of the trees on your land and its possible use for copra and food production. I have inspected all the land which has been acquired and thought of its possibilities as a coconut producing area. You know that in the Pacific native lands rarely produce one ton from three acres. I live in a copra producing Island and am familiar with coconut values and copra production. The nuts on your trees differ greatly from the nuts on native areas in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Your trees are not heavy bearers. This affects the value of the land from the point of view of food and copra production. I ask you to think over this point.

Remember that as your Arbitrator I am bound by the provisions of the law. I can assess the value of the land only in the manner I have stated to you.

Please do not confuse the issue by mixing up the question of royalties with the question of payment for the surface. Remember that the King's Government considered it expedient in the public interest that your lands should be made available to the Commission who hold the licence to enable it to work the phosphates; remember that the lease has issued; remember that the question of royalties has been settled; remember that I can deal only with the value of the land excluding any increase in value because of the phosphates. Next Tuesday, with the Arbitrator for the British Phosphate Commissioners I shall proceed to assess compensation in the manner stated.

It is unnecessary at this stage to refer to the terms offered you by the British Phosphate Commissioners. They have been communicated to you in writing. There may be those among you who would at this stage wish to accept those terms if they were again offered. You alone can answer that question.

I now invite you to state your views, if you so wish, and ask such questions as you may desire. Remember that I am here as your Arbitrator.

I trust that I shall be able to report to His Excellency the High Commissioner and His Honour the Resident Commissioner that our conversation today has been guided by a spirit of reasonableness and that you will realise, whatever the decision which will be reached next week may be, that your interests have been carefully and sympathetically considered. You are men and women of understanding; you know that it is impossible in life for every person to obtain everything which he or she may desire and that it is for this reason that the settlement of differences is referred to the judgement of others.

At the conclusion of the address the Banabans were informed that a Notice fixing the date for Arbitration proceedings would be served upon them. The text of the Notice was read to the meeting. The Banabans asked that the Notice should not be served. They were informed that all land-owners concerned would be served and the reason for this procedure explained.

Questions were then asked and answered.

The essential questions and answers are set out below.

ROTAN: They did you come here ?

Reference made in reply to Sections
4 - 6 of the Ordinance.

Would you listen to what we have to say
about the land ?

Certainly.

We know nothing about the royalties. Who
prescribed them ?

The Resident Commissioner in accordance
with the law.

IETE: Who leased the 150 acres to the British
Phosphate Commissioners ?

The land was acquired as prescribed by law
and was then leased by the Resident
Commissioner in the manner the law
permitted.

We were surprised lease was issued unknown
to us,

You all received Notices.

Yes, that is true, but we do not like it. We
do not agree with the Notices.

IETE then referred to the days when the Company first came to Ocean Island and, according to his statement, obtained areas of land in return for sewing machines. He went on to say that in the time of Mr. Eliot leases were issued and that Mr. Eliot stated that no more land would be leased until the leased area was worked out. The people could then lease further lands if they wished. They wished to adhere to this. The old area was not worked out.

ROTAN: When land is acquired, do the Resident Commissioner and the British Phosphate Commissioners fix the price,

No, the Crown through the Resident Commissioner prescribes royalty and the assessment of the value of surface rights, when agreement is not reached, is the duty of Arbitrators.

IETE: What is your personal opinion? Have we enough land left? Why was the British Government so strict?

I am here as your Arbitrator. I assure you that every action taken has been in accordance with the law of the Colony.

(The people were here told about acquisitions of land in other countries. They attempted to force an expression of my personal opinion on the merits of acquisition.)

KIRENNENJ: The Notices served on us were in English. We could not understand them.

That is not a correct statement of facts. Translations of Notices were served on

family groups and you saw the Resident Commissioner, with the Notices, after service. (The meeting agrees that the substance of the Notices was known.)

ROTAN: Is every thing the Resident Commissioner does to us known to the High Commissioner ?

As a matter of official procedure all important actions are reported by the Resident Commissioner.

Did the High Commissioner know about the Notice ?

Under law the form of the Notice is prescribed by the High Commissioner, therefore he did.

We do not agree with the £150 an acre and the 10½d. royalty.

The question of royalty is finished. It has been prescribed in accordance with the law. The compensation payable for surface rights will be settled by Arbitration.

We know the question of royalty is finished with. We just do not agree. We want to let you know that we will not agree to £150 compensation. We want £180 per acre and the following payment for trees:

Coconut	{ large }	£2- 0- 0
	{ small }	1-10- 0
Pandanus	{ bearing }	1-10- 0
	{ small }	10- 0
Almond		1- 0- 0
Mango		1- 0- 0
Kaitu		10- 0
All other trees		5- 0

(Questioned as to how many trees they had on their own land Rotan and Iete gave evasive replies and finally remained silent.)

IETE: We do not want building sites leased according to size. We do not like the new scheme. We want payment per foot - 3d. per sq. foot.

(IETE was confused in his ideas and was unable to give any approximate idea of the size of the Cricket Ground which adjoined the place of meeting. He stated he did not know what the rental per acre of land leased on a 3d. per sq. foot basis would amount to.)

ROTAN: We want leased money paid half-yearly, not yearly. We want a truck of phosphate to be treated as weighting one ton. We want royalty to be paid on this ton when it leaves the phosphate fields.

Rotan was informed that the question of when lease money was paid was not before the meeting. A truck of phosphate weighed about 18 cwt. but the weight was not uniform.

The question of royalty was not at issue; the people knew well that moisture affected weights.

The Banabans were then asked whether they wished to appoint representatives to appear before the Arbitrators. They did not reply. They asked that the Notices of the date fixed for Arbitration proceedings should not be served. they were informed that this request would not be granted.

The people were then told that I was available at any time if they wished to see me. The meeting had no further questions to ask or statements to make.

Meeting terminated.

PEOPLE OF BANABA

When I first met you on Saturday last I informed you that I had been appointed to arbitrate on your behalf in assessing the amount of compensation to be paid to you in respect of the lands which were acquired by the Resident Commissioner on the 10th day of this month. I have already explained to you in detail the provisions of the Mining Law of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and I have shown to you that every step taken in the proceedings which have now drawn to a close has been in accordance with the law. If there are among you those who say that this not so I wish you to disregard such statements and to consider them as foolish. We Arbitrators have agreed on the Award which I shall read to you. It will later be deposited in the Government Buildings. One of your spokesman, Rotan it was, stated last Tuesday that you would only accept what you wanted and if you did not get what you wanted you would not like the Award. I am satisfied that the terms originally offered to you by the Commissioners represent more than the market value of the land. I have already explained to you the meaning of "market value" and I have told you the other factors which I, as Arbitrator, could take into account. I am bound by the law. Now last Tuesday the Commissioners, through the local Manager, came before the Arbitrators and again said that they would pay the price they originally offered. I have accepted this price with the small variation stated in the Award. It appeared advisable to define more clearly the price for coconut trees cut down in the non-mining area. The price is more, much more, than I could have obtained had I been

arguing your case before a Tribunal and you are fortunate that the Commissioners did not say - " We offered a price: it was not accepted: let the Arbitrators value the land: we will appear before them and ask for a price to be assessed which represents a strict value within the meaning of the law".

Certain of your old men stated that they wished to accept the Commissioners' offer. Others of you have stated, through Rotan, that nothing short of the Banaban terms would be agreeable. I hope, when you return to your villages, that you will remember that this matter is concluded today; that you will realise that, throughout all the negotiations, your interests have been carefully and sympathetically guarded. When talking over the Award - talk reasonably; remember that it is final; do not listen to foolish remarks if made to you.

I am glad to have met you and I shall not forget my visit to Banaba.

Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,

Western Pacific,

Ocean Island.

8th August, 1952.

Sir,

We, real Banaban community, have the honour to apply respectfully for a personal help from you, because we are in great heaviness of sorrow on account of our land of 150 acres of phosphate to be dug out, and $27\frac{3}{4}$ acres to be rented by the British Phosphate Commissioners Ocean Island.

The area of $177\frac{3}{4}$ acres in total was taken away from under our Charge by the words of Mr. A.F. Grimble Resident Commissioner, Mr. H.B. Maynard Employer, British Phosphate Commissioners and Mr. J.S. Neill man arrived from Tonga, for reasons of indefinitude to us, and transferred it to the British Phosphate Commissioners to dig out phosphate and to rent the land on 31st January, 1951. They also make the Price for this land as follows :-

Mining Area

£150. 0. 0. per acre.
10-1/3d. per ton of phosphate.
None per tree of all kinds on this mining area.

Rental

£5. 0. 0. per acre.
£2. 0. 0. per coconut tree to be cut down.

They forced us in a frightful way so that we will give away our land and to agree with satisfaction to the above prices privately judged by them but we were unsatisfied to agree to these prices because of the following :-

1. The British Phosphate Commissioners has not finished his last area which we had promised him to work till he finished it. (We think, it shall take him about ten more years to finished it).
2. It is against our Covenant made in November, 1913, that shall there be no one from the Banaban Community to lease his land until the British Phosphate Commissioners finishes his area which had been leased.
3. Our Covenant had been confirmed by His Honour the Resident Commissioner, Mr. E.C. Eliot, under British Flags in the Government Court House for the whole Banaban population. This confirmation was held in the month of November, 1913.
4. The prices mentioned above were not the sellers prices nor the buyers who as a mining licence but it is the prices privately arranged by Mr. Grimble, Mr. Maynard and Mr. Neill.
5. We have in our feeling that the Head Manager of this Company will offer us better prices for our land, but the arrangement of the three mentioned men prevented his offer.
6. Because of our valuable trees such as coconut trees, pandanus trees, etc. on this mining area worth nothing at all; but in the Covenant of 1913 was said that these are to be worth of money.

7. The 150 acres of land for mining is the only piece of land on which we, Banabans, live mostly on. It contains a great number of well-grown coconut trees, etc. and the soil is in a fertile on Ocean Island.

We have been to His Honour the Resident Commissioner with our request indicated, but we received no help from him.

We, afterwards, transferred the same request to His Excellency the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific during his short stay at Ocean Island on 29th July, 1951 and yet, the Company is still working on this new area up-to-date.

So, therefore, please kindly help us by your merciful arbitration and judgment in front of Our Heavenly God, and in front of His Majesty King George V.

We are,

Your Lordship's most piliable people,

The Banaban Community.

For the Native Owner.

Certified true and signed copy.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this Tenth day of April one thousand nine hundred and forty seven between the BANABAN LANDOWNERS OF OCEAN ISLAND (hereinafter called 'the Banabans') and THE BRITISH PHOSPHATE COMMISSIONERS (hereinafter called 'the Commissioners') in the presence of F.G.L. HOLLAND, Administrative Officer, Fiji.

1. The Banabans agree -

- (a) to transfer to the Commissioners approximately 291 acres of phosphate mining land with all trees of whatsoever kind on the land delineated and coloured purple on drawing No. 776 M.O. annexed hereto;
- (b) to transfer to the Commissioners approximately 380 acres of phosphate mining land with all trees of whatsoever kind on the land delineated and coloured stone on drawing No. 776 M.O. annexed hereto.

2. The Commissioners agree -

- (a) to pay for the phosphate mining land referred to in clause 1 (a) including all trees of whatsoever kind on the land at the rate of £200 per acre Australian currency payment to be made on the seventeenth day of April 1947;
- (b) to pay for the phosphate mining land referred to in clause 1 (b) including all trees of whatsoever kind on the land at the rate of £65 per acre Australian currency payment to be made on the seventeenth day of April 1947;
- (c) to pay from the seventeenth day of April 1947 a Royalty at the rate of one shilling and threepence per ton Australian currency on delivered weight of all phosphate exported from Ocean Island including also delivered weight of phosphate so exported from the balance of land already held by the Commissioners.

- 3. That after being worked out all phosphate land the subject of clause 1 (a) and clause 1 (b) shall revert to the Banaban owners as soon as this can take place without inconvenience or prejudice to the operations of the Commissioners.
- 4. Nothing in this Memorandum of Agreement shall be deemed to alter or affect in any manner the specified terms and conditions contained in the Licence from the Crown held by the Commissioners.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands this Tenth day of April 1947.

Signed at Rambi (Rabi) Island
 by, J. H. Hayward
 for The British Phosphate Commissioners
 of the one part

: In the presence of

by,

..... Sete Eri .....	..... Ross
..... Kabanti .....	..... Akeriba
..... Saraka Kamazie .....	..... Ito Iru
..... Kaitu .....	..... Katarake
..... Resi Kamboni .....	..... Teremita
..... Tebue .....	..... Annana
..... Ovi Oveba .....	..... Mataio
..... Imai Aekibi .....	..... Tekemmatani
..... Laluaniki .....	..... Beangibe
..... Mamawa .....	..... Aaron
..... Lonoro	

J. H. Hollands

: In the presence of

J. H. Hollands

for The Banaban Landowners of Ocean Island of the other part named.

Interpreters.

St. Errie
I. K. Aekibi

OCEAN ISLAND

MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE BANABAN COMMITTEE ON 20th FEBRUARY, 1942.

PRESENT:

Mr. G.J. Bridges, Mr. L.W. Cole.

Banabans: Levi, Teremita, Taberaua, Tanaera,
Ietera. Came later - Toteba, Rewi,
Akeriba. Interpreter - Iotua

Mr. Bridges

As you know we will be leaving Ocean Island on the 26th February, and I have taken this opportunity of meeting you to discuss a few matters of interest to yourselves and the Commissioners.

First I would like to thank you for your courtesy and help during the time I have been Manager here. This, I have very much appreciated, for without this spirit we would never have overcome some of the difficulties which have arisen from time to time.

It is the firm intention of the British Phosphate Commissioners to return to Ocean Island as early as possible and carry on as we have done in the past. We are leaving behind us buildings and plant to the value of many thousands of pounds and I ask you, as responsible leaders of the Banabans, to help us by preventing any damage to that property.

Mr. Cole will be remaining at Ocean Island until there is an opportunity to repatriate the Gilbert and Ellice Islanders. He will be in charge of the Commissioners' affairs here until he leaves and then they will be handed over to the representative of the Government or, if he does not remain, to the care of the Native Government.

You have been paid rentals for leased land up till 31st December, 1942, and I ask you to prevent any natives from interfering with any buildings or plant on that leased land.

During Mr. Gaze's last visit to the Island preliminary discussions took place with regard to obtaining further land for mining purposes. These matters will have to remain in abeyance until such time as we are again able to return and carry on our operations here.

In the event of Mr. Cole leaving with the Gilbert and Ellice Islanders there will be nobody left to run the Commissioners' Store and it will therefore be closed down to native sales. In this event arrangements will be made by Mr. Cole to enable the Banaban Store to obtain from the Commissioners' Store bulk goods and

foodstuffs for sale in the Banaban Store.

We will endeavour to arrange for a good supply of foodstuffs etc. to be sent up on the ship that will repatriate the Gilbert and Ellice Islanders to the Group. This will be for the use of the Banabans.

We have four good two-man canoes which we will leave for the use of the Native Government, on the departure of Mr. Cole, and they can make the necessary arrangements for fishing for the Banaban community.

In order to protect the Commissioners' property, the Acting Resident Commissioner, Mr. Garvey, has agreed to make the European settlement an "out of bounds" area and natives will not be allowed inside that area without written permission from the Administrative Officer or Mr. Cole. Notices to this effect will be posted up prior to the 26th February.

^{not}As the power House will be out of commission it will be possible to pump saltwater and therefore all the sewered latrines will be out of commission and should not under any circumstances be used. If they are used they will certainly bring an epidemic of sickness as there will be no saltwater to flush them.

That is all that I have to tell you. Do you wish to ask any questions?

Levi

Before you leave the Island can we buy secondhand iron and timber?

Mr. Bridges

We will sell you new material.

Levi

What about secondhand?

Mr. Bridges

Secondhand iron is not very good. We will sell you some but in a little while it will have holes in it. There is not very much secondhand timber but we will sell what there is if you require it. Anyone wishing to buy secondhand iron or timber should give a list to Iotua.

Ietera

Thank you.

Teremita

You will remember about the food?

Mr. Bridges

Yes, as soon as I see Mr. Gaze I will ask him to try and arrange it by the vessel which repatriates the Gilbert and Ellice Islanders.

Teremita

Thank you.

Mr. Bridges

With regard to the settlement. If you wish to come into it you must have a pass from Mr. Cartwright or Mr. Cole. If you have coconut trees in the settlement you must get a pass to go to those trees.

Rewi All the Gilbert and Ellice Islanders are cutting toddy.

Mr. Bridges I spoke to Mr. Garvey about it the other day.

Akeribo There is nothing wrong with drinking toddy provided they do not get drunk.

Mr. Bridges Yes, I know. About stores again, you may rest assured that whenever it is possible to get up stores Mr. Gaze will do so. The Company have been here forty years now and are not going to give it up. We will be back and working as soon as we can. Are there any further questions?

Rewi The Banaban Store is no good.

Mr. Bridges We can't help that. Rotan can get goods from the Commissioners' Store for sale at the Banaban Store.

Rewi While the war is on the Banaban Store is no good.

Mr. Bridges Mr. Gaze, Sir Albert Ellis and I too told you that you were starting the Store at a bad time.

Akeribo If the Commissioners' Store closes we will be able to get nothing from the Banaban Store.

Mr. Bridges While Mr. Cole is here our Store will be open just as it is now, but when Mr. Cole goes and the Gilbert and Ellice Islanders go there will be no need for the Store to open.

13th June, 1946.

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Meeting at Rabi Island to meet
some of the elders at their
request.

Introduction

Come at request of some of elders to listen to their remarks - have asked to see D.C.N. alone - request made in letter addressed to D.C.N. personally - regretted method of approach - correct way through Major Kennedy to D.C.N. - they should know correct methods as H.M.G. Fiji will always listen to people who make requests in proper manner - should have been through D.O., Major Kennedy.

Question : Who wishes to speak to me ?

Answer : Iete. There is one thing we would like to talk about on behalf of the Banabans - we don't want Major Kennedy to stay with us - that is why they did not tell Major Kennedy that they did not want this meeting.

Question : Is that all ?

Answer : Yes.

D.C.N. : Before this matter could be discussed further Major Kennedy should be here to listen to any reasons why they do not wish Major Kennedy to remain with them.

Question : Are all the elders of the council here ?

Answer : Some are not present; only two are absent.

Question : Who are absent ?

Answer : Kaiekieki, and Tetebano.

Question : Are all the representatives of the head families here ?

Answer : They are all here.

Question : Aren't there about 200 ?

Answer:(R) Some are absent because of distance.

D.C.N. : I have come here in your interests but to help you I must have all elders and heads of families present in order to obtain their wishes as representatives of a community. At such a meeting I am sure I could make you realize and appreciate the advantages of them making every endeavour to make Rabi their home and the home of the children in the years to come.

I shall be in this area for a few days and would be very happy to meet them at such a meeting. I wish you to know that the wishes of this Government is to do everything in its power to

make you happy, comfortable and prosperous. When you have fixed a time and a day I will meet you, but everyone must be present.

Question : (R) How long is the D.C.N. staying here ?

Answer : I am going to Taveuni but I can return when they are ready, within the next three or four days.

Meeting was then arranged for
10 a.m. Monday.

D.C.N. : I am happy to meet you but wish that you had arranged this meeting through Major Kennedy according to our custom in Fiji.

Rotan : We are sorry that they did not arrange this meeting for to-day.

D.C.N. : To-day is the King's Birthday and we hope that you will celebrate it by being happy.

Rotan : We all thank you very much for coming.

(Sgd.) J.E. Windrum.
13.6.46.

Meeting held at Rabi on 17/6/46

D.C.N. : Representatives of heads of families, councillors, elders, and members of the Banaban community of the island of Rabi.

We have met this morning in the terms of the arrangement we made when I was here and met some of you last Thursday at 10 a.m.

Some of you at the meeting last Thursday made certain complaints to me and I told you then that I could not discuss them unless you were all present and also Major Kennedy, the Administrative Officer, appointed by the Government of Fiji and the W.P.H.C. to be in charge of the Island of Rabi and to administer all those things necessary for the prosperity, comfort, peace and happiness of the Banaban community.

Question to Magistrate : Are the representative heads of all the families present here this morning ?

Answer : Yes.

Question : Are all the councillors present this morning ?

Answer : Yes.

Question : Have they a spokesman ?

Answer : Yes.

Question : Who is he ?

Answer : Iete.

Question : What have you to say Iete ?

Answer : This morning he has been authorized by the Banabans to speak to you.
The first thing I wish to say is that the Banabans do not wish Major Kennedy to stay with them.

D.C.N. : Major Kennedy is here and he should hear those reasons.

Iete : The first thing is that Major Kennedy drinks to excess and could not attend a meeting because he was under the influence of liquor.

Secondly, about our homes. When we first landed on Rabi we lived in tents where we still are and ~~and~~ we feel that Major Kennedy cannot assist us.

He is only thinking about his own home.

Akeripa : We do not wish to live on this island because of the food. Only during two months did we have any food, and after that time we suffered from starvation. And there is another thing. Some of our people have died on this island, the total deaths being about 40.

Tito : Major Kennedy did not tell us the truth. He first told us the land belonged to the Banabans and then told us it belonged to the Government. That is the reason why they do not wish Major Kennedy to remain in charge.

D.C.N. : Is there anything else ?

Nei Maka : In a meeting at Tarawa Major Kennedy showed us a map and photographs of houses where he said we would live. When we arrived here we were not given the houses shown to us but lived in tents. Living in the tents caused us sickness, and we were uncomfortable in these quarters. When they heard at Tarawa that they had to live in tents at Rabi, some of the Banabans did not wish to come.

D.C.N. : Whom did you tell this to ?

Answer : I can't remember.

D.C.N. : When they complained about coming to Rabi to live in tents, to whom did they complain ?

Answer : We did not complain. It was only in our minds.

Kaitu : When we first landed on Rabi we Banabans we allowed to go on Fijian land and no Fijians were allowed to come on our land. Why was this rule enforced?

D.C.N. : That question will be answered when you have finished making your statements.

D.C.N. : Anybody else?

Neiwawa: Who does this land belong to?
(head of a family)

Answer : This will be also answered later.

Neiwawa : We do not want Major Kennedy to stay with us.

D.C.N. Is there anything else you want to say?
to
Iete :

Answer : No.

D.C.N. : Major Kennedy wishes to ask certain questions to those who spoke this morning.

M/r Kennedy: Iete raised the question about living in tents and the question of the work on my house. What I want to ask Iete is "have you ever complained to me or asked me about any work which you wanted done to your house"?

Iete : No, we have not made any complaints but were looking to you as our helper.

M/r Kennedy: If I was your helper, if you felt that you wanted some work done, why did you not ask me?

Iete : I could not ask anything because it was Major Kennedy's duty to look after us.

Major Kennedy : When you were in the council do you remember any talk about new good houses for the Banabans?

Iete : There was.

Major Kennedy : Do you remember that we agreed in the council that it would not be good to waste any money or time on little jobs until we got the materials for good houses.

Iete : Yes, but only because of the conditions of the people.

Major Kennedy : Did you ever complain in the council about the condition of the people?

Iete : Major Kennedy understood.

D.C.N. : This is a fair question and he is evading the true answer. If they wish me to help them then I must get the true answer to Major Kennedy's question.

- Iete : Major Kennedy understood. (This is an evasion).
- Major Kennedy : Do you remember that I put up two photos sent to me by the C.S. showing the kind of houses we wanted to build on Rabi ?
- Iete : Yes.
- Major Kennedy : Can you tell me who tore them down ?
- Iete : I don't know.
- Major Kennedy to Akeripa : When you were at Tarawa do you remember an agreement you made with me before you came to Rabi ?
- Answer : Yes.
- Major Kennedy : Do you remember the statement in that agreement that the High Commissioner had kindly agreed to give you one month's rations and after that you had to obtain your own rations.
- Answer : Yes, but it was not clear.
- Question : Who was the interpreter ?
- Answer : Takai.
- Major K:
(to K). Were you at Kusaie ?
- Answer:
(to K). Yes.
- Major K: Do you remember the agreement at Kusaie ?
- Answer :
(to K). Yes.
- Major Kennedy : Did you hear the same statement there or a different one ?
- Answer :
(to K). He said it was different. At Kusai we only heard that we would go to our new island.
- Major K. Who was the interpreter ?
- Answer :
(to K) Tokamen
- Major Kennedy : Do you never hear at any time before you came to Rabi that you would get free Government rations for one month only ?
- Answer :
(to K) We did not hear at Kusai but did at Tarawa.
- Major Kennedy : If you heard at Tarawa and you agreed to that why do you complain ?
- Answer :
(to K) We are not complaining about the agreement. I am complaining that you did not help us.
- Major Kennedy : Have you ever complained about food ?
- Answer :
(to K) I did not come because I felt you must know.
- Major Kennedy : In the agreement at Tarawa you remember you agreed to stay on Rabi for 2 years.
- Answer :
(to K). Yes.
- Major Kennedy: You said that you did not wish to live on this island because of the food. Is that because of the food or is it because of home sickness ?

Answer: Both. You know.
(to K)

Major Kennedy : What is the strongest thing in your mind, hunger or homesickness ?

Answer: We don't want Major Kennedy because he didn't think about us. (Question evaded).
(to K)

Major Kennedy : Tito said he had heard two different statements from me (1) that Rabi belonged to the Banabans and afterwards when they had been here some time that it belonged to the Government.
(to Tito)

Major Kennedy : Who was the interpreter who said that this belonged to Banabans ?

Tito : To people. Haven't you all heard from him that Rabi is yours ? Isn't that true ?

Yes (by whole body).

Major Kennedy : If you think that Rabi is entirely yours, why were these statements made about a two years agreement during which time you were to live here and tell the High Commissioner whether you wanted the Island or not ?

Tito : About last Xmas the Banabans wanted to kill some cattle and asked Major Kennedy who owned the cattle ? He said these are yours not mine.

Major Kennedy : I instructed one of the overseers to kill some of the cattle for a feast. He is using this to show that the island was theirs. Later I refused and would not allow them to kill cattle beyond the natural increase because the High Commissioner owned the island.

Major Kennedy : (repeated question to Tito)

Tito : We heard from Major Kennedy that everything on this land was theirs (evasion).

Major Kennedy : Did you or did you not hear from me that you could not sell things like launches, cattle or horses ?

Tito : We don't know about that question.

Major Kennedy : In your opinion can you sell a launch to an Indian ? If a thing belongs to a person, he can sell it.

Tito : (Just said he didn't understand the question). We cannot answer that question.

Major Kennedy : Have you ever heard from Rotan the things which I explained to him i.e. the things you can do and the things you cannot do.

Tito : We are getting tangled by these questions and don't want to answer them, but we don't want Major Kennedy.

Major Kennedy : Do you remember hearing me tell you at Tarawa and other places before we came here that I had in writing the instructions from the High Commissioner to me.

Is there any man here who has ever asked to see that letter ?

Answer : No.

Major Kennedy : Is Rotan here ? Will you answer a question ?
Have you asked to see the letter and has
any man ever asked you to see it on his behalf ?

Rotan : We don't want any more questions.

D.C.N. : Major Kennedy is asking you questions to help
me understand the true position on Rabi and
unless you answer I cannot understand the
position. Unless you answer the questions
fairly and honestly you will not assist me
at all.

D.C.N. : I will not take up your time in telling
(to gathering you the various events commencing from when
in reply to you first considered the question of leaving the
questions). Gilbert Islands and coming to Rabi with a view
to making it your permanent home for yourselves
and your generations to come. When you arrived
at Rabi you were more or less refugees, but you
were far better off than the usual type of
refugee, because you had a beautiful
fertile island with fresh water streams,
coconut palms, rich fertile flats and
forest produce with which to build houses.
You were rich and you enjoyed the facilities
of a regular steamship service from Suva to
Rabi. You were therefore able to buy foods
and supplies from Suva. When you arrived
you were expected to do everything in your
power to try and make a success of making
this island of Rabi your permanent home.
The immediate and essential conditions for
making the scheme a success consisted of
firstly building houses of bush construction
similar to the one here; secondly, to
plant food gardens; and thirdly to take
advantage of the very valuable coconut
plantations growing on most of the beaches
around the island.

It is your duty to endeavour to honour the
agreement which you made before you came to
Rabi Island and to put on trial for 2 years
in the interests of yourselves and your
children the making of Rabi Island your home.

If it is not your wish to make Rabi Island
your home then it will be my duty to advise
your High Commissioner that you do not wish
to stay and that you wish to return to your
homeland - Banaba. It lies with you to make that
decision. It is not my duty to influence you, but
it is my duty to endeavour to lay before you the
advantages and disadvantages of both Banaba and
Rabi Island. What I tell you about Banaba is what
I have learnt, and you must forgive me for any
errors and omissions. Your homeland, Banaba, is
slowly being mined by the British Phosphate
Company and within the next 40 or 50 years
there will be little left of your island other
than the fringe of coconut palms down near the
coast. You yourselves can best answer the
question as to whether you should return to
Banaba there to rear your children and at the
end of 50 years without the revenue that you
are now deriving from the mining activities
that are at present in progress there or to
make this fertile island of Rabi your permanent
home. Here on Rabi with the revenue you derive

from Banaba you can be better off than any of the other races now living in Fiji; by other races I mean Polynesians, Melanesians and Indians. Here on Rabi you can build permanent houses, schools, hospitals and all the services necessary such as water, electric light and sanitation. All this you can do from the monies you receive from Banaba. In addition to the monies you receive from Banaba by cultivating the rich lands of this island and by working the copra plantations you will obtain sufficient money to keep you and your families well fed, well clothed, well housed and, above all, happy and contented.

When the time comes that you no longer receive revenue from Banaba you should have established yourselves on Rabi Island so that you could live in peace and plenty. You are very fortunate you are here today because the High Commissioner considers that this is the best answer to your future and the future of your children. That is why Major Kennedy was sent here to endeavour to make this island your home. There are bound to be difficulties with such a project as this. It can only be a success if you all pull together and bury and petty grievances. I propose soon to adjourn this meeting for about two hours to allow you to discuss over your fires what has been said to you this morning. I want you all to come back this afternoon because I wish to ascertain your wishes as to whether you wish to remain on Rabi Island or return to Banaba. If you wish to return to Banaba I shall convey that wish to the High Commissioner. If you wish to make Rabi your home we can then discuss intensification for settling you here permanently. If you decide to remain the question that you brought up this morning with regard to your movements to and from Rabi and visits to Rabi by outsiders and other such questions can then be discussed. Most of those questions can be dealt with by your Island Council.

Before adjourning I wish to thank you for your patience and the attention you have given to these discussions. Thank you !

Meeting resumed at 3.00 p.m.

D.C.N. :

Before we adjourned this morning I asked you all when you went back to your houses to discuss the various matters brought before the Council this morning. The most important matter under discussion is whether you wish to make Rabi your home or whether you wish to return to Banaba.

The only means of ascertaining your wishes is to take a vote and this I now propose to proceed to do.

There are two ways of taking the vote, one is by raising the hand and the other is by a ballot paper. I think in your interests that a ballot paper will give a more true and accurate answer. Have you any of you anything to say about this suggestion ?

Iete : Before we take this vote we want to know what the price of this island was!

D.C.N. : I am given to understand that the purchase price is in the vicinity of £25,000 A.

Iete : We are agreeable to buy this land at this price.

D.C.N. : The High Commissioner purchased Rabi Island to see if it was suitable for a new home for you.

I do not know if the High Commissioner will keep it for any other purpose but I am sure he will give it to you if you decide to make it your permanent home now. It lies with you to make the decision whether to stay or whether to go, and only by voting will this be possible.

Iete : Some of us cannot write.

D.C.N. : Those who cannot write may be assisted by those who can.

Rotan : When we were at Ocean Island we did not think we would be separated like this.

D.C.N. : How am I to convey to the High Commissioner the wishes of the Banaban community as to whether they wish to make Rabi their permanent home or not unless each head of a family expresses his wish in writing.

Rotan : When we were at Ocean Island they discussed the question of buying another home amongst themselves. They decided to buy an island in Fiji. (Evasion of question.)

D.C.N. :
(to Rotan) I am afraid you are avoiding the issue which is very simple. Does the Banaban community wish to make Rabi its permanent home now or does it wish the High Commissioner to make arrangements to return them to Banaba? The answer is "We want to stay" or "We want to go".

Rotan : The Banabans may want Rabi but they may want it for a future home.

D.C.N. : If Rotan cannot answer my question I am unable to give the Banaban people any assistance or advice.

You arrived here on 15.12.45 on agreement to stay here for two years and within that period you have to make up your minds whether you wish to live here now or return to Ocean Island now.

Iete : We asked you what was the price of the island and you said £25,000 A. and now we have decided to take the island at this price.

(The question was re-read to Iete who evaded it by saying "We agreed to buy it for our island".)

We want to be under your control and do not want Major Kennedy with us any more.

D.C.N. :

I am only trying to find out whether you intend to make Rabi your permanent home or whether you wish to return to Banaba.

We want to know so that the construction of schools, hospitals, etc. may be expedited.

Do not think of me or of Major Kennedy think of yourselves. The Banaban people and the children who will come to the Banaban people. Are they going to be happy on Rabi Island or on Banaba ?

It is for you people to decide, not us, but whatever you decide your wishes will be conveyed to the High Commissioner and it is the duty of the High Commissioner to make you happy and contented.

If you decide to stay on Rabi Island there is much to be done as it is nearly the end of June, four-five months before the next hurricane season and it is most important that you do everything now to ensure that you have houses that can stand up to the strong wind and rain.

As soon as you wish to help yourselves experts in house-building can be obtained for you and they are the Fijian people of this Colony. There are no great difficulties, only those that you make yourselves, and we again come to the question that started at 3 o'clock this afternoon and that is to take a vote as to whether you wish to make Rabi your permanent home now or return to Banaba now.

Iete :

We wish to stay on this island.

D.C.N. :

I want everybody's individual vote. I will give you the paper and you may vote.

Rotan :

If these things are done for the Banabans they must not be done until the Banabans agree. Was the island bought by Banaban Trust Funds or otherwise ?

D.C.N. :

We are back to where we were at 3 p.m.

You certainly cannot exist under these conditions for 2 years. You will have to have houses to protect you from the winds and rain even if you return to Banaba.

Rotan :

(Again gave an evasive answer.)

D.C.N. :

I have already told you three or four times how the island was purchased. It lies with the Banabans to decide (1) not to make Rabi their home when they will go back to Banaba (2) to stay on Rabi when immediate plans will have to be made for the construction of schools, hospitals, water supplies etc. It is for you to decide.

Iete :

Do you want us to give you the money for this land ?

D.C.N. :

I have nothing to do with the sale or purchase of the island; that has already been dealt with by the High Commissioner.

- Tito : I told you this afternoon that we wish to stay on this island for ever and to be under the Government of Fiji but we do not want Major Kennedy to remain with us.
- D.C.N. : It is my duty to lay before the High Commissioner everything that has been said today and it is for the High Commissioner to decide what is to be done, having read these notes being taken down by Mr. Harwood. And again I come back to the one question - what are the best means of finding out the wishes of you, the Banaban community, as to your wishes with regard to making Rabi Island your permanent home, which means that you forsake your island of Banaba.
- Rotan : We can't give it up.
- D.C.N. : It is for you to decide. I have tried to tell you this morning both the advantages and disadvantages of Banaba and Rabi.
- Rotan : Would the Commissioner please explain what is meant by staying on Rabi and going back to Banaba ?
- D.C.N. : Is it necessary for me to answer that question ? I have already told you this morning what it means to stay on Rabi or return to Banaba.
Am I to understand from your reluctance to give me a direct answer, assuming that you are speaking for the whole of the Banaban community, that you wish to own two islands and wander freely between them ?
- Rotan : That was indeed our agreement at Ocean Island (agreement refers to what they agreed to between themselves).
- D.C.N. : I am afraid there is little I can do to help you further in this discussion. If you are unable to make up your own minds it will be my duty to so report to the High Commissioner.
- Kaitu : There is some important work to do at Banaba in connection with the boundaries. That is why we cannot give a direct answer.
- D.C.N. : Rotan, don't waste my time. I have a very big area to administer and I can't stand here for you to fence with me. It is not a difficult question to decide. It is either "Yes" or "No". "Yes, we stay on Rabi Island" or "No, we do not stay on Rabi Island". If it is "Yes", we get down to work and settle in here, if it is "No" you will probably have to wait here at least two years to enable arrangements to be made to accommodate at Ocean Island or somewhere else.
I don't want to waste your time. I told you this morning the advantages and disadvantages of Rabi Island. It is for you to decide, not one of you, and it is my duty to advise the High Commissioner and the reason I wish you to give a decision is to enable the Government of Fiji and W.P.H.C. to do everything in their power to make you happy and contented here. It is hard for you and for the Government but the answer lies with you, not with me nor with Major Kennedy, but with you and in making that decision you have to remember your children. Is it better for them to inherit the island of Rabi or for them to live on Banaba. That

is all I have to say.

Rotan : I am sorry for wasting your time but there is one thing we are afraid to answer now and that is that question because Banaba will be lost to us.

D.C.N. : When the Phosphates are finished no ships will go there, you will get no money and you will be the only people there.

Where is the headquarters of the Banaban Government going to be or do you envisage two Governments, one at Rabi, one at Banaba ?

Rotan : We do not think of making two Government If we are going to stay on Rabi will Ocean Island be lost to us or not ?

When pressed

Question by Rotan made statement

" We agree to stay on Rabi Island for ever if Ocean Island is not taken away from us."

Answer

" This is a matter which I will have to refer to the High Commissioner. I will take the necessary steps to place it before him as soon as possible. I will ask him to give the Banaban people an answer quickly."

Kaitu : We do not want Major Kennedy.

D.C.N. : Is there anything else you would like to say before I go ?

Rotan : We wish to ask about our lost money.

D.C.N. : The matter is being enquired into by the Police.

Rotan : On behalf of the Banabans I thank you for coming here and if we have anything we wish to report we will tell you.

D.C.N. : All reports must be made through Kennedy and I hope to visit you again I thank you again for being so patient this very long meeting today.

(Sgd.) J.E. WINDRUM
D.C.N.
17.6.46

Also present : L.W. HARWOOD
Agricultural Officer North

J. PROBERT 17.6.46.

A.S.O.P.

WESTERN PACIFIC.

NO.

23.

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC,
SUVA, FIJI,

20⁹ September, 1946.

Sir,

2.9.46.

With reference to my telegram No. 168 of the 4th July, regarding the scheme for settling the native population of Ocean Island on Rabi Island in Fiji, I have the honour to forward a copy of a memorandum by Mr. H.E. Maude, M.B.E., of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony staff, dealing with the question of the future of these people, with special reference to their lands and funds.

2. Mr. Maude has had considerable personal contact with the Banaban population of Ocean Island during the past seventeen years. In 1934, as Lands Commissioner, he completed a lands settlement of the island, with the exception of one village, and codified their system of land tenure; and since that he has acted as Administrative Officer, Ocean Island, on three occasions. I therefore considered him to be best fitted to deal with questions relating to their future welfare.

3. In his memorandum, Mr. Maude has dealt exhaustively with the history of land policy on Ocean Island and the creation of the Banaban Funds, with a view to presenting a composite picture of the present problems relating to the community, now that they have been collected from the various centres to which they had been taken by the Japanese and settled temporarily on Rabi pending a final decision as to whether they are to remain there or return once again to Ocean Island.

4.

The Right Honourable

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

4. In accordance with the agreement made with the Banabans at the time of their removal to Rabi, this decision must rest with them as a community and the Government is bound to abide by it. Before requiring them to make their choice, however, it is necessary, as Mr. Maude points out in paragraph 62 of his memorandum, that the Government should state clearly to them the terms on which they will be permitted to reside permanently on Rabi and the effect which such settlement would have on their lands on Ocean Island and on their measure of control over the Banaban Funds.

5. The several recommendations for the settlement of the Banaban problem made in the memorandum, and summarized in paragraph 74, have been discussed by me with Mr. Maude and other officers conversant with Ocean Island affairs, and various changes adopted as a result have been incorporated in the final text. I am, therefore, in agreement with the memorandum, and recommend it for your consideration as offering a reasonable prospect of satisfying the demands and aspirations of this community and at the same time securing their future welfare.

6. It will, I think, be generally agreed that for the Banabans to return from Rabi to Ocean Island, as a community, would be contrary to their best interests and that there can be little hope for their advancement should they elect to do so. This being so, I propose to do all in my power to persuade them to make their future homeland on Rabi and, with this end in view, to make the terms of their remaining there as attractive as possible.

7. In order to enable me to present these terms to the Banabans I should be grateful, therefore, for a decision on the question of the ownership of under-surface mineral rights, as raised in paragraph 56 of the memorandum, which is fundamental to the whole question of the control of Banaban Funds. If, as I anticipate, your decision is that such rights are properly vested in the Crown but that the royalties resulting from the exploitation of the rights may continue, as heretofore, to be applied "to or for the benefit of" the Banaban community, I should be glad to learn whether you are in agreement with my proceeding along the general lines set out in Part IV. of the memorandum and, in particular, with the recommendations that, in the event of the Banabans electing to remain on Rabi:-

- (1) the title to worked-out lands in the 1931 area on Ocean Island should revert to the native landowners - paragraph 52;
- (2) the Banaban Royalty Trust and Provident Funds should be amalgamated - paragraph 58;
- (3) a Banaban Funds Committee should be created with limited powers of control over the expenditure of Banaban Funds - paragraph 58; and that
- (4) no expenditure should be sanctioned from such Funds for the benefit of individual Banabans who may choose to return to Ocean Island - paragraph 64.

It is presumed that should the Banabans reject the terms of settlement and decide to return to Ocean Island, there would be no objection to the continued retention of Rabi, as suggested in paragraph 68, against

against the day when it may again be required for their homeland.

8. I would emphasize, in conclusion, the desirability of putting the final choice of remaining on Rabi or returning to Ocean Island before the Banaban community at the earliest possible date, since they are somewhat naturally dissatisfied with their present position on the island without permanent housing and with medical and educational facilities which leave much to be desired. Each day's delay sensibly diminishes the prospect of the Banabans ultimately agreeing to stay on Rabi and I should be grateful, therefore, for your early approval, if possible by telegraph, to my endeavouring to effect a final settlement with them on the lines now recommended.

9. A copy of the memorandum has been sent to Mr. Gaze, the General Manager of the British Phosphate Commissioners.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

(Signed) A.G. GRANTHAM

High Commissioner.

WESTERN PACIFIC.

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5. The several recommendations for the settlement of the Banaban problem made in the memorandum, and summarized in paragraph 74, have been discussed by me with Mr. Haude and other officers conversant with Ocean Island affairs, and various changes adopted as a result have been incorporated in the final text. I am, therefore, in agreement with the memorandum, and recommend it for your consideration as offering a reasonable prospect of satisfying the demands and aspirations of this community and at the same time securing their future welfare.

6. It will, I think, be generally agreed that for the Banabans to return from Rabi to Ocean Island, as a community, would be contrary to their best interests and that there can be little hope for their advancement should they elect to do so. This being so, I propose to do all in my power to persuade them to make their future homeland on Rabi and, with this end in view, to make the terms of their remaining there as attractive as possible.

The following is a statement of the intentions of Government with regard to the future of the Banaban Community on Rabi Island, with special reference to their lands and funds and other matters incidental thereto, and is drawn up on the understanding, which a majority of the Banabans hereinafter affirm, that they desire to reside on Rabi and regard it as their headquarters and home.

(A). As regards lands on Ocean Island -

(1). Such decision to reside on Rabi Island shall in no way affect any rights to lands possessed by the Banabans on Ocean Island;

(2). The title to all worked out phosphate lands, which have, or may in future, come into possession of the Crown shall revert to the Banabans.

(B). As regards lands on Rabi Island -

(3). The ownership of Rabi Island, with the exception of a Fiji Government reserve of 50 acres at Katherine Bay, shall be vested in the Rabi Island Council on behalf of the Banaban Community resident in Rabi Island, subject to the creation at Nuka of a Government Station of an area to be agreed upon by the Island Council in consultation with the Banaban Adviser;

(4). The division of lands on Rabi Island, and the system of land tenure and inheritance shall be in accordance with legislation to be enacted by the Rabi Island Council;

(5). The ownership of all the assets of the former estate, including stock, tools, houses, etc. shall be vested in the Rabi Island Council on behalf of the Banaban Community resident here and no such assets shall be disposed of except in such manner as may be jointly agreed upon by the Banaban Adviser and the Council.

(C). As regards Banaban Funds -

(6). The Banaban Royalty Trust and Provident Funds shall be amalgamated into one fund to be called the Banaban Fund which, save for the payment of annuities as at present, shall be used exclusively for the benefit of the Banaban Community on Rabi Island;

(7). The management of the Fund shall be vested in a Banaban Fund Trust Board consisting of the Banaban Adviser as Chairman and of not more than five members of the Rabi Island Council elected by the Council as members; such Board shall be empowered to deal with problems connected with annuities and like matters. Decisions of the Board in such matters shall be subject to the approval of the Governor or of such Officer as he may appoint for the purpose;

(8). Residence on Rabi Island for more than six months in each financial year shall be an essential qualification for all members of the Banaban Fund Trust Board;

(9). The Banaban Fund Trust Board shall draw up annual Accounts and Estimates showing, inter alia, the revenue accruing from royalties and interest from the Banaban Fund, and the expenditure on different services. Such Accounts and Estimates shall be submitted to the Council for its consideration and when passed by it, shall be forwarded by the Banaban Adviser to the Governor of Fiji for his approval. The Accounts and Estimates shall be published and shall be made available to the Banaban Community;

(10). The Board shall also deal with all problems arising from the Landholders' Fund. The capital sum invested in the Landholders' Fund shall be handed to the Banaban Fund Trust Board for investment as Trustees on

behalf of each landholder, who shall have the same rights, in accordance with Banaban customary law, over his invested capital funds as he would have had over the lands which such capital funds represent. The Board shall also deal with all problems arising from the Landholders' Fund. Decisions of the Board in such matters shall be subject to the approval of the Governor or of such Officer as he may appoint for the purpose;

(11). At a public meeting of the Banaban Community held at Rabi Island on the 9th May, 1947, it was agreed, at the unanimous request of those present, that His Excellency the Governor of Fiji should be petitioned to permit the withdrawal by individual landholders of part or the whole of their capital invested in the Landholders' Fund for the purpose of effecting permanent improvements to their landholdings on Rabi Island, the prior consent of the Governor of Fiji being required in each instance. The meeting was informed that an amendment to the present legislation in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony would probably be necessary, in the event of this proposal receiving the approval of the Governor.

(D). As regards Annuities -

(12). The payment of Annuities, in accordance with the terms of the 1937 Annuities Settlement, shall continue unless varied by the Governor of Fiji consequent upon recommendations made by the Banaban Fund Trust Board;

(13). Such annuities shall be payable in Fiji currency to those resident in Fiji and in Australian currency to those resident elsewhere.

(E). As regards visits to Ocean Island -

(14). The Banabans shall be permitted, subject to the provisions of the laws of Fiji and further subject to shipping being available, to travel freely between Rabi

Island and Ocean Island and, subject to the rights of the British Phosphate Commissioners over any lands purchased or leased to them, to reside on Ocean Island.

(F). As regards Taxation on Rabi Island -

(15). The Banabans on Rabi Island shall be subject to the laws of Fiji, including the laws relating to Taxation, in the same manner as other residents of Fiji. The Banabans will consequently be eligible to receive all normal services provided by the Government of Fiji on the same terms and conditions as such services are provided for other residents of Fiji.

(G). As regards the Banaban Adviser -

(16). The Banaban Adviser hereinbefore mentioned shall be an Officer of the Government of Fiji, appointed by the Governor to advise the Banaban Community resident on Rabi Island on all matters connected with its social and economic advancement. He shall be paid from the Banaban Fund at such salary as may be fixed from time to time by the Governor, after consultation with the Island Council and the Governor shall have power to vary the terms of, or terminate, his appointment.

The above

The above statement of the intentions of Government have been read out and explained fully to the Banaban Community a majority of which has, by voting in a secret ballot, the results of which are recorded in the Appendix hereto, signified its acceptance of the same.

(Signed) H.E. Maude,

Resident Commissioner,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,
for the High Commissioner for the
Western Pacific.

(Signed) P.D. Macdonald,

Acting Assistant Colonial Secretary,
for the Governor of Fiji.

(Signed) F.G.L. Holland,

Administrative Officer,
Rabi Island.

(Signed) Bauro Ratieta,

Assistant Administrative Officer,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.
(Interpreter in Gilbertese language).

(Signed) Iete Eri.

(Signed) Rotan. ✓

(Signed) Kabanti.

(Signed) R. Kaibuariki.

(Signed) Akeriba. ✓

(Signed) Tebuke. ✓

(Signed) Kaitu.

(Signed) Keangiho. ✓

(Signed) Tarakai Kamarie.

(Signed) Katarake.

(Signed) Mataio.

(Signed) Tekai Arekibo.

(Signed) Auriaria.

(Signed) K. Ueanimarakī.

(Signed) Tetebano Taberanibou.

(Signed) Tekenimatang.

(Signed) Naikara Kake.

(Signed) Teremita.

(Signed) Ikamawa.

(Signed) Tito Airu. ✓

Representatives of the
Banaban Community.

Signed 12/5/47.

APPENDIX.

The following are the results of a vote taken by secret ballot, held in Rabi Island on the 10th and 11th May, 1947, at which 318 (94.6%) out of 336 of the population over the age of 18 voted; the voting was supervised by the undersigned:

For making Rabi their headquarters and home -	270 (84.9%)
Against making Rabi their headquarters and home -	48 (15.1%)
Majority in favour -	222.

(Signed) H. E. Maude,

Resident Commissioner,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,
for the High Commissioner for the
Western Pacific.

(Signed) Iete Eri.

(Signed) P. D. Macdonald,

Acting Assistant Colonial Secretary,
for the Governor of Fiji.

(Signed) Rotan.

(Signed) F. G. L. Holland,

Administrative Officer, Rabi Island.

(Signed) Kabanti.

(Signed) Bauro Ratieta,

Assistant Administrative Officer,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,
(Interpreter in Gilbertese language).

(Signed) Akeriba.

was forwarded by Mr P.D. Macdonald to the Colonial Secretary, Fiji, on the 15th May, together with a detailed account of the negotiations.

2. Mr Macdonald, Assistant Colonial Secretary, Fiji, representing that Government and myself, representing the administration of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, arrived at Rabi on the evening of the 7th May and left at approximately midnight on the 13th. Six days in all were therefore spent on the island: of these the 8th to the 10th were occupied in discussions with the Banaban community, part of the 10th and all the 11th in balloting on whether they wished to remain on Rabi or return to Ocean Island and the final two days in further conferences with the Banabans in explanation of the consequences of their final decision and in discussions with Major F.G.L. Holland, O.B.E., G.M., the Administrative Officer on Rabi Island (now to be known as the Banaban Adviser) on Banaban accounts and other allied matters.

3. The "Statement of Intentions" is based on the draft "Memorandum of Agreement" prepared by me at Tarawa in accordance with the instructions contained in the correspondence ending with the High Commissioner's telegram No.171 of the 5th March. This draft, which incorporated the various recommendations set out in my memorandum of the 2nd September, 1946, on "The Future of the Banaban Population", was discussed by Mr Macdonald with
the Attorney-General

A copy of this letter has been
forwarded to the Ag. R. Cr.,
G. & E.I.C.

M.v. "Sydney Star",

11th July, 1947.

Confidential.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward a copy of the final "Statement of the Intentions of the Government" regarding the future of the Banaban Community on Rabi Island, as agreed to between the Banaban representatives on the one hand and those of the Fiji and Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony administrations on the other at a series of meetings held at Rabi from the 8th to the 11th May, 1947. The delay in forwarding the document is regretted, being due to the fact that it was, with other notes relating to the Banaban negotiations, left in the High Commission office on my departure from Fiji with written instructions that it was to be forwarded to New Zealand by the following air mail; owing, however, to some oversight, it was evidently sent by surface mail and consequently reached me only a few days before my departure from the Dominion. Its non-receipt is fortunately of less importance since a second original was forwarded by

His Excellency

The Acting High Commissioner

for the Western Pacific,

Suva, Fiji.

the Attorney-General and various changes incorporated in conformity with his advice. The Attorney-General, furthermore, doubted whether the document would, in any case, have any legal validity and felt that it would be best cast in the form of a statement of proposed Government policy vis-a-vis the Banabans, assuming that they elected to make Rabi their future homeland.

4. I had anticipated, when drafting my main memorandum referred to above, that any proposals made to the Banabans along the lines there advocated would meet with a favourable response; and the event did not disappoint my hopes. It is true that nostalgia for their old homeland was evident on all sides, and particularly among the older Banabans, operating as a powerful drag away from the consideration of Rabi as a future home. Indeed, so potent was the very understandable call of their ancestral home that several leaders of the community were deaf to all argument based on more material considerations, and I feared more than once that their persuasive appeals might carry the rest with them on a wave of idealistic sentimentality. The superior advantages of remaining on Rabi under the terms now proposed were, however, obvious to all except the incurably homesick, and the younger generation in particular were able to appreciate the better economic, social and educational opportunities to which they, and their children, would fall heir.

5. Few native races are more able than the Banabans to appreciate on which side of their bread the butter lies and I was not surprised to find that, after the small but vocal minority of sentimentalists had tried, and failed, to gain their point, the community settled down to their time-honoured technique of using the Government's latest proposals (as set out in the "Statement of Intentions") as a lever to gain further concessions and a yet

concessions and a yet larger measure of control over their funds. The relative generosity of the new policy clearly surprised then; but it was not long before more than one speaker had made it plain that, while acceptable as a step forward, the proposals did not as yet meet fully the demands of at least a section of the community.

6. These ultimate demands, as detailed by individual speakers, may be summarized as follows :-

- (1) the capital, as well as the interest, standing to the credit of each owner in the Landholders Fund should be handed over to the owner for investment or disposal at his or her absolute discretion;
- (2) all future royalties payable to the Royalties Trust Fund should be divided among the owners of the surface rights, if possible in proportion to the volume of phosphate taken off each land, again for investment or disposal at his or her discretion; and
- (3) any balance lying in the Royalty Trust Fund after the erection of the necessary communal and other buildings on Rabi and the completion of the related public works programme should be divided among the existing members of the community. The Provident Fund would be, of course, used primarily for the above purpose but it was recognized that it will probably prove insufficient without assistance from the Royalty Trust Fund.

7. These demands were admitted by the Banabans themselves to be based on self-interest and framed regardless of the welfare of succeeding generations. The proposal as to the devision of the capital in the Landholders Fund is, furthermore, contrary to Banaban customary law while those relating to the Royalty Trust and Provident Funds are in opposition to the policy hitherto adopted by the Government of regarding royalties from under-surface rights as being the property of the community as a whole rather than the individual owners of surface rights (vide, in this connexion, paragraphs 20 - 23 of my main memorandum.

8. With the settlement of Rabi, however, the Banaban arguments for exclusive and unfettered control over his own funds, as summarized below, will be greatly strengthened. As regards the Landholders Fund the Banaban recognizes that each capital deposit represents, in monetary form, the land formerly possessed by him and that, while he was living on Ocean Island itself, he could not logically expect to be able to spend it contrary to Banaban customary law regulating the inheritance of land. He points out, however, that the object of this restriction was to ensure that his descendants would, even if they no longer possessed any land, still enjoy an income from the interest on the capital representing their former holding. Now, however, that he will possess his own landholdings on Rabi (bigger and better than any he had on Ocean Island), which he can and must pass on to his children in accordance with Banaban custom, he considers that the whole object of the Landholders Fund has ceased and that he should be allowed to have the free use of both the capital and interest in it.

9. Regarding royalties (whether new or already invested in the Royalty Trust) the Banaban argues, as he has always done, that all under surface rights belong absolutely to the owners of the surface rights and that the Government has no right to withhold his royalty payments, which should be paid to each individual landowner and not diverted to communal use. A majority of the Banabans would except the payment of 2d per ton made to the Provident Fund for the purchase and development of Rabi as their community home, since this was originally agreed to by the people, but an increasing minority of the younger men would have this sum also divided up and all development and other community expenses met from taxation.

10. The attitude taken by Mr Macdonald and myself to the Banaban demands was to the effect that we were not empowered to discuss such a drastic amendment of policy and that, in any case, we were of the strong opinion that the time for their

time for their discussion was not now, when so much effort and expenditure was required for the setting up and development of their new home and it was quite impossible to forecast what percentage of the Provident and Royalty Trust Funds would be needed before the work was complete. Once their public buildings, schools, churches, roads and other community requirements had been met it would be possible for the Banaban Fund Trust Board (who are elected by themselves) to recommend such division of Trust Funds as they thought best.

11. In the case of the Landholders Fund we agreed to recommend to Your Excellency that individual landholders should be permitted, with your prior sanction in each instance, to withdraw part or the whole of their capital investment for the purpose of effecting permanent improvements to their new landholdings on Rabi. Further than this very reasonable concession we were not prepared to go, since it was obvious that the majority at any rate of the younger Banabans wanted to be given their capital to waste on a few months of riotous and extravagant living, quite regardless (as they admitted themselves) of the rights or welfare of succeeding generations. Past experience confirms the powers of the Banabans to get rid of large capital sums in a few months, for in 1912 they were handed £7,000 and within a short period had nothing left to show for it.

12. Once everybody had had their say and every conceivable argument had been repeated, the Banabans were quite prepared to agree to :-

- (1) the holding of a secret ballot to establish whether the majority of the community desired to make Rabi their future home or return to Ocean Island; and
- (2) if the verdict was in favour of staying on Rabi, to agree to the terms governing the control of their lands and funds, and other incidental matters, as set out in the Government "Statement of Intentions".

The secret ballot was accordingly held on the 10th and 11th

May with the

May with the following result, no less than 318 (94.6%) out of the 336 of the population over the age of 18 voting.-

- (1) For making Rabi the Banaban homeland - 270 (84.9%)
- (2) Against making Rabi the Banaban homeland - 48 (15.1%)
- (3) Majority in favour - 222

The "Statement of Intentions" was thereupon unanimously approved and signed by all parties on the 12th May.

13. In this satisfactory solving of a series of complex problems concerning Banaban lands and funds, which have been a thorn in the flesh of the administration for some 30 years, much credit is due to the present Administrative Officer in charge of their affairs, Major Holland, who for many months had been engaged in patient explanation and tactful propaganda with this end in view. So marked was the change in the spirit of the community (and no less in its material state) since my last visit a year previously that I have little doubt that Major Holland, who obviously had the confidence of the community and their welfare at heart, could have brought the negotiations to a successful termination without our presence. The fact, however, that official representatives of the two Governments concerned were present at the final proceedings may serve to prevent future misunderstanding.

14. With the decision to make Rabi their future homeland, the Banabans become, as a community, subjects of the Colony of Fiji. After discussion with Mr Macdonald I recommend that the official date of handing over their funds and records to the Fiji Government should be the 31st December, 1947, since the majority of the people will be away engaged in boundary-marking on Ocean Island until the end of this year and, as a consequence, it will not be possible for the Banaban Adviser to organise elections to, and the functioning of, the Island Council and Trust Fund Board pending their return. The interval will, furthermore, give the High Commission time to straighten out the position as regards the Banaban Funds and hand them over with all receipts and payments complete to the end of the year.

end of the year.

15. The following details of the final action required before the management of Banaban affairs can be handed to the Fiji Government may be of assistance to the Western Pacific High Commission staff. -

- (1) A complete tabular summary of all revenue and expenditure from Banaban Funds year by year from the beginning (either by calendar or financial years, whichever is the easier) should be prepared and forwarded to the Banaban Adviser, for the information of the Island Council, as promised to the community. This statement need not give details of each item of expenditure but only the service on which it was incurred, e.g. drought relief, upkeep of hospital, annuities, etc., and the revenue need only show each fund separately, not each payment.
- (2) A complete statement, which would presumably be based on (1), showing the position of each Banaban Fund as at the 31st December, 1947.
- (3) Any necessary action to amend the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony legislation in the event of Your Excellency approving the recommendation contained in paragraph 11. Speaking without the records, it appears to me that no action is, in fact, required, since the Ocean Island lands code has never been gazetted in accordance with the provisions of the Native Land Codes Ordinance, 1940.

Once the above action is completed, it only remains to hand over the actual funds, files and records to a representative of the Fiji Government, presumably during the first week in January. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that the summary required at (1) cannot be prepared by the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, whose records have all been destroyed by enemy action, but that the information is available in the High Commission office. It is suggested that it is usual

for Governments to

for Governments to furnish details of the expenditure they incur from funds entrusted to their care and that the fact that the Banabans have never been given any such statements in the past should not be allowed to prevent one being prepared for them now, even though it may mean the temporary employment of an extra officer to extract the necessary facts and figures.

16. With this letter I must perforce, and with feelings of genuine regret, close nearly 20 years of association with the Banaban community, during which period I have developed a great admiration for their many sterling qualities. My recent visit to Rabi Island has convinced me that now they have decided to settle down in a locality where their industry, perseverance and rugged individualism can be given full scope, they are destined to progress rapidly in every sphere of activity. They will, however, require much sympathetic advice and assistance for some time to come, and it is to be hoped, therefore, that they may find as many firm friends in the future among officers of the Fiji Government as they have among the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony staff in the past.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

(Signed) H.E. Maude,

Resident Commissioner,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.

Rambi Island,
Fiji Group.
30th June, 1948.

Sir,

Iai karineam ae moan te bati iroura ngaira te Kauntira i aon Rambi, ibukia I-Banaba ni bane.

A bane ni boraoi nanora n onon nakoim are te Tau-taeka ni Buritan, ibukin te bai ae moan te kakawaki, are a tia n anga maiuna, ma rarana iai ara Embaea ni Buritan are bon te "Ka-inaomata".

Mangaia ae ti bubuti te Inaomata-n-okoro i an Engiran, n ai aron aei :-

Rambi, bon abara ae bou, ae mena n te aono ni Biti, ma ti bubuti nakoim ba e na inaomata mai an te Tua ni Biti, ao mai an naba ana Tua te Korone ni Kiribati ma Ereti. Ao e na tauaki taekana i an ana Tua te Kauntira n Rambi ma te Kowana i Suva.

Banaba, bon abara ni kawai, ae mena i an ana Tua te Korone ni Kiribati ma Ereti ma ti bubuti nakoim ba e na kainaomataki mai an ana tau-taeka. Ao e na tauaki taekana i an ana Tua te Kauntira ma te Kowana i Suva.

Angabai, taian angabai ni bane ske e tatanciai te Tua ni Kiribati ma Ereti ni karerekei mai aoni Banaba, ke aika nang rereke mai aon Rambi. Ti bubuti nakoim ba a na aki tauaki taekaaia i an aia babaire te Tua ni Biti ao te Tua ni Kiribati ma Ereti, ma ti bubuti ba e na tauaki taekani baireana i an ana kaetieti te Kauntira n Rambi, ao te Kowana i Suva.

Mataniwin nanora a bati ni kukurei ni bubuti te Inaomata ngkai bon te tia "Kainaomata" ngkoe.

Iai karineam ae bati iroura,
Ngaira an toro ibukia I-Banaba,
Te Kauntira n Rambi.

(Signed) Rotan Tito, Chairman.

The Administrative Officer,
Rambi Island.

TRANSLATION

Rambi Island,
Fiji.
30th June, 1948.

Sir,

We, the members of the Rambi Island Council, have the honour most respectfully to submit the following on behalf of the Banaban community. Our hearts are united in asking the British Government for something of the greatest importance, for which the British Empire has given life and blood, and that is, Independence. We ask to be granted our Independence, under England, as follows :

Rambi Island in Fiji is truly our new homeland, and we beg that it may no longer be subject to the Government of Fiji, nor also subject to the Government of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, but that its administration may be handed over to the Rambi Island Council, with the Governor at Suva.

Banaba, (Ocean Island) our old homeland, is now subject to the Government of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. We beg that the administration of Ocean Island may be handed over to the Rambi Island Council, with the Governor at Suva.

We beg that all Government taxes normally collected at Ocean Island and those to be levied at Rambi will not be held by the respective Governments of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and Fiji but will come under the control of the Rambi Island Council, with the Governor at Suva.

We rejoice when we submit our request for independence, because you (the British Government) are truly the givers of Independence.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servants,
The Rambi Island Council,

(Signed) Rotan Tito, Chairman.

The Administrative Officer,
Rambi Island.

Speech at Rambi Island, 3rd August, 1948, by
His Excellency,
Sir Brian Freeston, K.C.M.G., O.B.E.

Kam na mauri! This is my first time to visit Rambi, and my first time to meet you, the Banaban people. I am glad to see you today, and to talk to you. I come to you as the Governor of Fiji. Now that you live in Fiji, I am the Governor and not the High Commissioner. In the past the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific looked after and cared for you. Now the same person, as Governor of Fiji, will keep on giving his help to you.

2. I have learned lately some of your history, that is, how your fathers and yourselves lived at Ocean Island; about the digging up and taking away of your lands; and about your money. I have learned also of your sufferings and losses during the war years, and how, after the Japanese were beaten, you all came to Rambi. Your decision last year to make Rambi your homeland was a wise decision, and makes me glad. Rambi Island is indeed a good island, fertile and beautiful. It is 12 times as large as Ocean Island. There are 2,880 acres planted in coco-nuts. There are large areas for the grazing of cattle and horses, and for plant production, and there are many timber trees that can be used for house-building. The streams do not run dry at any time. The fruit of your labours on Rambi will be plentiful.

3. I have noted with pleasure the many things you have done during the last two years. It has given me extra pleasure to be told of the progress made by the Banaban Co-operative Society, of your housing and roadmaking plans, and of your many gardens that grow food. I shall walk around later and see for myself the work that is being done on this side of the island. I wish to remind you of the shortage of food in the world, and that by growing more food for yourselves you help other people who are hungry. The less food that comes into Rambi, the more food there is for men, women and children in other countries. It is good news that more and more copra is being sent away from Rambi. That helps you because it gives your Co-operative Society more money, and it helps the world, because copra is made into various kinds of food, and into soap, oil, and other things.

4. The Statement of Intentions that you signed last year in May gave you great freedom in the management of your own affairs. It is indeed a very important Agreement for you and your children. Your wishes were put into words and agreed to by the Government. Now I want to talk about one part, or paragraph, in the Agreement, and that paragraph is No.15. I shall read it to you: "The Banabans on Rambi Island shall be subject to the laws of Fiji, including the laws relating to Taxation, in the same manner as other residents of Fiji. The Banabans will consequently be eligible to receive all normal services provided by the Government of Fiji on the same terms and conditions as such services are provided for other residents of Fiji." The interpreter will now read this paragraph as it was translated at the time and written down: "Kaini Banaba aika a mamaeka i son Rambi, a na iriri nanon Tuan Tautaeka ni Biti ao Tuan naba te Angabai n ai aroia nake a mamaeka i son abamakoro ni Biti. A na rereke ngkanne irovia bai nako ake a tatanelai ni karerekeaki mairoun te Tautaeka ni Biti n aroia ma kawala ake a katauaki naba i bukia nake a mamaeka i son abamakoro ni Biti." Now that you have heard this

paragraph 15, I shall give you the answer to the letter you wrote a few weeks ago to the Administrative Officer, Rambai, who is also the Banaban Adviser. I have read this letter and thought over it. The letter asks for a great deal. It asks for Rambai to be independent of the Government of Fiji and for Ocean Island to be independent of the Government of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. It asks also for Rambai Island and Ocean Island to be controlled by the Rambai Island Council, with the Governor of Fiji. After I had studied your letter, I read over the Agreement signed by you last year. There I saw the paragraph that the interpreter, Tekai, has just read to you. And so, I cannot grant the request for independence, as stated in your letter.

5. You have not been long in the Colony of Fiji, and it will be a year or two more before you understand all its laws and regulations. But when you learn all about these laws of Fiji, you will find they are very like the laws of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. Within the British Empire there is one law for all, rich or poor, strong or weak, and the chief laws are the same for all Colonies. Always remember that the good things of the Colony of Fiji will come to you. You have already discovered that Fiji has higher schools for your boys, and the boys thus being educated will return later to Rambai and be leaders in the community, as administrative officials, doctors, engineers, teachers, accountants, and so on. Your Island Council now stands for the people, because it was elected by the people. It has started its work satisfactorily. The Banaban Funds Trust Board has been formed, and the Ordinance giving it power to do its work will, I hope, be passed this year. The Island Council has learned how it can help the people, separately and all together, and how it can help to keep peace and order at the same time. The Banaban Funds Trust Board has to learn how to look after the money belonging to the Banabans. The Council and the Board have my best wishes for success. The Island Regulations for Rambai which must be written shortly will protect your way of life and your customs. Thus freedom, and protection, have been and are being given to you. Never before, I believe, have you had so much control over your own affairs. But your request for extra control, independence for Rambai and Ocean Island, is one which His Majesty, King George VI, is unable to grant. My advice to you is to rejoice in your present larger freedom, and make the best use of it, for the benefit of each of you and for all of you.

6. You have done much to learn how to live happily on Rambai. For your further progress, I and the Fiji Government will help you as much as we can, and your Adviser will guide you, as he has been doing, over the rough parts of the road. I have told you how glad I am to meet you today. I want to repeat those words of welcome. Do not forget that for the work ahead, you have friends everywhere, who will always be standing near to help you onward. I am sure that if you keep on working and smiling as you have done during the last two years, you will make Rambai an island of which you and I will be truly proud.

17. 20/9/46

IN NEW HOME

OCEAN ISLANDERS

TRANSFER MADE TO RAMBI

The island of Rambli, in the Fiji group, which is the new home of about 1000 former native inhabitants of Ocean Island, who were transferred en bloc by the Western Pacific High Commission last December, was visited by the minister of the Beresford Street Congregational Church, the Rev. Clifford Welch, during a tour of the Pacific under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. Mr Welch, who returned to Auckland in the steamer Moraybank last week, also called at Nauru and Ocean Islands, and was most impressed with the progress being made in the production of phosphate.

When he visited Rambli in the missionary society's vessel John Williams a few months ago, the Ocean Islanders were still bewildered by their changed habitat, said Mr Welch yesterday. This unprecedented mass transfer of an indigenous population in the Pacific had been necessary because the islanders' food supplies were being progressively reduced by the extensive phosphate workings on Ocean Island.

Adjustment Not Easy

Rambli was a beautiful spot covering an area of 29 square miles which had previously been owned by a copra firm from whom it had been bought lock, stock and barrel, said Mr Welch. At the time of his visit the new inhabitants were living in tents and a few prefabricated huts, and were making use of cows, horses and equipment left behind by the original residents.

Adjustment to their new way of life was not easy for the Ocean Islanders, Mr Welch continued. They were puzzled by Rambli's animals, hills, waterfall and bush, which they had not known on their own barren island. As they had been brought up on tinned milk, they did not like it fresh. They also had to learn the principles of agriculture and other arts. Because they were not used to a seasonal climate, a native medical practitioner was stationed on Rambli to guard against any ill-effects on their health.

Mr Welch said he believed the move was an excellent idea and would give the natives a fuller life. The colder climate should make them more virile and harder workers, and they should become a wealthy population if they made the most of the natural advantages of the island, which had good soil capable of growing all kinds of fruit. It was visited regularly by the copra boat Yanawai. In charge was a district officer appointed by the Western Pacific High Commission.

Production of Phosphate

"I think New Zealand should be told that the men are working extraordinarily hard, and it is amazing what has been done since the island was re-occupied," said Mr Welch, in commenting on his visit to Nauru. Although the production of phosphate was not anything like it was before the war, it was remarkable what was being done in less than a year after starting again from scratch.

Chinese indentured labour had been brought from Hongkong and work was going on 24 hours a day. Prefabricated buildings had arrived from Australia, but living conditions were nothing like they were before the war. The first party of European women and children had returned to the island just before he left. Workers were being highly paid, but they had no source of entertainment, apart from a cinema.

Until the cantilever plant was restored, the phosphate had to be loaded into the ships from lighters. It was taken out to the edge of the reef on an endless belt, which deposited it into buckets in a lighter. The lighter, which carried about five tons at a time, was towed to the ship by a launch and the buckets of phosphate were lifted out by the ship's winches.

Workers Highly Praised

When a westerly swell arose, loading from the reef had to cease and the ship put to sea until it subsided. By this method 1000 tons of phosphate were loaded in a day, compared with about 100 tons an hour when the cantilever was used. At present, a ship would be lucky to get away in ten days. At Ocean Island, where loading had always been done by lighter, the Gilbertese and Chinese had it down to a fine art and a ship could be filled in four days. The transfer of the Ocean Islanders to Rambli had not affected the trade, as few of them had worked for the British Phosphate Commission.

"I think the farmers in New Zealand would do well to understand that it has taken an enormous amount of hard work under severe tropical conditions to get the two islands back into production and despatch the Moraybank with the first shipment to the Dominion since early in the war," added Mr Welch. "There is no doubt it has been a real feat of good solid sweat."

RAMBI ISLAND, 16° 30' S., 180° E.

Area	26.56 sq. miles = 16,998 acres.
Length, greatest	10 miles.
Width, greatest	5 miles.
Distance round, general	27 miles.
Length of Coast Line	36 miles.
Area in coco-nuts	2,886 acres.
Number of coco-nut trees	180,900.
Highest Point, Mount Banaba	1,549 feet.
Largest stream, Rakentai	300 gals a minute, (dry-weather flow).
Nuka to Eritabeta, by track	2 miles.
Nuka to Tiotio, " "	4½ miles.
Nuka to Rakentai, " "	4½ miles.
Nuka to Tengea, " "	5½ miles.
Nuka to Tengea, by coast.	10 miles.
Nuka to Tengea, by launch	10 miles.
Nuka to Rakentai, by launch	13 miles.
Tengea to Rakentai, by launch	9 miles.
Nuka to nearest land, Napuka	6 miles.
Nuka to Kioa, bay in middle	16 miles.
Nuka to Vanua Levu, west side of Natewa Bay	17 miles.
Nuka to Mbuta Bay, middle	18 miles.
Nuka to Waiyevo, Taveuni	24 miles.
Nuka to Undu Point	24 miles.
Nuka to Suva, direct	156 miles.
Population, Banabans	811 ⁺
Population, Gilbertese	227.
Others (Fijians, 45; Solomon Islanders, 9; Ellice Islanders, 5.)	59.

Principal Settlements -

Nuka on West Coast, middle.
Tengea on Katharine Bay, South Coast.
Rakentai on Dawson Bay, East Coast.

Headquarters - Nuka.

+ Including all students at boarding schools, in Fiji, but excluding 9 leper patients at Makongai, and 40 Banabans in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and elsewhere.

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Synopsis of Chief Secretary's Address to Rambi Island
Council. 3/1/49.

Kam na mauri:

Self-introduction if necessary. Personal representative of High Commissioner. I say what he would have said had he come: my words are his words - not come to argue or discuss but to tell you where you stand, so that you cannot say "we didn't know - the High Commission did not tell us" to the Fiji Government - pay attention.

2. Tried to visit four weeks ago; gathering hurricane made this impossible. Wished to visit before 1st January when Banabans come under Fiji Government; say farewell for High Commission and hand over to Fiji. Although visit delayed, will say same things now.

3. Hurricane damage, regrettable blow, act of God; must get down and repair damage. Fortunately rarely happens. May be of interest to know similar gales in Tarawa: Alexander's house blown down over him, fortunately no loss of life. Marlow with me to see how new houses have stood up: may be advisable in future to build type of house which will resist hurricanes.

4. First unpleasant incident. High Commissioner most displeased and disturbed. Matter must be put right. A few weeks ago at Island Council Rotan accused Maude, Macdonald and Holland of carrying through Statement of Intentions as trap to bind necks of Banabans. Bad words for anybody to use of officers who have done so much for Banabans; much worse for man in position of Rotan. Rotan has apologised to Holland but offending words were uttered in Council and apology and withdrawal must now be made. Chairman cannot say one thing in one place and another in another place. His Excellency expects this.

After some attempt at equivocation, Rotan withdraws and apologises. He expresses a wish also, if ever this is possible, to say he is sorry in person to the High Commissioner, Mr. Maude and Mr. Macdonald.

SPECIFIC MATTERS -

5. Request for independence and assistance from Gilbert's revenue from Ocean Island impracticable. Surprised that this has been brought up since High Commissioner told them on 3rd August that King would be unable to grant it. It is no use Banabans comparing themselves with Tonga with its population of 40,000 and its direct treaties with the King: rather they should compare themselves with Kioa which is a Fiji Island settled by Ellice Islanders. Any request from people of Kioa for independence and for finance from Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony equally unthinkable.

Sorry

Sorry that Banaban Cooperative Society does not now wish to register under the Cooperative Societies Ordinance. will not press the matter at present but it will be discussed later.

6. Chairman of Banabans Trust Board appointed in terms of Statement of Intentions -

"The management of the fund shall be vested in a Banaban Fund Trust Board consisting of the Banaban Adviser as Chairman..."

The Deputy Chairman appointed by the Chairman in accordance with Banaban Funds Ordinance 1948. This is usual practice.

Banabans request to have a new man as their adviser who will stay for a long time among them. This cannot be so. The Statement of Intentions is clear -

"The Banaban Adviser shall be an officer of the Government of Fiji appointed by the Governor."

This is for the good of the Banabans. Governor of Fiji is appointed by the King, not by the people of Fiji. The King chooses the best man who does not stay all his life in Fiji. New Governors are appointed by the King from time to time: Men who have knowledge and experience from other places are thus always in charge of affairs in Fiji. Banabans Adviser is chosen similarly by the Governor of Fiji, not by the Banabans. The Governor chooses the best man and will continue to do so, from his officers. It would not be good either for the Banabans' interests or for the Banaban Adviser himself if he spent his whole life in Rambi. It is for their good and for his good that their Adviser should have experience elsewhere.

7. No objection to their employing a lawyer if there is any matter which needs his attention. There will be every objection to their employing a lawyer permanently. Everybody who has legal business to transact goes to a lawyer and no objection to Banabans doing likewise. Everybody does not employ a lawyer all the time and there is no need for Banabans to do so. But if they want legal advice on any particular point let them by all means brief a lawyer for the purpose.

8. The Banabans now under Fiji Government who will look after them just as well as High Commission in the past, but they must look to the present and future - not to the past. They are always going back to the past, they think of what was done to their accounts ten, fifteen, or twenty or even thirty years ago; they think of the times when they were at Ocean Island and they think of what happened to them under Japanese occupation. They must not do so, they must look forward. A man cannot go ahead without stumbling if he is always looking over his shoulder. It is no good making queries on accounts of ten, fifteen, twenty or thirty years ago. Government does not do it, when accounts for year are closed and have been before the auditor and any questions cleared up, they are finished with. When they are finished, questions cannot be made on what happened years ago. Banabans' accounts have been audited by Mr. Main
and

and they have seen his report. The matter is now closed and no queries on five, ten, fifteen or twenty years ago can now be answered. I repeat this.

9. Ocean Island days are finished. Here there is a larger and more fertile land purchased by the High Commissioner for the Banabans. £25,000; now worth £100,000. Did Mr. Maude look after interests of Banabans!? It is to its development that they must look forward; they must not look back, they have done many things during the last year, there are many things still to do. They must not look back at the hard times they had owing to the Japanese occupation. They must think that there are other people in the Gilberts, in the Solomons and all over the world who were badly treated by the Japanese; who lost their all and whose relatives and friends were killed. Many are more unfortunate than the Banabans. They have not been able to find a new home such as Rambi. They have not the money the Banabans have. The Banabans therefore not only victims of Japanese, they should count themselves more fortunate than others and they should give thanks for this. In England people bombed and pay 9/- in the £ tax. They should work with a will to make new homeland a better and more prosperous place.

My words may be hard but they are for Banabans good. To repeat - Banabans now under Fiji Government under Fiji laws, and they must look forward to living their lives under Fiji Government who will look after them as well as the High Commission ever did. I have referred to Tonga's treaty with the King. You have Statement of Intentions. Your charter: agreed by you and by Government. Stick to it. High Commission now says goodbye to them, it is glad of what it has been able to do in the past for them and it now hands on their welfare to Fiji Government who will govern them wisely and well. Mr. Coode is the new Banaban Adviser and Mr. Reid is the District Commissioner of the District in which they live. In future they must look to them.

Now goodbye from the High Commissioner and good wishes for the future from the Government.

Look forward - not back.

COLONY OF FIJI.

District Office,
Rambi Island.
31st January, 1949.

HANDING-OVER STATEMENT.

1. The District Office staff consists of Ikamawa, Karuoteiti Airu, Iotua Itienang and Natua Tekoruru. Ikamawa is Clerk and Postmaster. He did a course in postal work at the General Post Office, Suva, in 1947. He is an experienced clerk, and a relief typist. Ikamawa has had to be given spells of recuperative leave, owing to his poor health. Karuoteiti Airu is the Treasury Clerk and Typist. He is a speed typist, neat and accurate. At accounts, or at any other work in the office, he is alert, capable and reliable. It has been my good fortune to have a clerk of his ability, during my 30 months stay on Rambi. Karuoteiti has had serious trouble with his eyes. The sight in one is gone, as the result of Iritis. A specialist has warned that if Iritis should attack the other eye, the pupil at all costs must be kept dilated with Atropine Sulphate, 1% drops. A supply has been procured, and is held by the Assistant Medical Practitioner. Iotua Itienang is the Storekeeper, a cheerful and willing worker. The abolition of rations for those employed officially, and a considerable decrease in the purchase of housing materials, the latter because of inclusive contracts, has rendered his office almost superfluous. But full employment for him will occur, once the decision is made to divide the lands on Rambi. There will then be much surveying to be done, and Iotua was trained for such work at Ocean Island. Natua Tekoruru is the fourth member of the office staff. His duties have been general, with a bias towards land matters. He is conscientious and efficient, and I have regretted not employing him earlier, as suggested by my predecessor in his handing-over report.

2. The members of the Medical Staff are Tekai Arekibo, Assistant Medical Practitioner, Dressers Bureitetau, Tamueru and Tati, and Nurses Tetaba, Bakaineaki and Tiaon. Tekai Arekibo is altogether an excellent head of his department, unselfish and hardworking, a leader by example, and with the best knowledge of English among the Banaban community. He wisely keeps aloof from affairs unconnected with his official duties. Bureitetau has lengthy service as a dresser. The quality of his work fell away seriously for a time, but lately, as the result of three months' leave, he has made recovery. Tamueru is short of conscience for service as a dresser, and his employment ceased during this month. Tati is a newcomer, who is shaping satisfactorily. The three nurses have always appeared as diligent and faithful workers.

3. There are three regular teachers. Naikara Kake with Ocean Island experience is the senior. He is in need of further training and is due to enter the Masina Training College early next year, for the full two years' course. The other two teachers are Teai Tokoia and Kariatabwewa Tabuariki, and they are now students at the College mentioned. Teai has done the first year of the course, and Kariatabwewa is just starting it. Much may be expected from both of them. For the present year and next year, the Banaban School will be staffed by one teacher and two student-teachers, Karoro and Taukates. The latter two taught without pay during 1948, and are to receive 30/- per month each during 1949. The two Army

Huts in which the school is held are ill-adapted for their present purpose. A new school building costing £3,500 is projected. With this in being, along with the requisite equipment, and with three certificated teachers at work, the Banaban School will be properly established. The Banaban School is situated at the headquarters of the island, and provides for the principal villages on the west coast. For the smaller main villages on the south and east coasts, Tenges and Rakentai, there are mission schools. In time no doubt these will be superseded by official schools.

4. For higher education than that given locally, there are 20 Banaban boys at the Ratu Kandavalevu School, Londoni, one at Queen Victoria School, one at the Methodist Agricultural School, Navuso, 12 at the Methodist School at Niusawa, Taveuni, and three at the Catholic School at Vairiki, Taveuni. In addition a number of pupils are entered privately at the Taveuni Schools. And, of course, there are the two teachers already noted as students at Nasinu.

5. The Island Magistrate, Amon, is a recent appointment, and it is yet too early to report on him, as a permanency. It has been necessary to warn him that his support of certain aspirations of the Island Council was incompatible with his duties as Magistrate, and this has had a salutary effect so far. Tito Airu, the Island Scribe, is the very best person for the post. Tebuke, Captain of Police, is one of the older generation of Banaban gentlemen, of which happily a few remain. He is greatly respected, in spite of his firmness regarding obedience of all to law. The three headquarters policemen are Teangoa, Kirata and Tikaus, all of them good. Village policemen, one each for Eritabeta, Arobati, Rakentai and Tenges, have yet to be appointed. At present the Overseers of the two last-named villages act as Kaubure.

6. The operator at the Wireless Station, Fred Corrie, did a refresher course at Suva in 1947. There has been recent criticism from Suva of his "sending", in that it lacked definition, but a later report indicated satisfactory improvement. He has improved also, in his accounts as submitted to this office. Fred Corrie, in my opinion, is well suited to his duty on Rambi. He can be kept up to standard by an occasional talk, and his personality makes the process an easy one. I may add that the wireless station is of inestimable convenience to the island, even though full telegraph communication has not been granted to it.

7. Estimates of the number of cattle on the island vary between 600 and 900. The numbers in the bush on the hills make reliable figures hard to obtain. The last count of horses showed 104 head. In charge of all the stock are two caretakers, Manasa Ndraki and Taremon. The latter is a Banaban and a learner. The senior, Manasa Ndraki, is a Fijian, and an excellent all-round man. He has given valuable help, in agriculture and forestry. It would be difficult to replace him, and I do not foresee that for many years to come any Banaban could do so.

8. The Headquarters (or Government) Station is bounded on the north by Virginia stream and on the south by Nuka stream. This was the delimitation agreed upon in the early days of the Settlement Scheme. The village of Nuka is situated largely within this area; also the following buildings used by the Banaban Co-operative Society: Dryers, Copra-Bulk Store,

Retail

Retail Store and Cinema. (Films for the Cinema have been shown since June last, and are received on contract from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (N. Z.) Limited. The projector is a B. T. H., 46 millimetre.) The two principal church buildings are at Nuka also. The remaining buildings except those privately-owned form part of the Government Station, and comprise the following: District Officer's Quarters and Servants' House, District Office, Wireless Office, Council House, School Huts (2), Head Teacher's House (lately constructed), Hospital Dispensary and Ward, Assistant Medical Practitioner's Quarters (also lately constructed) and four Army Huts. Administrative responsibility has extended to the fencing, materials and labour, for Nuka village and the adjacent village of Nuka-Meang, and to the provision of six reef latrines. Other villages are provided with fencing wire, on application; and the making of latrines is a matter for the villagers themselves. A road starting within the Government Station and proceeding outwards north and south has been taken in hand, the plan being to open up the whole west coast to motor traffic. Progress with the road has been slow, and damage was done during the recent hurricane. Gelignite has not been obtainable, in sufficient amounts, and this has been a factor also. A road foreman has been badly needed, as there is much bridging of streams to be done, and in places considerable excavation also. The result altogether has been an undue cost of the length of road so far prepared. As almost the whole benefit of the road will fall to the Banaban Co-operative Society, it should share the cost. The two hospital buildings were removed fairly recently to their permanent site. A hospital proper might replace the present temporary one, once the housing situation becomes satisfactory. The part of the school blown down in December has been restored. Mention of a new school has already been made. Twelve small cottages are in process of building, but the upkeep of these will rest with those to whom they are allotted. A new bulk and retail store and storekeeper's cottage have been completed at Tengea. Payment in this case was made by the Banaban Co-operative Society. Ribauca is the Government Station carpenter, and though an old man, is still the best local carpenter for skill and speed. He has been promised leave, as early as can be arranged. Pu, Tawaka, and Teba are capable overseers, the last-named a carpenter also, and handle their gangs with firmness and tact.

9. Banaban names have been adopted for all villages, and these names now prevail in speech and writing, though occasionally one may hear the older Fijian name for a locality. The spelling of these Banaban names is in accordance with the modernised Gilbertese system of spelling instituted in 1938. The English names of capes and bays had already been recorded in the Office of the Director of Lands, and these were not changed, except that the Gilbertese equivalents are used by the Banabans and Gilbertese. I am assured that the correct spelling of Rambi (or Rabi) is Rambe (Rabe), but as the spelling, Rambi, appears on the official map of Fiji, and as this, along with Rabi, is in general use, I recommend its retention.

10. Overpayments of annuities occurred at Rambi, in respect of Banabans who died during the war. Dates of death given by the relatives were accepted by the Council, but these dates proved to be much in error, when written records were

discovered.

discovered. The total overpaid was £256/12/8. The total refunded to date is £102/15/6. The remainder can easily be collected, when the gift of £A. 7,500 from the British Phosphate Commissioners is paid out to landowners. See paragraph 19. A separate and smaller overpayment of annuities was involved, when the Treasurer, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, paid certain sums at Tarawa. No annuities or other Banaban payments are now made in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, except as requested from Rambi. Other outstanding accounts are dealt with in paragraphs 11 to 16.

11. My predecessor reported the sum of £940/16/6, as owing by the Banaban Co-operative Society to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony for surplus rations taken over in January, 1946. The sum named, less £3/13/6 for cornflour issued to the hospital, was paid on 20th November, 1946. A further debt of the Society, that of £38/19/10, for 20 sacks of rice obtained from the Trade Scheme of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony in June, 1946, was paid on the 17th September, 1947.

12. My predecessor also reported over £100, as owing by the Banaban Co-operative Society, from the sale of fresh meat. The exact sum turned out to be £177/1/11. His note was as follows: "During March, April and May (1946) cattle were slaughtered by permission of the District Officer by the Banaban Co-operative Society's Store for sale to its customers. The agreement made between the District Officer and the Managing Committee of the Store was that the beef should be sold at the rate of 8d per lb, the proceeds kept separately from the Store Cash and the transactions recorded in a separate book. The cash was then to be deposited with the District Officer, credited to Deposits, Rambi Cattle Replacement Account, and used for the purchase of stud bulls from the Agricultural Department, Fiji. More than £100 cash has been collected by the Store, as a result of these transactions. It has not been deposited in accordance with the terms of the agreement." Two months after my arrival, the debt thus referred to was paid. I had made it clear to everybody that the Rambi Cattle Replacement Account would be used for the purchase of Holstein-Friesian cattle, so as to improve milk and meat supply, the local stock having degenerated into "scrub cattle". I may interpolate here that new bulls must be kept in enclosures, and not allowed at large, or the locally-bred bulls will unite to destroy the newcomers. Such enclosures were provided, but the Island Council has not so far consented to the bringing in of stud cattle.

13. After the payment of the debt mentioned, I allowed more cattle to be slaughtered, but always within the rate of natural increase. To exceed this rate would lead to excessive growth of grass and scrub, to the detriment of coco-nut production and collection. Further sums were duly deposited, according to the agreement. Killing was stopped late in 1947, owing to the receipt of tinned meat from Ocean Island. When resumed, and under presumably the old conditions, and later when the proceeds were requested, I was informed that the Council had directed the Co-operative Society to retain as its own the proceeds in hand from the sale of the fresh beef, and all such future proceeds. There was repetition of discussion without effect, the cash in question remained in the hands of the Co-operative Society (and still does), until finally I disallowed any more cattle to be slaughtered for sale and limited the killings to those for the free issue of

meat,

meat for King's Birthday and other public celebrations. The Council later directed that the proceeds from the sale of horses should be handed over also to the Banaban Co-operative Society. No horses have so far been sold.

14. The Council argues that the disposal of money coming from the sale of fresh meat is essentially a Banaban matter, to be decided by the Council itself, as the representatives of the Banabans, and further, that as all Banabans belong to the Co-operative Society, the distinction drawn between the Banaban Community or Public, on the one hand, and the Banaban Co-operative Society, on the other hand, is simply no distinction at all. Money may therefore be transferred from Banaban Communal Funds to the Society, unfettered by rules, (though, not necessarily vice versa). As it appears to be necessary to state my reply to the Council's argument, that reply in detail is repeated here : (a) That which the Co-operative Society sells, it must first purchase or produce; as with tinned meat, so with fresh meat; even copra is purchased by the Society, before it sells the copra. (b) The Banaban Community, as the Public, is a political entity, the Banaban Co-operative Society, a commercial entity, both very separate from each other despite the accidental occurrence that all Banabans belong to the Co-operative Society. Money may not proceed from Communal Funds to the Society, except on approved occasions, as for example, the gift of £1,550 to the Co-operative Society, when it was first formed. (c) Rambi was purchased out of Communal Funds, i.e., the Banaban Provident Fund, and that, until the cattle and horses included in this transaction pass to private ownership, as will happen in time partly or wholly, (and when, as the Council admits, such owners will insist on payment for any cattle or meat sold by them to the Society), the cattle are communal property, and not the property of the Banaban Co-operative Society, except by purchase. (d) Much money, in fact hundreds of pounds, has been spent in materials and labour, in fencing the villages of Nuka and Nuka-Meang, so as to keep stock from destroying the many private gardens. Communal money was drawn on for this work, not the Society's money, one more proof that the cattle and horses are not the property, nor the responsibility, of the Society. (e) Two Livestock caretakers, whose duties lie with all the stock on Rambi, are paid wages from Banaban Communal Funds, and not from the funds of the Society. And finally (f) the statement of Intentions has it at (B)(5) that stock may not be disposed of "except in such manner as may be jointly agreed upon by the Banaban Adviser and the Council."

15. I would like to explain here why the subject in the preceding three paragraphs has not been separately reported earlier, as also the subjects in the two paragraphs which now follow. It has been my policy to delay making representations on certain matters, under dispute with the local Council, as long as possible, in the hope that time would bring a change of mind, which it sometimes has, on the part of the Council, or other means conspire to do so, which also has occurred. In the case of the subjects now mentioned, I can no longer delay in reporting them, owing to my impending departure from Rambi.

16. The Banaban Co-operative Society was founded in 1940, with a capital of £1,550. This sum was a free grant from the Banaban Royalty Trust Fund, and not therefore liable

to repayment. Capital was not raised by any other means. In September, 1940, a further sum of £1,000 was obtained from the same fund, for working expenses, and in August, 1941, a second sum of £1,000. These two sums totalling £2,000 were interest-free loans, but as loans they were due for repayment, when that could be conveniently done. This condition was clearly understood at the time, nor have the Banabans ever questioned it since. The Banaban Co-operative Society had a Trust Account in those days with the Government, and this account shows a credit balance of £2,326. I advised repayment of the £2,000 from this Trust Account in 1946, as the Society had already by then comfortable surplus funds, gained from its operations on Rambi, and had not even at the beginning of these operations been under the necessity of drawing upon this Trust Account. The answer given, reasonable enough at the time, was that the Society wished to feel even more secure. The validity of that reply however has long disappeared, as the Society has an additional Trust Account, this for £3,000, and its credit balance at the Bank of New South Wales, Suva, when last noted, was over £10,000. The Island Council has lately informed me that it has directed the Co-operative Society not to repay the loan of £2,000 mentioned above.

17. Soon after my arrival here, I submitted a plan to the Island Council, for the division of lands on Rambi. This plan was that of equal division among Banaban landowners, no one landowner to receive more than another. It had appeared to me that the large landowner of Ocean Island had already been proportionately recompensed in perpetuity, by the purchase price placed in his name, on which he received interest. Another benefit to him was the higher rate of his land annuity or bonus. In the Rambi division of lands, to prevent the large landowner being recompensed yet again, I proposed equal shares. The large landowners did not agree, and the small landholders, who happen to be unvoiced, did not intervene in their own behalf. A second plan was then produced, one giving areas to all proportionate in size to their Ocean Island holdings, but with the proviso that the first division should be equal, a second division dealing with the unequal areas to be added to each landowner. Both the first plan and the second required surveys beforehand, and allocation by ballot. There was general agreement to this second plan, but no action followed, on the part of the Council. A third plan occurred to me later still, and is the one I now favour. It is for the Banaban landowners to select their own areas, and then to "squat" on them, as many have done already. Survey (followed by registration) was to occur afterwards, according to size of area allotted in each case. Such survey might limit or increase squatter holdings, but even in the former case, would not interfere with the nucleus of any area, nor those natural features which had drawn the landowner to it. Every owner would be at least on his own selected site. The prospects of the minimum of discontent seemed very bright in this plan. The Council liked this plan also, but considered that as no one was agitating for the rights of private ownership, the matter might be conveniently set aside. A later reply from the Council was that it desired first that all Banaban grievances against Government should be redressed and the claim for independence should be granted. Once these matters were settled to the satisfaction of the Council, it would then get down to the work of land division.

- 7 -

18. The preceding paragraph deals with the most important of the outstanding matters, as distinct from accounts. Other outstanding matters are reported in the next two paragraphs.

19. A total of £A.84,728/17/7 was the surface price paid by the British Phosphate Commissioners for 686.622 acres of mining land, under the Agreement between the Banaban landowners and the Commissioners. The agreement was dated 10th April, 1947, and embraced the whole remainder of the mining land of Ocean Island. Individual blocks were identified and surveyed between August and December, 1947, to aid in which 397 Banaban travelled to Ocean Island from Rambi Island. The relevant lists of owners, areas and values were delivered here by the British Phosphate Commissioners on the 7th September, 1948. The lists had then to be corrected, in the light of revised claims to ownership. There were also 128 blocks without owners, for which owners had to be traced. The lists when completed will be used not only for the allocation of the sum of £A.84,728/17/7, according to owners' respective total areas, but also for the distribution of the gift payment of £A.7,500 (£P.6,637/3/4) from the British Phosphate Commissioners to the Banaban landowners concerned, for their co-operation in consenting to an approximate location of their lands. As regards the latter, the Council debated at length the answer as between distribution according to number of blocks, or according to acreage. My advice had been for acreage, and this was finally accepted. Early in November, the Council began the correction of the lists, which work is expected to be completed shortly. With regard to the original sum held in the Banaban Landholders Fund, that of £A.22,500 (this sum being the surface price of 150 acres of mining land resumed in 1931), the lists held in this office did not contain the individual sums making up the total amount. This information has lately been added. The total of the Banaban Landholders Fund is, of course, £A.107,228/17/7 (£22,500 + £84,728/17/7).

20. Action was delayed regarding the preparation of a Code of Laws for Rambi, pending the receipt of the revised Fijian Regulations, upon which the Rambi regulations would be largely, though not entirely, based. These were received in October last, but since then other special matters have taken up the time that was to be devoted to this subject.

21. The Rambi community is establishing a reputation as a law-abiding one. During 1946, there were eight convictions for crimes; during 1947, five only; and during 1948, none. The population on the 31st December, 1948 was composed of 811 Banabans, 227 Gilbertese, 45 Fijians, and 14 others.

22. The copra produced on Rambi during 1948 was over 674 tons, from which the nett proceeds, drawn by the Banaban Co-operative Society as in the previous years, was £30,792/19/5. The respective figures for these previous years have been as follows: 1945 (December only), 23 tons, £417/1/1; 1946, 372 tons, £8,467/19/0; 1947, 489 tons, £16,343/7/7.

23. The re-building of one copra dryer and the renovation of the other three are works nearing completion. The dryer at Nuka was burned down in May 1947, but was restored by 1948. The dryer at Rakentel, saved from the same fate by being closed down, was renovated at the same time. Both these dryers are of the New Guinea type. The two dryers at Tengea, which have

been

been the principal source of revenue to the Banaban Co-operative Society, are now under conversion and renovation. They are of Buka type and are being converted to New Guinea type, which consumes less fuel.

24. There are areas of coco-nut trees on Rambi, which have suffered from the ravages of the stick insect. The damaged palms are recovering slowly, however. The accepted method of dealing with the pest is to prepare lines of rubbish among the affected palms, and to light this rubbish on a calm day. The ascending smoke causes the stick insects to fall to the ground, where they can be easily destroyed. For unceasing war against the stick insect, the mynah plays the major part. This bird was once absent from Rambi, but Lever Bros. managed to establish it, after many failures. The mynah is now fairly plentiful, but is attacked in turn by the local hawks. A shooting campaign against the hawk has accordingly been carried on, and has been restrained only by the shortage of cartridges.

25. The Rambi Island Council receives mention in this report, only in the part it plays in certain matters. Correspondence on its activities otherwise will be found in the relevant files. The Banaban Funds Trust Board, which is elected from the Island Council, was so elected on the 5th May, 1948, preparatory to its assumption of formal duty, on the 1st January, 1949. It has prepared the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, Banaban Trust Fund (the amalgamated Banaban Royalty Trust Fund and the Banaban Provident Fund) for the year 1949 and has submitted them to the Island Council. The Council however has not yet passed all the items, stating that before doing so, it requires a statement of the credit balances of the two Funds noted in brackets above, as at the 31st December, 1948. As it will be some time before the Accounts of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony are advanced enough for these figures to be known, I have requested that the credit balances mentioned, as found at a certain date, may be forwarded to Rambi. This office will then work out the required figures, by the deduction of local expenditure and the addition of royalty and interest payments, between this "certain date" and the end of December last.

26. Statements of Expenditure in detail covering the whole period of the Banaban Settlement Scheme have been prepared and duly submitted, the first (which dealt with the period September, 1945 to 29th February, 1948) to the Chief Secretary, Western Pacific High Commission, Suva, the second (which dealt with the period 1st March, 1948 to 31st December, 1948) to the Honourable The Colonial Secretary, Fiji. The Rambi Island Council, which examined both statements carefully, accepted the first with certain reservations which were then reported, and accepted the second without comment of any kind.

27. There are 54 Deposit Accounts, Trust, totalling £752/5/10, and one, that of the Banaban Co-operative Society, for £3,000. Accounts with the Government Savings Bank, Suva, number 73, with a total sum deposited of about £1,400. Both Trust and Savings Bank accounts will be increased shortly, when the gift payment of £A. 7,500, explained in paragraph 19, is distributed among the Banabans. Before 1939, accounts were started at Ocean Island with the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia, Sydney. These accounts are being gradually closed by depositors, the number of accounts closed so far being 20.

28. The stamp imprest held from the Posts and Telegraphs Department is £40. At the moment, the value of stamps on hand is £7/11/0, and the amount of cash £2/9/0.

29. The cash balance at the sub-accountancy, Rambi, as at the 31st December, 1948, was £2,490/10/2. This sum will be taken over by the Fiji Government, as from 1st January, 1949, who will then credit the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony with a corresponding sum. January 1st, 1949, it may be added, is the official date, when the Banabans on Rambi became administered formally by the Government of Fiji.

30. Inventories of furniture, equipment and non-expendable stores are displayed in the buildings to which they refer. Copies are on file. The storekeeper holds stock books, both for non-expendable items and for expendables also.

31. The 31st December, 1948, saw the conclusion of the Banaban Settlement Scheme as such. The Banabans, 703 souls, arrived at Rambi, on the 15th December, 1945. Three years later, at the end of 1948, the number of Banabans on Rambi was 841. No Banaban has left the island in the meantime for domicile at his old home, Ocean Island, with the exception of one, who returned there, however, on appointment as the representative of the Banaban community, in its local dealings with the British Phosphate Commissioners. The total success of the Settlement Scheme, in its aspect as a collective migration, has been due to the measures taken in the field of administration, education and public works to commit the Banabans to their new home; to the realization, which came gradually to the immigrants, of the superiority of Rambi in size, attractiveness, resources, interests, and nearness to cultural areas; to the wisdom of the two-year rule, which kept the Banabans pegged to Rambi for that period, thus allowing the love of the new home to grow strongly enough; to the visit of 397 landowners and relatives to Ocean Island in 1947, for the purpose of marking land boundaries, which enabled comparisons to be made, not unduly affected by sentiment; to the sale of all the remaining mining lands at Ocean Island in 1947, thus withdrawing attention from these lands; and to the prevailing high price of copra, and the abundance of it on Rambi, which together have provided most profitable employment for all. In the elections held in May, 1947, 270 adults voted in favour of making Rambi their headquarters and home, and 48 adults voted for the return to Ocean Island. For a time these 48 persons were insistent in their adherence to this intention, but mention of it has now disappeared.

(Signed) P.G.L. Holland,

Banaban Adviser, Rambi.
31st January, 1949.

Distribution: The Honourable The Colonial Secretary, Suva.
The Chief Secretary, Western Pacific High
Commission, Suva.
The District Commissioner, Northern, Lambasa.

RAMBI ISLAND.
4th February, 1949.

Accounts, 1948, Banaban Co-operative Society.

With regard to the report dated 24/1/49 of Messrs Main and Kay, Chartered Accountants, on their examination of the accounts of the Banaban Co-operative Society, for the year 1948, I wish to offer comments on certain items therein, as follows :

1 (a). Gift to Bubuke £200 less £7 refunded later, £193. Bubuke was the leader of the Raratonga Concert Party. Before the arrival of this party, I gave the Rambi Island Council a talk on concert procedure, as regards the whys and wherefores of admission fees. The Council answered that the visiting Party would not be allowed to charge an admission fee at all for their concerts, as money was not allowed to leave the island. I demurred at this, stating that the labourer was worthy of his hire, the hire in the present case being the admission fee, paid individually by those who attended the concerts. The Council was not satisfied and confirmed its decision in writing, dated 14/4/48, as now quoted: "The party will be informed when they first arrive that they may show their Concert free, and when they have finished, the Banabans will show their own Concert free, too, for this is our custom, and also it is prohibited by the rule of our Community to give away money on Rambi." Yet afterwards £193 was paid from the Society's funds to Bubuke, plus, I understand, £50 from the Tengea branch of the Society, and certain items of tinned foodstuffs were added to the gift.

1 (b). Special wages paid to Councillors, £808. This matter has recently come to light independently, and has been reported

2. Copra Trading. Commission 2½% paid to A. Herrick, on sales of copra, £516. It is disappointing indeed for me to observe this item, because I tried hard to prevent its occurrence. The employment of an agent (or buyer) in a limited capacity was my own suggestion to the Banaban Co-operative Society. He was in this "limited capacity" to have nothing whatever to do with the sale of copra, nor with the purchase of the main items for the Rambi store. These particular transactions were proceeding smoothly and satisfactorily. I informed the Manager of the Co-operative Society many times that there could be no advantage in the Agent's intervention in these two types of transactions. The Agent was to be used for the supply of those minor goods in short supply, procurable at the smaller stores. I even gave a total of commission involved. That figure would work out at less than £100 a year. In answer to an inquiry from Messrs Burns, Philp, Suva, regarding the employment of Mr Herrick, I wrote as follows on the 28th May, 1948. "My own idea then was and still is that the Agent would attend to matters outside the scope of the sale of copra and of the normal purchases from your firm." I read this to Rotan, the Manager, to which he expressed assent. Nevertheless Mr Herrick was allowed to do that which I had expressly advised against, not deliberately, of course, but as the

result

result of a kind of drift, and thus a lot of money was wasted.

3. Store Trading. Loss on Store Trading, £1,746.

I am unable to understand how this loss has occurred. The prices charged at the store, those that have come within my knowledge, would point to a substantial profit. Undisclosed book debts are a possible explanation. I feel that the shareholders, i.e., all adult Banabans, should be informed of the loss at the annual general meeting. No such meeting nor any general meeting has been held during my 30 months stay on Rambi. Last year, on the 4th January, at a meeting with Banaban Elders, I spoke on the subject of the annual general meeting, and gave also a list of proposed rules for the Society. Among these rules were these two (1) "The annual general meeting of the members of the Society shall take place during the month of January each year" (2) "The Auditors report and the balance sheet shall be read and explained at this meeting, and then formally adopted." When I inquired later as to what was being done, I was informed that the Banaban community wished the Council to direct the affairs of the Society, and that general meetings were therefore unnecessary. The loss in Store Trading comes now as a compelling reason for such a meeting to be held.

4 (c). Liability for Income Tax. As the Banabans are now formally administered by the Fiji Government, the issue will be forced whether the Banaban Co-operative Society is to be registered or not under the Co-operative Societies Ordinance. My efforts to secure agreement to registration have met with fluctuating success only. As regards income-tax liability, the Acting Registrar of Co-operative Societies wrote to me on the 17th February, 1948 : "I have endeavoured to obtain a ruling from the Department of Inland Revenue and can only say that they have expressed the view that, so long as a Society functions as laid down in the Ordinance and handles only members goods, no tax will be payable by the Society, but that further consideration is necessary." A further letter contained some modification of this ruling.

4 (c). Used Truck, £595. A truck was obtained by me in November, 1946 for the Society, from Messrs Burns, Philp, Suva. The price was £180, plus freight. This truck is still in use and has paid for itself many times over, in the work it has done. This excellent precedent was not recollected, when the second truck was to be purchased. I inspected this second truck on its arrival here, and found its condition inferior to that of the first truck at the time of its purchase, with the price over three times as much. This was on the 7th September, 1948. I at once advised the Manager of the local Society to dispense with the services of Mr Herrick, as an agent.

4 (e). Proceeds from sales of slaughtered cattle, £105. The matter of the allocation of these proceeds has been dealt with in my handing-over statement. I should judge that the total sum at present involved exceeds £105, but there are no figures available, other than those of the Co-operative Society, whose earlier accounts in this respect were accurate enough.

4 (f) Advances, Ben Corrie, Launch £160; Tengea People, Launch, £700. The auditors draw attention to the absence of authority for these advances. I know of none. The transactions, as now revealed, were news to me, until the auditors report was seen. My information had been very different. I have now inquired as to the £700, and find two launches are included in this sum, one for Tengea people costing £250, and one for Nuka-Meang people costing £450. The prospects of repayment are not good, beyond that arising from the impending distribution of the gift payment to the Banabans of £6,637/3/4, from the British Phosphate Commissioners.

(Signed) F.G.L. Holland,

4. 2. 49.

Recent History of the Indigenous People of Ocean Island.

(Presented but not delivered
to Wanganui Rotary Club)

Wanganui, April, 1949

1. In an address made to you some years ago, on the subject of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, where incidentally I served for 25 years, I included an account of Ocean Island, then the headquarters of that Colony, pointing out its structural difference from other Gilbert Islands, in that it was an island of the upheaved type, & not a coral atoll, and adding that it contained the richest deposit of raw phosphate of lime in the world. "Richest in quality" only, because the island itself is small, even tiny; its area a mere 1470 acres, rising to a height of 280 feet in the centre. Of this 1470 acres, 1200 acres is muniabla, the remainder being rocky and unwearable coastal lands. As you are aware, New Zealand benefits from the Ocean Island phosphate, as a large tonnage is imported annually, which is converted into the superphosphate so valuable to farmers and gardeners. Many thousands of tons of this rich phosphate have been dealt with by your local phosphate works. A link exists therefore between Ocean Island and Wanganui, so you may now feel that this talk of mine is not remote from your general interests. The fortunes of the natives of Ocean Island have been of course vitally affected by the phosphate discovered to be under the surface of the island. Large funds have been built up from the sale of surface rights and from royalty drawn on the phosphate excavated and exported.

2. Ocean Island is situated just south of the Equator, & almost due north of Wanganui. The native name of the island is Banaba, spelt BANABA, and the indigenous natives are therefore called Banabans, which term I shall use in what follows. The Banabans are of pure Gilbertese stock, and altogether are Gilbertese, with no variation, except now that of having much more money. The Gilbertese, whose history I gave in my earlier talk, belong to the Micronesian family of races, and are not to be confused with Melanesians, who are black-skinned, nor with the Polynesians, of whom the Maori race forms a part. The Banaban shared with his Gilbertese brother the factor of limited resources of food, except for fish & coco-nuts, but he had a further privation, that of shortage of fresh water. Wells, there were none, as in the Gilberts. His supply of water came from deep subterranean pools, access to which was gained through narrow, ~~and~~ slipping tunnels. Water-getting was the work, the incessant work, of the women, whose containers for the purpose were coco-nut shells

each holding about a pint. In drought periods, & Ocean Island is subject to occasional droughts, the subterranean pools of water were liable to dry up, when the plight of the Banabans was so desperate that the liquid from fishes' eyes was squeezed out and drunk. It will be realized then how much the coming of corrugated iron, lances and utensils meant to the Banabans.

3. Ocean Island (or Banaba) was discovered in 1804, by the British vessel, Ocean, hence the name Ocean Island. Its population was then numerous, one estimate putting the number at 2,000. The history of the island for the next 100 years was unenviable, owing to the arrival of beachcombers, and the introduction of firearms and new diseases, and life later was made even more terrible by a series of droughts. By the year 1900, the Banabans had declined in number to 450 only, riddled by disease & reputed to be the poorest natives in the Pacific. But the year 1900 saw the turn of the tide. In that year, the phosphate deposits on the island were discovered by Mr A. F. Ellis, now Sir Albert Ellis, New Zealand representative on the British Phosphate Commissioners. This discovery and the coming of British rule - the Union Jack was hoisted on the island on the 28th September, 1901 - changed the fortunes of the Banabans so much that today they are probably the richest natives in the Pacific. Once the poorest, now the richest. The 450 people of 1900 had increased to over 700 by 1931, & today the number is 840. But for the war, this 840 would be higher, or roughly double that of the 450 of the year 1900.

4. I now come nearer to the subject of this letter, the recent history of the Banabans, or indigenous people of Ocean Island. In December, 1941, one day only after Pearl Harbor, the Banabans saw war at hand, when their island was bombed by Japanese planes based in the Marshall Islands. The Residency, the official home of the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony, a beautiful building completed only 2 years before was hit and demolished. I myself was at Tarawa, a 250 miles away when this occurred, and next day had the unpleasant experience of facing Japanese marines who had landed from two destroyers. That of course is another story, & mention it here merely to show how prepared was the Japanese for their southward drive. Air attacks on Ocean Island ceased, though the island was regularly patrolled by enemy planes. In ^{September} ~~August~~, 1942, the Japanese landed troops & occupied the island, after having first shelled it. By that time however nearly all the Europeans, Government officials & British Phosphate Commissioners staff had been evacuated, during one dash by a fast destroyer, along with the hundreds of Chinese phosphate workers. Those remained on the island when the Japanese landed, ^{and} ~~some~~ Europeans

of who had elected to stay behind, as representatives of Government, phosphate
 Commissioners and Mission, together with some hundreds of Gilbertese
 phosphate labourers, & other Gilbertese & Ellice Islanders in Government
 employ. The ^{few} Europeans, as will have been your immediate
 forebodings, did not survive the Japanese occupation, being the
 victims of harsh treatment or of starvation. Large supplies of food
 had been left behind at Ocean Island by the departing Europeans,
 this food began to run short in 1943, as the Japanese were poorly
 supplied themselves with foodstuffs. In July & August, 1943, the
 Japanese evacuated natives from Ocean Island, the first lot were
 taken to Tarawa, & the second & third to Kauru, the twin phosphate
 island with Ocean Island, and to Kusaie in the Caroline Islands
 respectively. The greater number were taken to Kusaie. About 160
 Gilbertese young men were retained at Ocean Island. & of their
 melancholy fate I shall speak later. At Kauru & Kusaie a
 blight fell on the Banabans, & the few Gilbertese with them. The
 Japanese, as was usual with them, had plenty of guns and bullets,
 but little else, even for themselves. Food, clothing, & medicine there
 was none for the natives, so ill-fitted were the Japanese for their
 self-assumed role of conquerors. At Kauru, the Banabans lived
 scantily on fish & coconuts today, what was left of their efforts with
 these foods, after the Japanese had taken the lion's share. Coconut
 today is the juice extracted from the fruit branches of the coconut
 palm. At Kusaie, the Banabans were put to work on Kumera,
 or sweet potato cultivation; the Kumera can be grown at Kusaie all the
 year round. The Banabans share of the fruits of their labours was
 the Kumera leaves only, the tubers going to the Japanese. So for many
 weary months at Kusaie, the Banaban diet was ^{boiled} Kumera leaves,
 plus a meagre quantity of coconut flesh. The Japanese commander
 at Kusaie was laconic in speech, according to the Banabans.
 When they were lined up before him at Kusaie, on their arrival there,
 he spoke as follows: "You, Banabans, are now under Japanese rule,
 & in my charge. For any trouble that you may make, I can kill you
 & will kill you. Take my warnings. That is all." Banaban bondage
 ended with the arrival of Australian troops at Kauru on the 18th
 September, 1945 and American troops at Kusaie a little later. The
 few Banabans at Tarawa had seen the destruction of the Japanese
 force there in November, 1943. I was present at this battle. A
~~submarine~~ ~~was~~ ~~sent~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~canal~~ ~~from~~ ~~Ocean~~ ~~Island~~, in
 April, 1943.

Meanwhile at Ocean Island, the 160 Gilbertese young
 men & menial were employed by the Japanese, partly on military

work, and partly on fishing. Seven of those employed on fishing escaped in three canoes in April, 1944. One ^{man} only was heard of again. He arrived at Admiralty Islands, 1500 miles away due west, after being at sea for 7 months. Seven months on a small canoe & still living! The remainder of the 160 men were slaughtered by the Japanese, two days after the peace declaration had been made known to Japanese Commander at Ocean Island. For this atrocious crime, he was later deservedly hanged. His crime would never have been ~~known~~ revealed, but for the survival of one of the 160 men. This man's story is truly remarkable, also. I regret having no time to deal with the particulars of the two events just noted, which however are related at paragraphs 24 & 89 of Sir Albert Ellis's Book, "Mid-Pacific Outposts".

In November, 1948, the Banabans were retrieved from Nauru & Kusaie, and were taken to Tarawa, where they were united with their less unlucky kin there. The problem now arose of the immediate home for the Banabans. Ocean Island itself had surrendered to the Australian force which had occupied Nauru Island. The date of the Ocean Island surrender was 1st October, 1948. All the Banaban villages at Ocean Island were found to have been obliterated by the Japanese, & it seemed doubtful if the Banabans could return to their old home under the period of two years for this reason & for another - the matter of exotic food supplies. The Banabans, anyway, had subsisted for many years on imported rice, flour, sugar & meat, because of the reduced surface area of their islands, and its effect on local food production. It had been obvious to everybody many years ago that this matter of a reduced surface area would lead one day to the evacuation of the island by its native owners, and provision against that day had been made by the Government of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony as early as 1931. In that year a Provident Fund derived from the ~~export~~ royalty on phosphate excavated was started, its principal object being the eventual purchase of a new home, ~~to which the Ban~~ for the Banabans. The natural date for the migration was still distant in 1948, but in the circumstances mentioned - destruction of villages and food supply - it was decided to put it to the assembled Banabans at Tarawa that they shall move at once to their new home. They agreed to do so, though not enthusiastically, their love of their ancestral home being so strong.

The new home, at which the Banabans arrived on the 15th December, 1948, with 300 of their Gilbertese friends, was Ramahi Island in the Fiji Group. Ramahi Island had been

purchased in 1942, on behalf of the Banabans, from the money held in the Provident Fund. It was not realized in 1942, that the new home would be so soon required. Its purchase, as I have indicated, was merely a provision against a future date, then thought to be distant, but which was brought forward by the results of war. Rambu Island, though still within the Tropics was very different otherwise from Ocean Island. The ~~rocks~~ ^{rocks} of Rambu lay on the surface, those of Ocean Island under the surface. Its area was 17,000 acres as against the 14,700 acres of Ocean Island. It was in latitude $16^{\circ}30'$ south as against latitude 0° , & therefore could boast a kind of winter. It had great surface fertility, as against surface sterility. It had running streams, wooded hills, 3,000 acres planted with ~~matured~~ ^{matured} coconut palms, all bearing, timber trees of many ~~all~~ ^{many} kinds, hard & soft, 900 head of cattle, 100 horses. Every tropical crop would grow in abundance. In short, the rocks of Rambu lay on the surface, those of Ocean Island were under the surface. I found Rambu Island to be a paradise in resources & beauty, but the Banabans considered that this perfection was marred by their being a winter, when the temperature falls so low, that it is equal to that of Wanganui during the summer months. Rambu Island had been purchased from Lever Bros., the great soap firm, who had managed it as a large estate, using a labour force of 60 to 100, Syrens & Solomon Islanders. There were 4 hot-air copra dryers on the island, in which 700 tons of copra was dried annually, copra stores, a general retail store, 3 sets of European quarters, buildings for the labour, launches & boats, & much other equipment. All this, together with the cattle & horses, was included in the purchase. The Banabans walked into a going concern, for business & for living. Extra accommodation only was required & this was provided in the form of Army huts & tents. The tents within a year had been replaced by native thatched houses, & these in turn are being progressively replaced by brick houses in some cases, & by timber & iron houses in others. The Banabans carried on with the copra production, using as instructors, the Lever Bros old labour force, & last year reached the creditable total of 670 tons of copra exported. They also took over the general store, & ran it as a cooperative concern. A cooperative society composed of all adult Banabans had been established in 1941 at Ocean Island. This was revived at Rambu, for the management of the copra & store business. With copra later at £50 a ton, the Banaban Co-operative Society now has a credit

balance
 the envy of other native co-operative societies. A central primary school & two other smaller schools take all the children of school age. Higher education is available at secondary schools in Suva, & 40 Banaban boys have already passed to these schools. Churches have been built for the two denominations. The Banaban is deeply religious, & there is nothing superficial in his attitude. A fine basis of natural morality exists. During my last year on Rambi - I was Administrative Officer there for 2 1/2 years - crime was entirely absent. Not one case was brought before the Court. A qualified medical practitioner, a Banaban, assisted by a male & female staff attends fully to the medical needs of the island. The island has no wireless station. Roads & bridges are being extended. So now there is a community on Rambi Island, living happily ~~and successfully~~ in a new environment, learning rapidly to adapt itself to that environment & to exploit it, with large funds in hand ^{that come} ~~coming~~ from ^{and} being increased by the royalty on phosphate exports from Ocean Island, & with additional funds coming from trading operations on Rambi. Best of all, not one Banaban has returned so far to his old home, Ocean Island, though there exists no obstacle to his doing so. The migration has had many successes, but this is the chief one. That all Banabans have adopted Rambi Island as their home ~~for ever~~ permanent new home.

Of course the happy situation just reported was not attained without incidents, some expected and troublesome, others unexpected and humorous. I propose to relate a few of the latter kind. I shall be obliged if members of the press will not use ~~the~~ the material of this particular paragraph. A concert party of Rarotongans giving concerts throughout Fiji wishes to give one at Rambi, & arrives for that purpose. The old men informed me that no admission fee must be charged by the concert party, & that as a form of payment, the Banabans themselves would give a concert in return for that of the Rarotongans. My protests that the Banabans were not professional performers as were the Rarotongans & that the labourer was worthy of his hire, even a concert performer, were not accepted. Accordingly, the Rarotongans gave their performance, & the next night the Banabans squared matters by doing some dancing & singing. Needless to say, the leader of the Rarotongans was not satisfied with the remuneration and began an assault on Banaban defences. He tried many moves, until he found the old men's weakness, the idea of a gift, not a payment, ~~the~~ dear no, just a gift, a gift that would remain a

memory. The leader was promptly given £250, which was fully twice as much as the Karatungans would have received from the sale of tickets.

One of the four hot-air dryers I mentioned was burned down. Two persons were to blame, the manager of the Co-operative Society, a Banaban, who had failed to take precautions, the other, the fireman on duty, who had fallen asleep while on watch. The loss was rather serious, as materials for the re-building of the dryer were difficult to obtain, & until the dryer could be rebuilt, 25% of the green copra could not be handled. The one efficient person had been myself, as I had re-insured the dryer at the proper time. The dryer was old & the utmost cover I could get was £805. The new dryer would cost £1400. When informed of these facts, the Banaban old men were at first very pleased with me, but later, on thinking it over, they came back to tell me politely that I was much to blame. I answered, "Not the manager nor the fireman to blame?" "No, you. You are to blame." "Why, I asked. "Well," they answered, "you ^{are} to blame for not ^{insuring} the old dryer for £1400, ~~and for £805~~" If it costs £1400 to re-build the new dryer, then the old dryer should have been insured for that sum, so that the cost of re-building the dryer would come entirely out of the insurance money." It took me several talks in the ways of insurance, before the censure laid on me was lifted.

There were large landowners at Ocean Island & small landowners. Land was unequally distributed, as the result of centuries of inheritance. When the matter of division of lands came up for discussion at Rambi, I proposed to the people that there should be absolute equality of division. All should get the same. The large landowners demurred, stating that those who had large holdings at Ocean Island should receive large areas at Rambi, & by extension small pieces would be allocated to small landowners. I pointed out at length that the large landowner had already been recompensed, in fact, twice recompensed for his larger holding, in that he had received a larger purchase ^{price} than the small landowners, for the sale of Ocean Island lands, and a larger share of phosphate royalty, and that as Rambi Island was purchased out of communal funds, land division on Rambi should be strictly equal. The big fellows still ~~demurred~~ demurred, whereupon I appealed to the small landowners present. I told them I was on their side, & so would be those higher up. I felt a glow myself, as I spoke, as we all do, at putting up a fight for the under dog. The small ~~but~~ landowners thanked me gently for my efforts on their behalf, but added, to my great surprise, that they agreed with the big fellows, & would accept the principle of

~~small pieces for small landowners.~~

inequality of land division. It was over land distribution that I received an other shock. I asked the hakim Magistrate what were his hopes in the land held. From him, I expected an impartial answer, of not an altruistic one. He answered, "My great hope is that the piece of land I draw is the nearest to the shore, so that it will be short walk for any of my family to get the groceries."

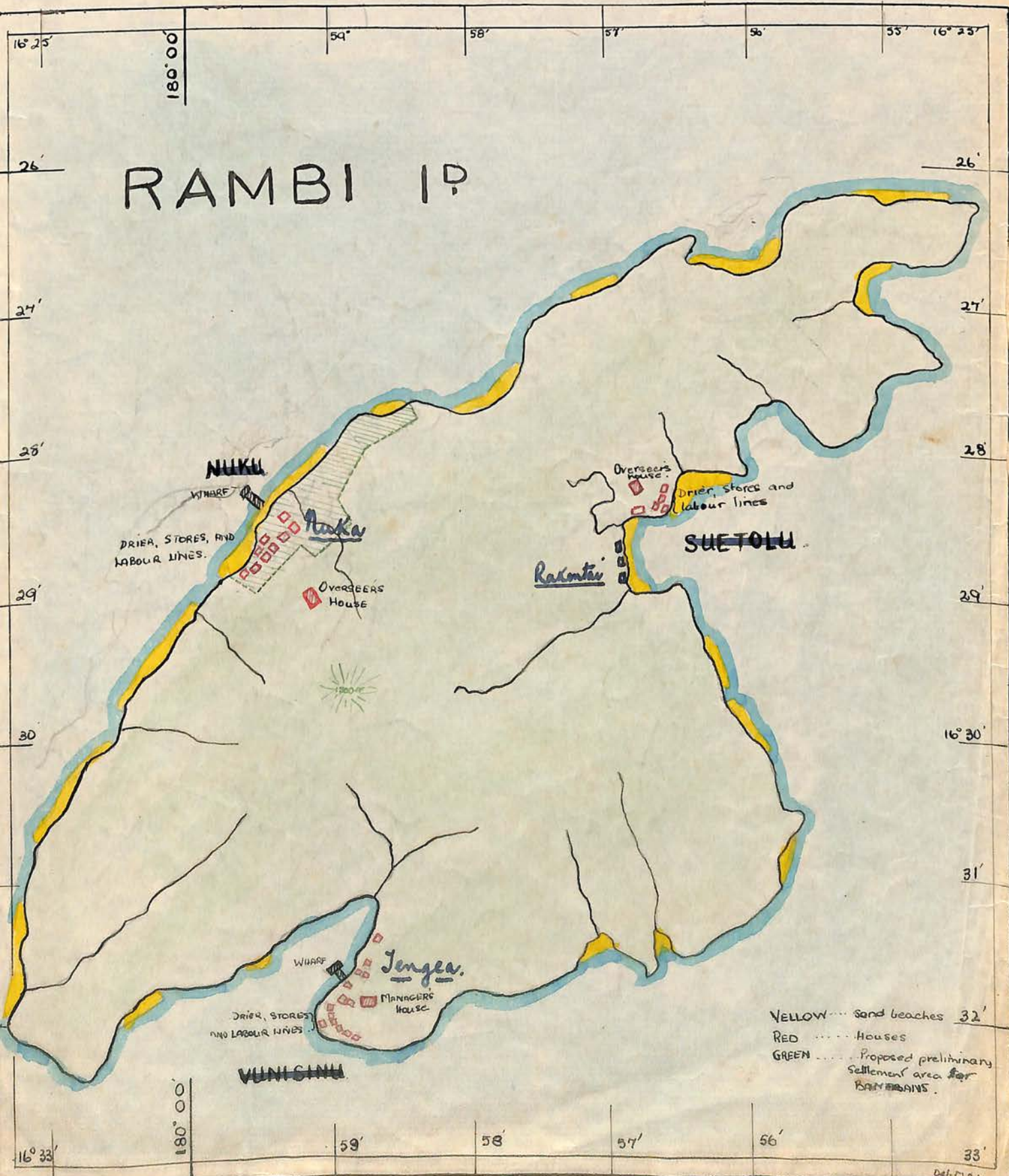
There was a distrust of Banks when I arrived at Rangoon. The Co-operative Society then had a considerable sum of money fastidiously away in a small safe. I called a meeting of the Committee of the Society, & asked for to obtain their approval, for the transfer of this money to a Bank. The Committee pointed out that this would conflict with one of the rules of the Society, which was that the Society's money must be counted, at the end of each month by the Committee, to see if it was all there. It could not be counted if it was in a Bank. I asked for the other rules, but after much scuffling of heads, it was admitted, that no other rule could be recollected. I pointed out the dangers of fire & theft, but my warning was unheeded. The one rule was inviolate. The money in the safe continued to grow until it reached £6,000 in £1. 0s. 6d. notes; & my worry for its safety grew proportionately. However help was at hand. A burglar was attempted. The burglar had almost forced his way into the office, where he had the £6,000, when he was disturbed & fled. The next day all the cash in the safe was handed to me, for deposit to a Bank. I was interested afterwards to learn that, in official circles at Suva, the burglar was believed to be me, indubitably me, that is, that in order to ^{secure} my own ends, the transfer of the £6,000 to the Bank, I had staged an attempted burglary. Colour was lent to this belief, by the crimeless record of the Banabans. The allegation was not true, but I never discovered who my burglar friend was.

And now my task comes to an end. I regret that, in the time available, I have had to exclude much of the material relating to the period from 1901, the year the Union Jack was hoisted at Ocean Island, up to the time of the Pacific War, but what has been given will have revealed, I hope, that the Banabans enjoyed to the full, during that period, the justice, benevolence, integrity & foresight of British administration.

MAP OF RAMBI.

Showing present copra making settlements and the proposed area for preliminary settlement of the Banabans at Nuku.

Areas fronted by sand beaches are all considered suitable for future villages and hamlets. (The sand beaches are shown in yellow). All these areas have clean permanent streams in the vicinity.



RAMBI ID

YELLOW ... Sand beaches 32'
 RED ... Houses
 GREEN ... Proposed preliminary settlement area for BANABANS.