THE NEW GUINEA MANDATE: AUSTRALIA'S "SACRED TRUST"

by

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B.A. (Hon.), The University of London, 1960

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
Master of Arts
in the Department of
History

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
August, 1961
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After the First World War Germany was deprived of her colonies by the Allied Powers. These colonies were then portioned out amongst some of the allied nations under the League of Nations Mandate System with the proviso that they should be held as 'a sacred trust of civilisation' and that the mandatory powers should provide for the 'moral and material well-being and social progress of the native inhabitants'. To help the League in seeing that this task was properly discharged the Permanent Mandates Commission was set up. Its duty was to receive and examine the Annual Reports which were submitted by the mandatories and to make the necessary recommendations to the League Council. Under this arrangement Northern New Guinea was handed over to Australia. This thesis examines the extent to which Australia fulfilled her 'sacred trust'.

Australian interest in New Guinea dates from the second half of the nineteenth century, and was motivated by economic and strategic concerns. Since the discovery of the Island of New Guinea in the fifteenth century, there had always been the hope of discovering gold in this area. Apart from this, in the nineteenth century the rivalries
amongst the various colonial powers directly affected the Australian colonies, which feared that war between the European powers would involve them as dependencies of Great Britain. The danger to Australian security in case of war would be serious if Germany or any other Great Power was allowed to occupy New Guinea, which lies like a stepping stone off Australia's north-east coast.

For these two reasons, Australians were anxious that the part of New Guinea not under Dutch control (Eastern New Guinea) should be annexed by Great Britain. The British, however, had no great desire to further extend their influence in the Pacific without demonstrable cause and as long as there was no indication that any other Great Power was keen on annexing the Territory, Britain was satisfied in leaving it alone. In 1877, with the discovery of gold in the area, the clamour for annexation became more insistent. Although the goldfields soon petered out Australian demands for annexation did not die down. Germany's activities and interests in the Pacific were a constant stimulus to such demands, but the Colonial Office, unwilling to shoulder the burden of annexation and believing that no other Power was interested in the area, turned a deaf ear to all pleas. Eventually Queensland, annoyed with the Colonial Office and fearful of the consequences that might attend Germany's annexation of the Territory, proclaimed it a British protectorate in 1883. Great Britain refused to endorse this action. Nevertheless,
as a result of joint pressures from all the Australian colonies and with the guarantee that they were prepared to shoulder the financial burden that might be consequent upon annexation, Whitehall annexed South-eastern New Guinea in 1884 after previously informing Germany of her action. An agreement as to the future of the north-eastern part of the Territory was to be made subject to negotiation between Britain and Germany.

Suddenly, and without previous warning, Germany annexed North-eastern New Guinea in October, 1884. This action was greatly resented in Britain because of the off-hand method adopted. The Australian colonies were bitterly disappointed and protested unavailingly to the mother country. Australian interest in the area now increased, because the danger to Australia in case of war was greater than ever before. This strategic fear played a significant role in bringing about the union of the six colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

With the outbreak of the First World War, the Australians, acting under the instructions of the British Government, attacked and conquered German New Guinea. After its conquest a considerable campaign was waged in Australia, led by responsible members of Parliament, for the annexation of the Territory. The Australian Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes, fought desperately to see this end achieved at the Paris
Peace Conference. But he met in President Wilson a determined opponent who was convinced that the former enemy colonial possessions should not be annexed but placed under international control. Hughes had to give way but not until he was assured that the C class mandate under which the Territory was placed was "equivalent to a 999 years lease". The debates on the Peace Treaty in the Australian Parliament clearly showed that the Australians merely accepted the mandate as a compromise and as a cloak to outright annexation.

After the War, military administration was ended and civil control was established in New Guinea. Australia faced many difficulties in administering the Territory. These difficulties arose from the rugged nature of the country, the backwardness and diversity of its inhabitants, Australia's lack of experience in governing subject races, and her preoccupation with her own development.

Various methods were adopted for the pacification of the Territory but perhaps the chief characteristic was the lack of enthusiasm displayed by the Administration in the task of bringing the Territory under control. The first task was to extend administrative control over the whole Territory but this was slowed down by the inadequacy of the staff devoted to the task. Another problem was that of native administration, in which the New Guinea natives played little or no part at all. This was not the fault of the Australian Government but was due rather to the chaotic nature of
New Guinea society and particularly to the absence of any well-organized political institutions and hereditary leaders or chiefs that could be utilized.

Economic development and labour questions were also of great importance under the Australian Mandate. Economic activities in New Guinea centred mainly on the production of copra and gold by white settlers, with the natives providing the labour force. This master-servant relationship obviously called for legislative regulation. The Australian Administration realized this and passed a comprehensive Labour Ordinance which, though it contained some objectionable provisions, was on the whole commendable. Despite this, labour conditions in the Territory left much to be desired because of the inability of the Administration to properly enforce the Labour Ordinance. Some of the evils were the products of the indentured labour system which prevailed in the Territory. The Australian Government maintained that this was the most sensible system that could be adopted, taking into consideration the level of advancement of the people. While this is true, the Australian Government failed to encourage free labour with a view to eventually substituting it for indentured labour.

Another important task facing the Australian Administration was that of providing education and medical care for the natives. Missionary activities in these fields were quite considerable, but through shortage of staff, lack
of funds, and the opposition of the white settlers to any scheme for native betterment, the Administration failed to provide adequate educational and health services for the native inhabitants.

After taking into consideration the difficulties encountered by Australia in the task of administering the Territory and analysing her successes and failures, the conclusion seems inescapable that Australia did not adequately discharge the duty entrusted to her under the League of Nations Mandate.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia's Interest in New Guinea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1884</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Genesis of Australian Administration of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German New Guinea, 1914 - 1921</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Sacred Trust&quot; Begins</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) The Establishment of Civil Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The Difficulties of Administering New Guinea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government and Administration</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) The Extension of Government Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Native Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development and Labour Question</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) European Agricultural Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Native Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Land Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Mining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Labour Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Moral Progress</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) The Role of the Missions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The Role of the Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Public Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the &quot;Sacred Trust&quot; Fulfilled?</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am greatly indebted to my Supervisor, Dr. Peter Harnetty, whose enthusiasm, encouragement and advice sustained me throughout the writing of this thesis. I am also grateful to the Head and Staff of the Asian Studies Library who afforded me unlimited facilities in the use of their collection.
CHAPTER I

AUSTRALIAN INTEREST IN NEW GUINEA PRIOR TO 1884

European contact with the Island of New Guinea dates as far back as the 16th century though no occupation of the Territory was carried out by any European Power until the 19th century. Two Portuguese navigators — Antonio d'Abreu and Serrano were said to have sighted the Island in 1512. However credit for its actual discovery is often given to Jorge de Menezes, the Portuguese Governor of Moluccas who, while sailing from the Malay Peninsula to the spice islands, discovered it in 1526 and gave it the name "Ilhas dos Papuas". However neither the Portuguese nor any other European nation took any step to occupy the Island. India and the East Indies offered a more profitable field for trade while on the other hand, the isolation of New Guinea and its tropical climate and difficult terrain constituted a deterrent to European occupation or trade with the Island. The first European country to occupy any part

1 Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, Canberra, Commonwealth Printer, 1943, p. 15. See also S. W. Reed, The Making of Modern New Guinea, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1943, p. 74. The word 'Papua' is derived from a Malayan term meaning 'frizzy-haired'.
of the Island was Holland. In 1828 the Dutch took possession of the western portion of it. The eastern portion was left alone for a long time as no other European nation manifested any great interest in it. Even the Australian Colonies, despite the nearness of the Island showed no interest in it till the second half of the 19th century. This is because most of these colonies were still preoccupied with their own developments and had little or no energy left for outside ventures. However, the eastern portion was not altogether left untouched by European activities for earlier in the century, pearl-fishers and missionaries had become very active there.

By the latter half of the 19th century, Australian interest in the Island was beginning to reveal itself and from the 1860s onwards there was an ever-increasing and insistent demand (from traders, planters and missionaries) that the portion of the Island not occupied by the Dutch should be annexed by the Imperial Government. Several arguments were advanced to justify the claim for annexation. The main argument was that the Island offered an unlimited field for profitable investment. It was not till 1867 that a positive step was taken by the formation in that year of a New Guinea Company. This was a private Association formed in Sydney whose aim was the exploration and colonization of the Island. A. K. Collins, an enthusiastic supporter of the project, spoke in an extravagant vein on the possibilities
New Guinea held in store in a lecture which he delivered in Sydney on April 13, 1867. He described the territory as "an immense field for industry and enterprise" and he hopefully longed for that day when that territory "shall become one vast population unequalled by any other country in the world, subjected to the skill and knowledge of Europeans, and cultivated by its present inhabitants -- willing labourers in the cause of peaceful prosperity." He concluded with a grand peroration: "On behalf of future generations, on behalf of science, on behalf of commerce and prosperity and on behalf of justice, and finally on behalf of civilization and christianity, I advocate the measure I propose."²

In 1871 John Dunmore Lang, who was one of the provisional directors of the now defunct New Guinea Company, in a paper read to the Royal Society of New South Wales which he entitled "New Guinea -- a highly promising field for Settlement and Colonization",³ argued for the annexation of New Guinea on strategic grounds. He made mention of the interest shown in the area by other foreign powers. To support his statement he cited the recent Russian expedition


³ Ibid. See also J. D. Legge, Australian Colonial Policy, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1956, pp. 13-14.
led by Miklouho-Macklay. This strategic argument was "based on the fears of being beaten to a valuable commercial prize, rather than to any general view of the Pacific strategy."^5

In 1873 Captain Moresby undertook an exploration in New Guinea and the glowing account of the strategic possibility of the island which he gave once again stimulated interest in the island and various bodies began to advocate colonization and annexation. In 1876 the New Guinea Colonizing Association was formed in London by Lieutenant R. H. Armpit, R.N., with the aim of organizing an expedition to the island with a view to its eventual annexation. This association sought official support from the Imperial Government but was informed that no official sanction could be given to a body "brought together by the love of adventure or the desire for profit". Like the 1867 project it collapsed. The Colonial Office and the missionaries were opposed to this sort of enterprise — the Colonial Office

4 In 1871 Miklouho-Macklay got to Astrolabe Bay on the north-east coast of New Guinea. His purpose was to study the nature, custom and languages, but he so greatly liked the country that he returned in 1876. In 1877 he went back to Russia to obtain support for a settlement in New Guinea and to urge on the Russians for the desirability of annexation. However his plan did not materialize. For full treatment see: The Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 36.


out of unwillingness to undertake further financial obligation that might be consequent upon annexation and the missionaries out of fear of what might happen to the natives. In 1874 F. B. Labilliere (an Australian lawyer resident in London and a strong supporter of the Imperial Federation Idea) urged on the Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnavon, the desirability for annexation. In his letter, Labilliere made mention of the increasing volume of trade that now passed through the Torres strait, dwelt on the commercial possibilities of New Guinea and pointed out the interest of other European Powers in this area. Finally, he emphasized very strongly the need for immediate action, pointing out that another power might seize the territory to the detriment of the security of the Australian Colonies and consequently of Britain if the Imperial Government failed to act in time. Carnavon, on receiving this letter, consulted the Governors of the Australasian Colonies requesting their views on this matter. Various and conflicting replies were received. The Governor of New Zealand, Sir J. Ferguson maintained that the question of New Guinea was purely an Australian affair. He added, however, that opinion in New Zealand was favourable

7 Labilliere to Carnavon, March 26, 1874. Great Britain, Colonial Office, Correspondence respecting New Guinea, Parliamentary Papers, 1876 (C.1566), pp. 2-3.

8 Colonial Office to Governors of Australasian Colonies (Circular), April 17, 1874, ibid., p. 4.
to the extension of British rule in the Pacific. Governor Weld of Western Australia and Sir W. Cairns of Queensland supported the policy of Annexation. Sir George Bowen of Victoria, on the other hand strongly opposed the idea, quoting Lord Derby's statement that "the Queen had already enough black subjects" and asserting that 'few thinking men' in Australia would declare for such a policy. Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of New South Wales, objected to annexation. He expressed doubts as to whether any other powers were contemplating annexation of East New Guinea. But he went on to say that the annexation of New Guinea would be enthusiastically welcomed by the Australian colonies. To support this, he included in his reply a Minute by the Premier of New South Wales, Henry Parkes, in which it was maintained that New Guinea offered "so fair and certain a field for successful colonization". In July of the same year another circular was sent to the Governors asking whether the Colonies would be willing to contribute to the cost of annexing and governing New Guinea. It was pointed out in the circular that those same Australian Colonies had forced

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10 Weld to Carnavon, July 14, 1874, ibid., p. 6.

11 Bowen to Carnavon, September 1, 1874, ibid., p. 10.

12 Robinson to Carnavon, June 3, 1875, ibid., p. 26.
on the Imperial Government the annexation of the island of Fiji and had then refused to contribute the paltry sum of £4,000 per annum to the cost of its administration. No positive replies were received. All the colonies showed an unwillingness to accept financial obligation though desiring annexation. New South Wales maintained that though the Colonies were favourably disposed towards annexation, yet the whole question was still an Imperial one and since the colonies would not have a hand in the government of that territory when annexed, they could not be expected to bear any of the cost. As the Australian colonies were not prepared to bear the financial burden of annexation and the Imperial Government was not keen on incurring financial responsibility in an area where no Imperial interests were involved, the whole question of annexation had to be shelved for some time. In 1875 Carnavon sent a letter to the Australian Colonies conveying to them the decision of the Imperial Government. He pointed out that there was no necessity for annexation as there was no likelihood of any other power annexing the territory. He maintained once again that Imperial interests were not involved. He admitted the interests of Australia in the territory but concluded that since they were not willing to bear the financial burden, the Imperial Government

felt unable to accede to them their request.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1877 gold was discovered in the island at Port Moresby. This led to an inrush of prospective gold-seekers. The question of annexation was once again brought into the public eye. The indomitable Labilliere once again petitioned the Colonial Office.\textsuperscript{15} This new development changed the attitude of the missionaries who had hitherto opposed annexation. The London Missionary Society now urged on the Colonial Office the need for annexation pointing out the great "perils to which the natives in New Guinea have been exposed by the scheme of adventurers.\textsuperscript{16} However, the Colonial Office remained unyielding -- Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the new Colonial Secretary merely repeating Carnavon's statement that annexation would only be considered if the Australian Colonies agreed to bear the financial burden.\textsuperscript{17} Fortunately for the Colonial Office and unfortunately for the advocates of annexation, little or no gold was found on the island and this led to the withdrawal of the gold-seekers. With their withdrawal, the whole question died down once more.

\textsuperscript{14} Carnavon to Governors of Australasian Colonies, January 13, 1876. Great Britain, Colonial Office, Further Correspondence respecting New Guinea, Parliamentary Papers, 1883 (C.3617), p. 68.

\textsuperscript{15} Labilliere to Colonial Office, September 18, 1878, \textit{ibid.}, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{16} Joseph Mullien to Colonial Office, June 3, 1878, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 29-30.

\textsuperscript{17} Colonial Office to Gordon, October 5, 1878, \textit{ibid.}, p. 52.
In 1882 widespread rumours and fears as to the impending occupation of New Guinea by the Germans agitated the minds of the Australians and once more the question of annexation was renewed with the Colonial Office. The fears expressed by the Australians were not without foundation. In 1880 a company, Die Deutsche Scehandelsgesellschaff, was formed by a group of Berlin bankers and merchants with the sole purpose of colonizing New Guinea. The Director, Adolph von Hausermann wrote to Bismarck, the German Chancellor, soliciting the support of the Government. No support was given. Bismarck was not yet convinced of the necessity for colonial enterprise. He felt that the practical need of Germany at that time was not colonial adventures but internal consolidation. The colonial interests in Germany remained undaunted despite the attitude of their Government and they waged an insistent campaign to put pressure on the government so that it would accede to their request. In 1881 the Algemeine Zeitung carried an article which recommended annexation of New Guinea to the German Government. As a result of all these developments the undaunted Labilliere, once more wrote to the Colonial Office demanding annexation but was informed that the annexation of New Guinea was a question which Her Majesty's Government was not prepared at

present to reopen. Lord Loftus, the Governor of New South Wales, urged the Imperial Government to declare a protectorate over south-eastern New Guinea maintaining that Germany's keen interest in the area warranted it. Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the Premier of Queensland, urged on the Imperial Government the desirability of immediate annexation, adding that Queensland would be prepared to shoulder any financial responsibility that might be involved. Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, turned a deaf ear to all these requests and confidently maintained that there was no reason to believe that Germany entertained any proposal for annexation of New Guinea.

Queensland, fearing the consequences of foreign occupation and exasperated by the action of the Home Government, seized the initiative and took formal possession of the south-east portion of the island in the name of the Queen on April 3, 1883. This was done in order to force the hand of the Imperial Government. Whitehall, however, remained unconvinced of the necessity for annexation and bluntly


20 Loftus to Derby, February 19, 1883, ibid., p. 123.

21 Telegram, February 26, 1883, enclosed in Agent-General for Queensland to Colonial Office, February 28, 1883, ibid., p. 120.

22 Colonial Office, to Royal Col. Institute, April 4, 1883, ibid., p. 120.
refused to sanction it. Derby scathingly declared in the House of Lords:

The explanation of Queensland's action comes to no more than this ... that there were strong reports throughout Australia of the intention of some Power nobody knew what Power -- to seize upon part -- nobody knew what part -- of New Guinea. I endeavoured to ascertain the origin of these reports; but it does not appear that there was a shadow of evidence forthcoming to substantiate them.... We are tolerably well-assured that, as regards the leading European Powers ... no such intention is entertained.23

There were one or two reasons behind the Imperial Government's refusal to sanction the action of Queensland. Firstly, there was the unwillingness of the British Government to undertake further Imperial adventures. Secondly, it seemed that the Imperial Government was somewhat displeased with the independent action taken by Queensland in proclaiming the annexation of New Guinea. This was shared by some section of the British public opinion. The Daily News, a liberal paper, carried a leading article in which it stated:

The incident shows how very independent of us our dependencies are, and how easy it is by a little vigorous action almost to force the consent of a sovereign authority ignorant at first, and reluctant, but almost powerless afterwards.24


The Spectator declared that:

The precedent set by the Government of Queensland in annexing the island (New Guinea) on its own responsibility is too dangerous to be sanctioned.... Foreign policy is impossible if we are to be burdened with new possessions acquired without any volition of our own, or in opposition to the will of Parliament.25

Thirdly, the Imperial Government was suspicious of Queensland's motive. Queensland citizens had been deeply involved in a notorious labour-recruiting operation in New Guinea. A Royal Commission appointed in 1883 to look into this matter had pointed out that it was quite undesirable to allow Queensland any voice in the affairs of New Guinea:

If New Guinea becomes a part of Queensland, its vast regions will be available as a recruiting ground for labour, without any restrictions other than those which the Parliament of Queensland (an assembly largely composed of employers of native labour) itself may think fit to impose ... whether those who are most directly interested in the employment of imported black labour are the men to whom the regulation of its introduction can be most fitly committed, it is unnecessary to ask.... To entrust such control to the Legislature of any Australian Colony, is in fact, to entrust it to an oligarchy, in which those governed have no representation whatever, and which cannot but be influenced, in a greater or less degree, by its own selfish interest.26

25 Gordon, Australian Frontier in New Guinea, p. 159.
26 Legge, Australian Colonial Policy, p. 23.
Though Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the Premier of Queensland, denied this motive on the part of Queensland and maintained that there was no possibility, nor was it ever contemplated that natives would be taken to the Australian Coast, the suspicion of the Imperial Government could not be allayed.  

All the Australian Colonies supported very strongly the action of Queensland and all demanded a reconsideration of the whole matter by the Imperial Government. In 1883 an Inter-Colonial Conference was held in Sydney. At this Conference a resolution was passed demanding that the part of New Guinea not in possession of the Dutch and all the adjacent islands be forthwith incorporated into the Empire. Public meetings were held throughout Australia demanding annexation, and an incessant campaign in its favour was waged by the Press. An opinion on this issue was succinctly expressed by a pamphleteer who declared:

It might be presumed that the Conservative Press, would have been in favour of extending the territorial boundaries of the Empire; but when we find the liberal journals of Australia following suit and even exceeding them on the same side, a force of public opinion is represented which no prudent statesman can despise.... The Melbourne Age which occupies a unique position in British dependencies as

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27 Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 27.
28 Legge, Australian Colonial Policy, p. 22.
an exponent of popular feeling ... is even warmer on the side of annexation than the most extreme of the reactionary Press.\textsuperscript{29}

Lord Derby could no longer be deaf to this great clamour for annexation on the part of the Australian colonies. He therefore wanted once more to know, whether the Colonies would agree to contribute the sum of £15,000 to the cost of administration if a protectorate was declared. Victoria and Queensland quickly responded and agreed to shoulder the burden pending final arrangements.\textsuperscript{30} What finally forced the hand of the Imperial Government was German activity in north-eastern New Guinea. In October 1884 the New-Guinea Kompagnie was formed. Immediately after its formation Otto Finsch was sent out to the north coast of New Guinea to acquire land from the natives in the territory. On June 27, 1884, the German Chancellor was informed of the Company's object and the protection of the Imperial Government was solicited.\textsuperscript{31} This action forced the hand of the British Government and in September 1884 a protectorate was proclaimed over the south-eastern portion of New Guinea by Commodore Erskine acting on the orders of the Imperial Government. Germany was notified of this and in the

\textsuperscript{29} Legge, \textit{Australian Colonial Policy}, p. 29.


\textsuperscript{31} Reed, \textit{The Making of Modern New Guinea}, p. 81.
notification the British made it plain that the limiting of the protectorate to the south-east coast of New Guinea should not in any way prejudice any territorial question beyond that limit which they suggested should be a subject for diplomatic negotiation. In October 1884 Germany declared a protectorate over New Britain and Northern New Guinea without informing Great Britain. This caused great resentment in Britain. It was the brusque method adopted by Germany rather than the annexation which displeased Britain and when she lodged a protest against this, Bismarck merely asserted that the strip of New Guinea was very small and of little value to Britain. The question of the boundary between the British and the German protectorates now arose. In the boundary negotiation, Germany had a trump card to use: Britain's difficulties in Egypt. Britain had occupied Egypt in 1882 and French hostility to the occupation and the need to obtain German support on the Egyptian issue put her in a weak position in the New Guinea negotiations. This was clearly revealed in Gladstone's letter to Granville:

I do hope that you are pressing forward the 'Pauncefote' settlement of the north-coast of New Guinea ... it is really impossible to exaggerate the importance of getting out of the way the bar to the Egyptian settlement. These words, strong as they are, are in my opinion words of truth and soberness; as, if we cannot wind

32 Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 28.
up at once these small Colonial controversies, we shall before we are many weeks older find it to our cost.  

Therefore, in order to obtain German goodwill in Egypt, Britain had to climb down on her former desire to extend the boundary of her newly-proclaimed protectorate. This was the price she had to pay for procrastination. In 1885 a settlement was reached. Germany took possession of the northern portion of New Guinea and Britain the south-east.

This settlement was a great cause of annoyance to the Australians who claimed that the mother-country had sacrificed Australian interests to Imperial interests. The Premier of Victoria, R.I.P. Service, described the whole situation as "one of the most melancholy and marvellous illustrations of political imbecility that has ever been recorded in history." All the newspapers in Australia were loud in denouncing British policy. The *Sydney Morning Herald* maintained:

> It is bad for both the Imperial and the Colonial cause when a Secretary of State for Colonies undervalues their interests, fails to sympathize with their legitimate desires, shuts his eyes to their future, and treats them in the present with scant confidence. If Lord Derby is not open to

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these charges; the defense that is to clear his reputation must be stronger than anything which now appears.35

This bitter disappointment of the Australians with the role of the Colonial Office in the New Guinea affairs was to be recalled over and over again.

German annexation of north-eastern New Guinea had two important results. Firstly, it influenced in a very vital way Australian domestic politics. With Germany in New Guinea, the Australian Colonies became more than ever conscious of the danger of internal political disunity. They realized that there could be no more room for the petty internal dissensions which had hitherto characterized their relationship. To do this was to give the enemy the opportunity of swallowing them up one by one when the opportune moment arrived. This realization, coupled with economic and other factors, paved the way for the formation in 1901 of the Commonwealth of Australia. Secondly, the presence of Germany in New Guinea became an important factor influencing the relationship of the Australian Colonies with Britain. The Colonies were now ever more dependent on the Royal Navy for their security. As a result, they tended, unlike Canada, to lay greater emphasis on Imperial unity. This further strengthened their already close relationship

35 Gordon, Australian Frontier in New Guinea, p. 264.
with the mother-country despite their annoyance with her role in New Guinea. This sense of dependency was revealed at the Colonial Conference of 1887. Canada, sheltering behind the Monroe doctrine and the North Atlantic fleet, refused to contribute to the cost of the naval defence of the Empire. She maintained that she was already doing so by faithfully carrying out the agreement reached at the time of the Confederation whereby Great Britain agreed to bear the responsibility for naval defence while Canada undertook the responsibility on land. In addition, she argued that enough contributions had been made by the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.\textsuperscript{36} Australia, with her strategic nakedness and with Germany on her border, responded quickly to the suggestion that the colonies should contribute to the maintenance of the navy. She readily agreed to contribute the sum of £126,000 per annum towards the maintenance of the navy with the provision that a squadron of the navy should be permanently stationed in the Australian waters and that the squadron could only be used outside Australia with the consent of the colonies.\textsuperscript{37}

The constant fear in Australia of the menace from Germany was heightened by the arms race amongst the European powers. This was clearly brought out by the Australian


\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 124.
Bulletin of the time:

Europe is to be reconstituted here, and when Germany or France or England, fly at each others throats, there will be blood-letting in the South Seas as on the Rhine Frontier and in the British Channel. The whole matter is of profound seriousness for Australia and the Australians.38

By this time, the economic motive for the annexation of New Guinea had been relegated to a secondary place. It must be emphasized, however, that it was still present. In 1908 various applications for land for gold-mining purposes in New Guinea were made by Australians to the German Administration. This led to a frenzied renewal of the search for gold in the Territory by the German Government. In 1909 a group of Australian miners arrived in German New Guinea. Their purpose was to form a company to explore the new Territory for gold and a licence was granted to them by the German Administration.39 They were soon followed by a wave of others who entered the country without the permission of the German Administration. By the end of that year the number of Australian gold-prospectors was increasing so rapidly that the German Governor had to bring this to the attention of the Imperial Government in Berlin.


Their activities revealed the keen economic interest which
the Australians still possessed in the Territory. The
Melbourne *Argus* writing in 1929 on the Australian gold-
seekers' activities in the German New Guinea before 1914
threw light on the unyielding spirit of some of these gold
adventurers:

> Just before the outbreak of the war, three well-known gold-seekers -- Matt Crowe, Jim Preston, and Shark-Eye Bill were prospecting in what was then German New Guinea. Time and time again the Germans tried to get rid of these adventurers, never showing an open hand but setting their agents and the tribesmen against them. Shark-Eye and his companions were made of hardy stuff, and though often short of food and in constant danger of attack from poisoned dart and arrows, they remained in the country under the guise of birds-of-paradise collectors.... After months of starvation and ill-health, they came out, but not before they had found payable gold.40

After the War, Shark-Eye, whose true name was Park, returned to the Territory and was one of those who profited greatly from the subsequent discovery of gold at Edie Creek.41

This strong economic interest in New Guinea engendered and perpetuated by the hope of discovering large

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40 Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 221.

quantities of gold in the Territory coupled with the still stronger motive of security revealed that if ever an opportunity for taking over New Guinea should present itself, Australia would not fail to seize it. She did not have to wait for long. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 provided her with that opportunity.
CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF AUSTRALIAN ADMINISTRATION OF EX-GERMAN NEW GUINEA, 1914-1921

The declaration of war by Britain in 1914 automatically involved the Dominions. The Dominions accepted willingly the obligations of war and were determined to stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain in the struggle with Germany. As a part of the strategy of war, Britain aimed from the outset at destroying the important German wireless stations in the Pacific as a preliminary to dealing with the German naval units stationed in that area. To carry out this plan, the help of the Commonwealth of Australia was needed because British efforts were concentrated in the main theatre of war in Europe. For this reason, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Harcourt, sent a telegram to the Governor-General of Australia, on August 6, 1914 inviting that Dominion to assume the offensive against German territories in the Pacific:

If your ministers so desire and feel themselves able to seize the German wireless stations at New Guinea, Yap in the Marshall islands, and Nauru ... we should feel that this was a great and urgent
Imperial service. You will realize, however, that any territory now occupied must at the conclusion of war be at the disposal of the Imperial Government for purposes of an ultimate settlement.

The Australian Government responded quickly to this request and by August 10, 1914 an expeditionary force of 1500 men had been organized. A week later this force set out under the command of Colonel William Holmes to attack German New Guinea which was easily captured. Only a handful of German reservists and native police were available to resist the Australian attack on the wireless stations at Bita Paka and these soon surrendered. The capital of the German Protectorate -- Rabaul -- was also found undefended. By September 12, 1914, the military mission had been accomplished with the Australian force suffering only ten casualties. Immediately after the capitulation, the officer commanding the Australian force issued a proclamation declaring the Island to be in military occupation in the name of His Britannic Majesty. The lives and private properties of peaceful inhabitants were guaranteed and the laws of the Colony were to remain unchanged in so far as was consistent with the military situation. Holmes' action in this respect was in keeping with the principles


of international military law. By that law the occupying force, though vested with absolute power, does not possess the sovereignty of the occupied territory. Its power is limited only to those actions necessary for the maintenance and safeguarding of its army and to the realization of the purposes of war. The existing system of law and administration must be maintained and the property of private individuals protected.

On September 17, 1914 the terms of capitulation were signed by Colonel Holmes on behalf of His Britannic Majesty, and the Acting Governor of German New Guinea on behalf of the Imperial German Government. According to these terms, it was agreed that the Acting Governor had no authority to surrender any portion of the German possessions under his administration. However, as the principal centre had been occupied by the expeditionary force, the Acting Governor gave his assurance that all military resistance would cease forthwith. Provision was made for the return to Germany of the Acting Governor and of civil officials not required for carrying on the administration. The German military officers were made prisoners of war but all other Germans including the planters and civil officers were left alone after taking an oath of neutrality for the period of

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3 Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea, September 1914 to June 30, 1921, p. 5. (Hereafter cited as Annual Report to the League of Nations.)
the war. A military administration was set up and the
officer commanding the troops was appointed the Military
Administrator of the Territory.

Public opinion in Australia was determined that
German New Guinea should not be returned to Germany. It
was felt that an opportunity was now provided for seizing
this territory which most Australians believed would have
been theirs if it had not been for the dilatoriness of the
Imperial Government. The agitation for annexation was led
by responsible members of the Australian Parliament. In
April 1915, Joseph Cook, the opposition leader, speaking in
the House of Representatives of the need to hold an Imperial
Conference before the end of the war so as to put forward,
amongst other things, Australia's view concerning the
captured German islands declared that the islands:

... are a great responsibility for Australia, but one, I believe, we should be able to
shoulder; indeed, we should be glad to have
the opportunity of assuming any responsibility
arising out of the acquisition of these islands,
for in my own judgement they should never have
belonged to any other country but Australia.
It is only defective statesmanship that has
caused this trouble, heart burning, and
anxiety, during these trying days.4

Cook was assured by Andrew Fisher, the Prime Minister, that
steps would be taken to ensure that due consideration be

4 Australia, Parliament, House of Representatives, Official
Report of Debates, April 15, 1915, p. 2367. (Hereafter cited
as H.R. Deb.)
given to Australia's interest in considering any policy to be adopted towards the captured German territories. Brigadier Holmes, the officer who commanded the Australian force which captured New Guinea in a letter to G. F. Pearce, the Defence Minister, declared that he did not see his mission as 'a filibustering expedition' but as "an expedition sent to seize the territory which it was intended should never be relinquished but held for all time as a British possession for colonizing purposes."\(^5\)

Most Australians, like Holmes and Cook, were convinced that the captured territories would be handed over to the Australian Government after the war. This desire for annexation was rudely shaken by the entry of United States into the War and President Wilson's attitude that there should be no annexation of German colonies. This made the Australians uneasy about the future of the captured German territories in the Pacific -- particularly of New Guinea. It was no wonder that they welcomed enthusiastically the statement of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Walter Long, that under no circumstances would any of the captured German colonial territories be returned to her.\(^6\) But this

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\(^5\) Rowley, *The Australians in German New Guinea 1914–21*, p. 5. The letter was written after the capture of the Territory by Holmes to justify the terms of capitulations which he made with the Germans.

\(^6\) Long's statement was quoted by Senator Bakhap in a debate in Australia, Parliament, Senate, *Official Report of Debates*,
reassurance was only a temporary one. Lloyd George, sensitive to American reaction to Long's statement, issued a disclaimer in which he maintained that the desires of the native inhabitants would be taken into consideration in determining the future of the captured German colonial possessions. This led to a renewal of anxiety in Australia. On January 8, 1918 Wilson's Fourteen Points were proclaimed to the world. The Fifth Point provides for:

A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of government whose title is to be determined.  

This statement seemed to confirm Australian fears. Joseph Cook, now Minister for the Navy, displayed the anxiety typical of most Australians when he declared: "Australia was the first to take German territory which we say we are going to keep: and I profoundly hope that we may."  

Senator Bakhp moved a resolution expressing his unqualified support and appreciation of Long's statement.

July 19, 1917, p. 292. (Hereafter cited as Sen. Deb.) Bakhp moved a resolution expressing his unqualified support and appreciation of Long's statement.


which proposed that the natives of the different captured colonies would be consulted in the disposition of these territories. "Imagine," he declared, "the cannibal natives of New Guinea being consulted in regard to a matter which is of vital interest to our posterity." The objection to the return of former German possessions was not confined to Australia alone. South Africa as well as New Zealand were no less anxious to annex German South West Africa and Samoa respectively. General Smuts commenting December 17, 1917 on Mr. Long's statement declared: "Nothing has given greater pleasure than Mr. Long's statement that no German colony can go back to Germany. The mere suggestion is preposterous." The New Zealand Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, was equally emphatic:

> It would be a curious crime against the British in the Pacific, if Samoa and other islands were allowed to revert to Germany or any other foreign Power. Such a change would mean a perpetual menace, and there was no mistaken idea in the minds of the people of Britain as to what our views were on that subject. The Empire had to preserve the freedom of the Pacific.\footnote{11}

In April 1918 Hughes, the Australian Premier, 

\footnote{9 Rowley, \textit{The Australians in German New Guinea 1914-21}, p. 275.}

\footnote{10 Cited by Senator Bakhap in \textit{Sen. Deb.}, July 19, 1917, p. 293.}

\footnote{11 \textit{Loc. cit.}}
and Cook left for London and from there proceeded to Versailles for the Peace Conference. Hughes was convinced that annexation of German New Guinea was necessary not only for reasons of defence but also for economic advantages. He believed that to allow a strong power to dominate New Guinea would be suicidal. He saw in this territory a jumping off place for any attack on Australia. Hughes was an intransigent politician who, once convinced of the necessity of anything could never be diverted or deterred from what he considered his goal. This was to be revealed at the Peace Conference. Before his departure, he was instructed by his Cabinet to do all he could to secure annexation of New Guinea. W. A. Watt, the Acting Prime Minister, made this clear in replying to questions on Government policy towards the captured German possessions:

The Prime Minister is going to do his best, as far as that best will allow, to represent to the Imperial Government that the holding of the islands is vital to the defence interests of Australia in the future....

Some members of the Opposition who were either doctrinaire anti-imperialists or 'White Australia' isolationists maintained the principle of no 'annexation and no indemnity'. They asserted that the interest of the Government was trading interest pure and simple and that the commercial

class and its press would prolong the world's torture that
new markets may be opened to Australian traders. But
the Opposition's view was confined to a minority in
Australia while the Government policy won popular approval.
"Billy" Hughes, therefore, left for the Peace Conference
with the goodwill of the majority behind him in his mission
to secure the annexation of German New Guinea. However,
Australian hope was not destined to be completely fulfilled.
At Versailles Hughes met in Wilson an opponent no less
determined than himself that there should be no annexation
of German colonies if a stable peace was to be made.

To strengthen Australia's case with the Imperial
Government and Hughes' stand at Versailles, an identical
resolution was introduced into both Houses of Parliament
on November 14, 1918 just after the armistice. The resolution
was carefully worded to avoid reference to annexation,
though this was implied in Senator Millen's speech in which
he maintained that 'added territory was necessary not so
much for acres but for greater protection.' The
resolution reads:

That the Senate of the Commonwealth of
Australia declares that it is essential to
the future safety and welfare of Australia
that the captured German Possessions in the

Pacific, which are now occupied by Australia and New Zealand troops, should not in any circumstances, be restored to Germany; and that in the consideration of proposals affecting the destination of these islands Australia should be consulted.  

In a speech on the resolution in the Lower House the Acting Prime Minister, Watt, recalled Australia's disappointment with the 'defective' British diplomacy which had allowed Germany to take over north-eastern New Guinea in 1884. "This Department (Colonial Office) has always been hours behind the clock in regard to all the great events in the Southern Hemisphere, and we do not wish this to occur in the present crisis." He went on to describe unfairly the history of the Imperial Government in the South and West Pacific as one of 'lethargy and neglect' for which the Colonial Office was chiefly responsible. The motion was unanimously passed.

Meanwhile from Versailles, Hughes telegraphed the Acting Prime Minister asking him to obtain evidence which might prove German ill-treatment of the natives of New Guinea. This he wanted to use to support his claim that Germany should be stripped of all her overseas possessions. No such evidence could be obtained, but this incident

16 Ibid., November 14, 1918, pp. 7837-7858.
17 Rowley, The Australians in German New Guinea 1914-21, p. 278.
demonstrated the extent to which the Australian Government was prepared to go in order to achieve its objective.

By article 119 of the Peace Treaty, Germany agreed to renounce her claims over her colonies in favour of the Allied and Associated Powers. The question next arose as to what was to be done with them. Wilson was opposed to annexation but favoured putting them under international control. This led to a clash with Hughes who was opposed to any form of international control and demanded outright annexation. He clearly revealed the reason for his opposition to international control, for example, in describing his policy at Versailles to the Australian Parliament:

> International control would aim a deadly blow at our trade and industry. Under international control how could we secure the trade of these islands which legitimately belong to us.... Patriotism, commonsense and material interests alike declare that such a policy would mean the destruction of Australia.18

Both in and outside the Conference, Hughes made sure that his views on Australia's desire for annexation were unequivocally stated. In an interview published in the Paris newspaper Le Matin on February 2, 1919 he maintained that:

The people of France know the importance of such strategical position. It is our national roof. We want the roof safe as a whole, and not open to the fancies of passers-by, or the aggression of marauders ... what the Monroe doctrine is to America, an equitable settlement of the island question is to Australia. The blood of Australian soldiers had flowed in great rivers in order that their country's liberty should be secured. The most cherished ideals, and their country's political, industrial and social conditions are now at stake.

Hughes fought very desperately to see that New Guinea was annexed and though supported by South Africa and New Zealand, who were themselves keen on annexing South-West Africa and Samoa respectively, he failed to achieve his aim as it was decided by the Conference that the Mandate system be applied to these colonies.

The Mandate system was the product of General Smuts' fertile mind. Smuts' intention, however, was to apply the system to those new states which had come into being in Europe as a result of the dissolution of the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Empires. He never meant to apply this doctrine to the captured German possessions. The System, as applied to these ex-German territories, provided that they should be placed under the tutelage of more advanced nations as they were unable to stand by themselves

under the 'strenuous conditions of the modern world'. The mandatory nations were to hold them as 'sacred trusts' for civilization. They were to see to the 'moral and material well-being and the social advancement of the peoples of these territories'. A provision was also made that such territories should be opened to the nationals of all nations for trading and other legitimate purposes. This was the so-called 'open door policy' which Hughes thoroughly detested. He strongly maintained that it should not be applied to ex-German New Guinea. So violent was his opposition that Clemenceau daubed him a cannibal. Hughes' opposition to this policy was due to Australia's fear of Japanese emigration to New Guinea and Japanese aggression.

20 Baker, Woodrow Wilson and the World Settlement, p. 184. A Permanent Mandates Commission was later set up to advise the League on all matters relating to the observance of the Mandates. It was made up of nine members chosen in such a way that the majority belonged to non-mandatory states. (The membership was increased to ten with the admission of a German member in 1927.) The members were selected on the basis of personal merit and competence and during their tenure office with the Commission, they were not to hold Government jobs in their own countries. An expert from the International Labour Organization attended the meetings of the Commission in an advisory capacity when questions connected with labour were being discussed. The Commission was purely an advisory body. It could not even make direct recommendation to a mandatory and its recommendations to the League Council could be overruled by a Council member of a mandatory. It therefore depended upon the prestige of its members. Such distinguished personalities like Lord Lugard, Ormsby-Gore, Lord Hailey, M. Rappard and Mme Dannevig served on the Commission.
He believed that such a policy applied to New Guinea would be prejudicial to Australia's economic and strategic interests. This was revealed in his speech on the Mandate in the Australian House of Representatives:

I ask my fellow-citizens throughout Australia to realize, what an open door for men and goods into those islands would mean. Our control of trade and navigation would be gone, and within eighty miles of us there would come pouring in those who, when the hour shall strike, could pounce on us on the mainland.\footnote{H.R. Deb., September 10, 1919, p. 12174.}

Australia had been in constant fear of Japanese aggression since the beginning of the twentieth century. She had watched Japan's rise to military and naval power with uneasiness. It was her fear that an over-populated Japan might divert her attention to sparsely-populated Australia. She had reluctantly agreed to Japan's occupation of the former German islands in the North Pacific. This had been inevitable owing to the invaluable Japanese naval assistance to Britain during the war. The occupation of these captured German islands had brought Japan half-way to Australia and was a great cause of uneasiness to her. This, coupled with the fear of losing certain economic advantages which might result if the 'open-door policy' was applied, accounted for Hughes' bitter opposition to the policy. He bluntly declared: "There should be no open-door in regard to the
islands near Australia. There should be a barred and closed door with Australia as the guardian of the door."\(^{22}\)

A compromise had to be worked out to provide room for the various conflicting views. A solution was found in Smuts' proposal to create a third-class mandate -- the 'C' class -- by which the mandatory power would be allowed to administer the mandated territory as an integral part of its own territory. This satisfied everybody and New Guinea, Samoa and South-West Africa were placed in the category of 'C' class mandates.

On December 17, 1920 a Mandate for the Government of the Territory of New Guinea in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations was conferred upon His Britannic Majesty to be exercised on His behalf by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia. A certified copy of this was received by the Australian Government in April 1921 and in May of that same year a civil administration was established in New Guinea. Brigadier-General E. A. Wisdom was appointed as the Civil Administrator. Hughes in a debate on the Mandate summed up Australia's aim for acquiring New Guinea:

> We tried to obtain direct control ... but President Wilson's Fourteen Points forbade it and ... the principle of the

mandate was accepted. Then the nature of the contest changed, and since the mandate principle was forced upon us we had to see that the form of the mandate was consistent; not only with our national safety but with our economic, industrial and general welfare.  

From what can be gathered from the debates in Australian Parliament, it would seem that Australia agreed to hold New Guinea as a "sacred trust" without realizing its full implications. This was borne out by the fact that throughout the discussion on the mandate, most of the parliamentarians never made mention of the positive obligations which the mandate imposed on them -- the moral and material well-being and the social advancement of the natives of the Territory. Even Prime Minister Hughes did not touch upon this at all. He dwelt only on the economic and strategic advantages it secured for Australia. His right-hand man, Joseph Cook, who had accompanied him to the Peace Conference, could only see in the Territory a source of revenue for Australia:

In my opinion, very shortly these islands will be a source of revenue, and if one may so put it, a profit to us. This is a very great gain to Australia, and a great element in the security which we hope will come to us as, in the future we develop the resources of these islands for the benefit of the Empire and the world.  

24 Ibid., September 17, 1919, pp. 12408-12410.
The phrase 'benefit of the Empire and the world' is very significant. It seemed to imply that the mandate was not to be a dual one exercised in such a way as to be of advantage both to the native inhabitants on one hand and the Empire and the world on the other. It was to be administered only for the benefit of the Empire and the world. Only one or two members dwelt on the importance of the 'sacred trust' from the point of view of its obligations to the natives of New Guinea -- they were Senators Ferricks and Reid. Ferricks pointed out to members that: "In exercising control, particularly in what was German New Guinea, the care of the natives must be our first consideration."25 The heavy emphasis on the economic advantages to Australia brought a taunt from Senator Reid who declared: "So far as annexations in the Pacific are concerned our opponents speak of the mandatory powers which are to be given to us as if they were to be used for trade purposes."26 Even people like Ferricks and Reid who were aware of the nature of the 'sacred trust' were only dimly conscious of it. They did not seem to realize very fully that in order to discharge completely the entrusted responsibility a vigilant care must be exercised and a constant interest maintained over the affairs of the Territory. They seemed

26 Ibid., September 26, 1919, p. 12733.
to assume that once New Guinea came under Australian administration, the fulfilment of these obligations would be automatic. Reid declared: "Appreciating the democratic spirit of Australia as I do, the possible misuse of our power does not trouble me." This Australian attitude, objectionable as it might be, is quite understandable. Australia never accepted the spirit of the mandate system. Her determination was to annex New Guinea and she only agreed reluctantly to the mandate system in order to meet Wilson's wishes and on the understanding that the 'C' class mandate would be 'the equivalent of a 999 years' lease as compared with freehold'. To her therefore the 'mandate system' was nothing more than a thinly-veiled disguise for annexation.

27 H.R. Deb., September 26, 1919, p. 12733.

CHAPTER III

THE "SACRED TRUST" BEGINS

With the acquisition of the mandate over New Guinea, immediate steps were taken to bring to an end the Military Administration which had hitherto ruled the Territory and replace it with a civil one. On April 7, 1921 a proclamation was issued in Canberra bringing into operation the New Guinea Act, 1920\(^1\) which had already been passed by the Australian Parliament in anticipation of the award of the mandate. The Act authorized the Governor-General of Australia to accept the mandate; vested the Government of the Territory in an Administrator to be appointed by the Governor-General; provided that Acts of the Parliament of Australia should not apply to the Territory unless so expressed or unless extended to the Territory by the Governor-General, who was also vested with the power of making ordinances for the Territory. The Act embodied within itself the terms of the mandate, which required the

\(^1\) Annual Report to the League of Nations 1921-1924, p. 62. The term New Guinea as used in this thesis refers only to the north-eastern portion of the whole Island of New Guinea. This has won general acceptance. The Dutch portion of New Guinea is called Dutch New Guinea while the Australian colony is known as Papua.
establishment of freedom of conscience, prohibited the slave trade and forced labour, forbade the establishment of military or naval bases in the territory and the training of the natives for means other than police duties or for defence of the territory, and banned the supply of intoxicating drinks to the natives. Finally, the Act provided that the Governor-General should submit an Annual Report to the League Council containing full information as to the measures being taken to carry out the 'sacred trust'.

In establishing control over New Guinea, Australia did not need to develop a new system. There was already at hand the system of colonial rule established in her adjacent colony of Papua, which provided a basis for the civil administration in New Guinea. What she did, therefore, was to transpose the Papuan system to New Guinea with some slight modifications. At the head of the Administration was a Civil Administrator to whom the entire task of administration was entrusted. He was not assisted by any legislature, executive, or advisory council.

The judicial administration was vested in a

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2 In Papua, the head of the Administration was the Lieutenant-Governor, assisted in his task by an Advisory Council. In New Guinea the Administrator was supreme with no advisory council to assist him. In 1926 provision was made for the formation of an Advisory Council composed of the heads of Department to assist the Administrator. In 1933 the Advisory Council was abolished and Executive and Legislative Councils were set up.
Central Court and in District Courts. The Central Court possessed jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases; the District Courts were mainly courts of record presided over by the district officers. They possessed only limited jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases. An appeal lay from a District Court to the Central Court whose decision was final unless the Administrator gave permission for further appeal to himself.

For the purpose of Administration, the prevailing German system was retained with some slight changes in the number of districts. The Mandated Territory (German old Protectorate) was divided into ten districts, each under a District Officer. He was a magistrate of the District Court and of the Court for Native Affairs. Apart from helping in the general administration of the districts, he took control of the Territory while the District Officer was on patrol or absent from the district and in more important districts he was usually left in charge of a sub-station. There was also the Patrol Officer who assisted the District Officer in all fieldwork. He was also a magistrate of the Courts for Native Affairs. It was the duty of the District Officer and his staff to inspect all plantations regularly and to pay periodical visits to all

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3 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 60.
4 Later the number of districts was reduced to seven.
native villages under Government control or influence.

The task of supervising the work of the District Officers was entrusted to the District Inspector. This official made regular visits of inspection to all districts in the Territory, and was charged with the duty of investigating irregularities in district administration and any other important matters that might be brought to his notice.

To help in the task of maintaining law and order throughout the districts there was the native police force organized by the Germans and taken over by the Australian Administration. The Police Headquarters was in Rabaul, but outstations under the control of district officers were established in each district. The duties of the native police were the maintenance of law and order and the suppression amongst the natives of those practices which were considered inconsistent with the principle of morality.

In 1921, the Laws Repeal and Adopting Ordinance was passed by the Australian Parliament abolishing all acts, statutes, laws and ordinances and other legislative measures enacted by the German Government and declared to extend or applied to or in force in New Guinea. The ordinance vested in the Australian Government the 'right title, estate and other interest or control' of the German

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Government. It provided for the preservation of the rights and customs of natives and declared that such customs and usages, subject to the provision of any other future ordinance, should continue in existence in so far as they were not repugnant to the general principles of humanity. To provide a substitute for the German laws that had now been abrogated, provision was made for certain Acts of the Parliament of Australia, all ordinances and legislative acts made by the authority administering the Territory during military occupation, certain Acts and Statutes of the State of Queensland, certain Statutes and laws of England and certain ordinances of the Territory of Papua to apply as the laws of the Territory. On the basis of this legislation and administrative arrangements, the civil administration assumed actively the task of carrying out the sacred duty.

The Administration declared as its immediate aims the extension of its rule through the whole of the Territory, the improvement of the labour conditions and of native agriculture and the education of the natives in its broadest sense. In this worthy task of improving the 'material and moral welfare of the natives, the administration was faced with a host of problems. The first problem was posed by the nature of the country. North-east New Guinea, like the other parts of New Guinea is an extremely rugged and mountainous country. The mountains rise steeply from the Coast and reach heights of 14,000 feet in some cases. The coastal area
is one vast sweep of mangrove swamp, marshy, unhealthy and a home for malaria-bearing mosquitoes. Behind the mangrove swamp and along the Coast, there is a narrow coastal plain stretching from the Dutch border to the mouth of the Sepik River. Here and there too on the Mandang coast, around Astrolabe Bay and Huron Gulf and along the two great rivers -- Sepik and Ramu -- are isolated patches of lowlands. The navigable rivers are very few, most of them being characterized by cataracts and torrents. The whole area except for the highlands is covered by dense and almost impenetrable tropical forest. The climate, as typical of all equatorial areas of the world, is hot, humid and wet. The only exceptions are the highlands where owing to the altitude the climate is pleasant. The high temperature and humidity which is characteristic of the greater part of the area is very oppressive and unbearable to white people. At the time of Australian occupation of the Territory, diseases of malaria, dysentery, tropical sores, filariasis, intestinal parasites like hookworm were widespread taking toll of the life of many. The rugged nature of the territory, the dense tropical forest, the mangrove swamp with its deadly stench and malaria-bearing mosquitoes, the enervating hot, humid and wet climate, the oppressive heat -- all these posed very great problems to the task of administration. As a result of these factors, throughout the period of German occupation of New Guinea -- a period lasting for thirty years -- only three quarters of the islands were explored
and less than that were brought under effective control.\textsuperscript{6} Even this much was achieved under very trying conditions by heroic adventurers who in the interest of science, geography, or of humanity had faced undaunted the naturally adverse conditions of New Guinea. This problem was to continue to plague the Australian Administration and constituted a major obstacle to her in the discharge of her sacred trust.

Apart from geography and climate the society of New Guinea presented another type of difficulty to the Administration. New Guinea society is a melting-pot --- a medley of people of different racial origins.\textsuperscript{7} Along the coastal fringe of New Ireland, New Britain and New Guinea (mainland) were to be found the Melanesians; on the mainland were the Negritos and the Papuans; the Polynesians lived in the extreme east and the Micronesians in the most westerly of the islands. For many centuries past there had been a constant intermingling and intermarrying between peoples of different racial stock which gave birth to a society which can only be paralleled in Latin America.

New Guinea society was also highly fragmented. The village was the unit of social or political life. In

\textsuperscript{6} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., pp. 25-40. See also Reed, \textit{The Making of Modern New Guinea}, Chap. 1. There is a wealth of literature on this particular subject.
far too many areas means of government were not institutionalized. Here and there leaders were to be found who achieved their position as a result of wealth or valour during the internecine tribal warfare which characterized the polygot community of New Guinea. This sort of highly atomised society of mutually hostile groups speaking mutually unintelligible languages presented a very great difficulty to the task of administration. The position has been aptly summarized by Lord Hailey:

> It may not be entirely correct to speak of native society in New Guinea as anarchic, but it could be justly described as atomic. For the most part the country consists of a tangle of tiny communities, many of which can hardly be dignified by the name of villages, and most of which were habitually at feud with their neighbours. There were lacking therefore the larger tribal associations or the organized native authorities which could be adopted in Africa or parts of the Far East as agencies of local rule.

This sort of society recalls to mind the state of Nature described by Hobbes, where no possibility of arts, science, and cultivation exists; where man is constantly at war with his neighbour; and where man's life 'is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'.

The natives lived at a very low level of existence —

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money was unknown, and scientific agriculture unheard of. Shifting cultivation system with the aid of crude stone-age implements was the prevalent order everywhere. Knowledge of sanitation was entirely lacking. Sorcery and witchcraft were highly practiced and sacrifices were the common methods of healing diseases. Evidently, the backwardness of the people, the nature of the country and its climate, the 'anarchic' form of social organization presented peculiar and unfamiliar difficulties to the Australian Administration.

Apart from the above problems, there were others deriving from the internal situation in Australia. Australia was a growing country with a relatively small population. She was undergoing at this time a process of rapid, economic changes which made great demands on her people. Being hungry for capital herself, she could not afford to sink much money into the development of New Guinea. Self-interest would naturally dictate satisfying home needs before satisfying that of the mandated territory.

As far as administering a tropical dependency, or the governance of subject races, was concerned, Australia lacked the necessary experience and the personnel. It is true she had had to deal with the Australian aborigines but her treatment of these peoples had left much to be desired and at this period she had not manifested any great desire for their welfare. It is also true that she had been
administering Papua since 1906 but all those who had investigated the administration of that territory had come to the conclusion that the progress achieved in that territory was not due to the effort of the Government but was the result of the energy of Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Herbert Murray. Lord Hailey has described Murray as:

... an outstanding personality in the colonial world, universally recognized as humane in temperament, ruthless in dealing with abuse of authority, and unsparing in personal effort on behalf of a people to whom he was deeply attached and who were deeply attached to him...  

In 1920 a Royal Commission at the suggestion of Sir Herbert Murray had investigated amongst other things the possibility of unifying the two territories but had rejected the idea on the following grounds. Immediate Union would involve the adoption of all Papuan laws and the cancellation of the whole legal system under which the mandated Territory had grown up. Such a complete change carried out suddenly could only create confusion. In addition it would be impossible to present the League of Nations with an Annual Report which would give the facts necessary to enable the Council of the League to ascertain

9 Lord Hailey in his Introduction to Mair, *Australia in New Guinea*, p. XV.

10 Interim and Final Reports of the Royal Commission on Late German New Guinea, 1920, pp. 23-71.
the real position of the mandated Territory and determine
whether Australia was really discharging her duties. This
is because the business and the statistics of the mandated
Territory would be so interwoven with those of Papua that
the possibility of affording the League the opportunity
necessary for scrutiny and criticisms would be lost. This
rejection of the idea of amalgamation was, perhaps, a great
loss to the mandated Territory which might have greatly
benefitted under the benevolent rule of Murray.

Australia in starting on her sacred mission was
therefore confronted with a host of problems -- the geo-
graphy of the country, its climate, the 'anarchic' nature
of the social organization of the people, her preoccupation
with her own economic development, and her lack of experi-
ence in colonial administration. All these problems
constituted a handicap to the task of Administration and
must be taken into consideration, if an accurate and impartial
assessment of her achievements in New Guinea is to be arrived
at.
CHAPTER IV

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 1920–1940

The Extension of Government Control

When Civil Administration was established in 1921, only a very small portion of New Guinea was under effective control. The Germans had limited their activities mainly to the two islands of Manus and New Ireland and to some portions of New Britain and Bougainville, and along the coasts on the Mainland. The Australian military administration which governed the Territory from 1914–1921 was only concerned with maintaining the status quo. This was in keeping with international military law. Moreover, the war period was not the time to engage in exploring new areas and extending the influence of government. As a result, considerable areas of New Guinea remained a complete blank on the map. Yet these areas harboured very large populations needing the attention of Government. The task of extending Government control and authority became particularly necessary in order to protect those natives who had already come under Government control. These natives who had been taught to abandon the laws of the jungle, lay down their bows and arrows, and settle down to peaceful life, were being
constantly raided by those tribes which were still outside the sphere of Government influence. Furthermore, the gold-seekers were constantly penetrating beyond the pale of civilization into the uncontrolled areas, with fatal consequences both to themselves and to the natives with whom they came in contact. For these reasons, one of the greatest tasks facing the Administration was that of extending its rule over the whole of New Guinea — a very difficult and unenviable task when one considers the rugged nature of the country — its high mountains and deep chasms and the almost impenetrable nature of its dense tropical forest.

The Administration, nothing daunted, set itself to this task and a long programme was drawn up by means of which peace and good government would be ultimately extended throughout the whole of New Guinea. The task of achieving this objective fell to the District Officers and their staffs. Before this task was undertaken, the whole of the Territory was classified into five different areas.¹ First, there was the area under complete government control. This included areas of the Territory where the census had been taken and in which an unarmed constable could go to a village and arrest a native offender with the full assurance that he

would be supported by the natives in the performance of his duties. Then there was the area under government influence. This included areas which had been patrolled and brought under government influence to such an extent that the lives and property of white men were relatively safe, and where the natives were accustomed to paying visits to the District Officer for advice or for settlement of disputes. The third class embraced all areas which were under partial government influence. This consisted of areas which had been penetrated by patrols and where some contact had already been established with the natives. In such areas, an unarmed constable would be tolerated but given no assistance in making an arrest of a local native. The fourth class consisted of areas penetrated by patrols. This included those portions of the Territory where initial contact had been made but where friendly relationships had not yet been established. Finally, there was the unknown area consisting of those parts of the Territory not yet visited by any white men and which were by law out of bounds for whites except for the Administration officials and such people as missionaries and anthropologists. After this was done and each District Officer became acquainted with the degree of government influence in each section of his district, then the work of penetration with a view to bringing eventually all the Territories under complete Government influence began.

For the purpose, a method of peaceful penetration
known as the base-camp system was generally employed. This system had been employed with considerable success in the adjacent Australian colony of Papua. It is an economical system and has proved highly successful as a means of establishing contact with the natives. The chief instrument of the system is the patrol. Patrols can be divided roughly into two classes. First is the administrative patrol which operates only in areas under complete control for purely administrative purposes, such as tax-collecting, census taking, inspection of indentured labour and the like. Then there is the penetrating patrol employed in the extension of the influence of the Administration into new areas, or consolidating the influence already gained in areas previously visited but not yet under control. The system of peaceful penetration required a great deal of planning. A patrol party had to be organized and equipped for every possible contingency before setting out. Care must be taken to ensure that sufficient food and utensils for officers, police and carriers were taken along together with tents and medicines in case of illness. Moreover, various types of trade goods must be carried by means of which food could be purchased from the natives, as well as presents for distribution to the important men and women in the various native communities with whom friendly contact

might be established. Then an unknown area was mapped out for penetration and a patrol party consisting of an officer with about ten native constables and carriers set out on its task. As the party proceeded inland, services of interpreters were enlisted and as the usual thing was for several languages to be spoken even within a very limited area, three or four interpreters might be employed. When a sufficient area had been penetrated by a patrol, a suitable location was selected for a base-camp as the headquarters for the patrol officer. In doing this, care was exercised that such an area was chosen near the center of the different communities in the region. This had to be done so as not to appear partial to any one particular village -- a thing which might rouse the enmity of the other. When this has been done, in a matter of weeks, news must have gone round that the 'Government' was in their midst and eager to trade with all those who were keen. As a result there would come from neighbouring villages curious natives bent on seeing what was going on. Contact was thus established with groups from different villages and gifts were distributed and trade carried on with them. In a matter of few weeks, if the officer believed that the natives were already convinced of the peaceful intention of the patrol and were friendly, he started to patrol the area. All the villages were visited, gifts once more distributed and while compliments were being exchanged, the officer seized
the opportunity to explain the aims of government and the system of administration. In each village visited seeds and cuttings of European vegetables and non-indigenous fruits were distributed to the natives to be planted and a resthouse constructed for the use of future patrols. During this period, the officer took the trouble to collect information as regards the nature of the people, their customs, their tribal and social organizations, their general health, living conditions, their language and culture, and their political and trading relationship with the neighbouring tribes. Opportunity was also seized to appoint village officials — the luluai, the tultul and the medical tultul.3

The life of a base camp usually came to an end within three months and then the period of consolidation followed. For this purpose native police camps were placed at strategic points in the area at intervals of a day's walk. To these camps, selected native constables with their wives were sent. Here they erected their own homes, laid out gardens and settled down for a period of several months stay. They were there to act as instructors to the newly discovered natives teaching them how to raise new crops and imparting to them a rudimentary knowledge of sanitation while at the same time explaining to them the purpose of government — its demands and prohibitions.

3 The luluai system is described in detail in the section on Native Administration.
The task of peaceful penetration was an arduous and painstaking one. It demanded all the qualities a man can possess — courage, persistence and coolness in the face of danger. At times patrols met with hostility from the natives who resented intrusion into their hitherto secluded domain. At other times, they met with friendliness. The following extract taken from the report of a patrol at Ambuti clearly demonstrates this.

The natives demonstrated their disapproval of our intrusion by excited exclamations. As if by magic, the shore was lined up by warriors in war paint and feathers, brandishing formidable-looking spears. It was sometime before I was able to speak to them through my interpreters. I explained to them that my mission was of a friendly nature, and I decided to endeavour to land. Seeing that my attitude was friendly, they retreated some ten paces and built a barricade of spears, and intimated that that was the boundary past which I was not to go. Noticing a number of bad septic sores amongst the defenders, I walked up to one warrior, who had an awful sore extending from the knee to the ankle, and persuaded him to sit down. He did so, but would not relinquish his spear. I set to work and rendered what first aid assistance my experience and medical box could afford, and when the bandage was tied I signed him to get up. He endeavoured to show his appreciation of my labour by shaking hands with me and patting me on each side of the face and pulling my nose. For two hours I was occupied in dressing the sores of a number of men. By this time it was just on dusk and I noticed that quite a number were friendly towards me, though there were still some who showed some signs of mistrust and others who were antagonistic. I decided before it became
too dark to return to the pinnacle and informed them of my intention, intimating that I would come ashore again in the morning and that I would then go into their village.4

The base camp system of peaceful penetration was a very sound one although it is tedious. By this system the Administration might have been able to open up very peacefully a considerable portion of the Territory if it had not been plagued by two important problems -- lack of funds and shortage of staff. These two problems arose from the fact that the Australian Government was unwilling to make grants for the development of the Territory. The Administration was not unaware of this for it always complained that its efforts to provide adequate administration were frequently thwarted by shortage of staff. Furthermore, the officials were mostly returned soldiers who possessed little or no experience of administration. In addition, some of them were already too old to engage in the arduous task of 'peaceful penetration' of New Guinea. The introduction of the cadet system in 1925 by which young men were recruited into the service after a short period of training at the

4 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1927-1928, pp. 62-63. It was a common experience for natives of some villages to take to the bush on the approach of a patrol. Under that circumstance, the only thing left to a patrol party was to sit down and wait for the natives who eventually came back overpowered by curiosity. And whenever they did come back they were in the habit of examining the patrol party, pinching and scraping the white skin of the officer and testing it with a wet finger to see if the colour was lasting.
University of Sydney did help to alleviate the situation. Nevertheless the Administration continued to be hampered by shortage of officers and lack of experience on the part of those appointed.\(^5\)

Apart from the twin factors of lack of funds and shortage of staff, there is the over-all impression that the Administration was not too enthusiastic in the task of bringing the whole Territory quickly under Government control unless the economic activities of the European settlers demanded it. L. P. Mair maintains that under the Australian Administration "the most single incentive to the penetration of New Guinea Mainland ... has been the search for gold."\(^6\) This is borne out by the fact that though the Administration always complained of shortage of staff to open up new areas, it always had staff to spare to man new areas opened up by the activities of the gold-seekers. In the 1927-28 Report, it was stated that in view of the fact that gold-seekers were beginning to extend their activities towards the regions of Upper Waria River in the Morobe

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5 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1936-1937, p. 162. Cadets were selected from suitable applicants between the ages of 20 and 24. They then proceeded to New Guinea, where after a period of service lasting 21 months, they were sent to the University of Sydney in Australia where they took courses in elementary law, tropical hygiene, and anthropology.

6 Mair, Australia in New Guinea, p. 34.
District, it was decided to send the Government Anthropologist to that area to establish friendly relations with the natives and to prepare for the coming of the prospectors. The report concluded that as a result of this the prospectors were able to enter this area without hostility on the part of the natives and succeeded in procuring native food and guides as they journeyed from place to place. The clear implication of this is that no thought should have been given to the opening up of this area if not for the activities of the gold-seekers. This passage brought forth a strong criticism from the Mandates Commission which observed that in establishing friendly relations of this kind, the primary consideration of the Administration appeared to be a commercial one and that it would be contrary to the spirit of the mandatory system if the mandatory power allowed its paramount duty of raising the level of civilization to become subservient to the economic exploitation of the country.

As a result of the above factors, only 37,370 square miles of the 93,000 square miles of the Territory were brought under effective control by the Administration by

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1938. When due allowance has been given to the difficulties posed by the nature of the country, there is still the overall impression that the Australian Administration could have accomplished more than it really did.

Native Administration

In the field of Native Administration, the system adopted by the Australian Administration was nothing more than a modification of the one established by Germany when New Guinea was under her control. When Germany took possession of the Territory in 1884, one of the important tasks facing her was the establishment of control over those natives of the Territory that were within her sphere of control. For this purpose, she adopted a system of ruling through the native chiefs or leaders called the Luluai-System in New Guinea. The System was inaugurated in 1897 and according to the German Official Statement it "represented an attempt to bring condensation to the natives in a definite area and to lead them to take over duties and to work together for the well-being of the tribe." The New

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9 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1937-1938, p. 142. 10,040 square miles were under influence; 8,695 square miles under partial influence; 4,225 square miles were penetrated by patrols and the uncontrolled areas totalled 35,750 square miles.

10 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 39. See also Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 36; Reed, The Making of Modern New Guinea, p. 140. The Luluai-system strictly speaking is too rudimentary to be described as a system.
Guinea Luluai-System is an incipient form of the Indirect Rule System made famous by Lord Lugard in Nigeria. The form of Indirect Rule established here was of necessity a rudimentary one because of the nature of New Guinea Society. New Guinea society was a highly fragmented one where communities were broken up into small village units. There were, except in a few cases, no hereditary rulers whose authority was extensive. There were village heads whose offices in many cases were not hereditary but merely acquired as a result of wealth or valour. There was no highly developed political institutions which could be utilized. The German Administration, therefore, experienced some difficulty in setting up a system of native rule. It was difficult to find suitable persons who commanded the respect and obedience of their fellowmen. This problem was solved, however, by making use of the hereditary chiefs wherever they were found and failing this, leaders were chosen from amongst the elders and the most influential people in the different villages. Such leaders were generally referred to as the headmen or Luluais. Each Luluai or headman so appointed was made an agent of the Administration and he acted as its representative in his village. His duty was to see that all

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Luluai in the language of Blanche Bay people from where it is taken stood for a non-hereditary office filled by an outstanding warrior and a man of wealth. The word Kukurai meaning 'chief' in the language of North Bougainville is sometimes used instead of Luluai.
orders and regulations issued by the Administration were obeyed. He possessed some minor jurisdiction over his fellow-villagers -- the power of settling disputes between natives involving up to 25 marks or 10 fathoms of shell money. He also carried out minor administrative duties such as the care of roads and sanitation in the villages and the collection of head-tax for the Administration. Most important of all from the point of view of the Administration is that the Luluai was to see to the regular flow of labour from the villages to the German plantations. He received no salary but he was given presents and in addition he was allowed to deduct ten per cent of the amount of taxes he collected. On appointment he was given a peaked hat and silver-headed stick as an insignia of office. To assist him was another official called the Tultul. His duty was to act as an intermediary between the Administration officials on one hand and the Luluai and the villagers on the other. For this post, the requisite qualification was the ability to speak pidgin-English. A third official, the medical


13 Ibid., p. 140; also Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 40.

14 Ibid., p. 140.

15 Tultul in Blanche Bay language means a 'messenger' or a 'servant'.
Tultul or the 'dokita boy' as he is called by the New Guinea people was also chosen. After selection, this official was taken to the Headquarters of the Administration and given elementary instructions in first aid and in the dressing of wounds for a period lasting about three months. He was then sent back to his village to look after the health of his people. He received an annual salary of 20 marks. As each area of the Territory was opened up, luluais and tultuls were appointed from the various villages. In fact, the appointment of these officials always signified that a village had been brought under the influence of government.

This system was continued by the Australian Administration with some slight changes. Under Australian rule, the luluai was nominated by the villagers themselves, the Government merely confirming such nomination. This was given a particular emphasis in order to ensure that the man appointed to be luluai would be the natural leader of the people and as such be able to command respect from amongst the villagers. The luluai was now ordered to pay regular

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16 'Dokita Boy' is a word in pidgin English. This is a corrupt type of English which has developed as a result of contact with Europeans. This sort of language is not peculiar to New Guinea alone. It occurs in every place where there is a European contact with the native. A form of it is spoken in West Africa and in the West Indies.


18 An official statement in 1934 maintained that the "luluais" are carefully selected for character and intelligence and the majority are persons of social standing in their
visits to the Government centre and to report promptly any breach of the peace in his village. He was no longer paid any salary but as compensation, he and the other two officials were exempted from tax payment. His power was also whittled down to arresting native offenders and bringing them before the District Court for trial.

During the 1930's, a step forward in Native Administration was taken by the appointment of paramount luluais. A paramount luluai was endowed with some undefined authority over a group of neighbouring villages. He was charged with the duty of touring the villages under his authority and making sure that Government regulations were properly carried out. He also had the duty of presiding over an informal native court where, along with the luluais under his jurisdiction, minor matters not too serious to be brought before the Court for native affairs were settled. He received on appointment a silver-headed stick

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20 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1933-1934, p. 25. This office is not really an Australian innovation. The Germans had appointed a few paramount luluais just before 1914.
as an insignia of office and a salary of £3 per annum.\(^{21}\) The paramount luluai system was confined to certain parts of the Territory. By 1939, 66 paramount luluaïs had been appointed by the Administration.\(^{22}\) It was not too effective a system. Its effectiveness depended completely on the personality of the men appointed, since a paramount luluai had to supervise a number of villages whose languages he might not understand and where, as a result of his being an outsider, he lacked the prestige and respect necessary to make his office really effective.

In 1937 Native Councils were organized for the first time in the Territory. These Councils were set up in the fourteen groups of villages in Rabaul sub-district.\(^ {23}\) Each Council was made up of the influential members of the village communities chosen by the people themselves and according to official statement they "represented the social and religious divisions of the village groups."\(^ {24}\) Meetings of these Councils were held in public in the presence of an official of the Administration who visited each Council once

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\(^{21}\) Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 303.

\(^{22}\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1939-1940, p. 30.


\(^{24}\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1936-1937, p. 31.
a fortnight. Records of the meetings were kept in pidgin English or in the vernacular.\textsuperscript{25} Councils of similar nature were later established in Talasea, New Britain and Madang. These Councils could discuss matters affecting the villages but had no power to put their decisions into effect, nor did they possess any of those powers normally associated with local councils -- the power to tax and to spend the money so derived.

In appointing luluais and establishing these Councils, the declared aim of the Administration was "to create a body of responsible native officials who can be entrusted to an increasing extent with duties connected with the actual Administration of the Territory."\textsuperscript{26} By 1940 this aim had not been fulfilled to any appreciable extent. The luluais were still nothing more than mere rubber stamp agents of the Administration. This is understandable considering the time factor and the level of advancement of the people. Lord Hailey criticized the Administration for not directing its policy towards the organization of indigenous agencies of Native Administration.\textsuperscript{27} He maintained that the appointment of village councillors amounted only to the creation of local auxillaries to the

\textsuperscript{25} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1938-1939, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{26} P.M.C. Minutes, 9th Session (1926), p. 23.
\textsuperscript{27} Lord Hailey in his Introduction to Mair, \textit{Australia in New Guinea}, p. XVI.
police organization and that though the luluais and tultuls bore some resemblance to indigenous native institutions, the resemblance was purely illusory for they were used largely as officials and their appointment can hardly be said to have constituted a first experience in the practice of local self-government. This assertion is very true. But if no steps were taken to train the natives in the 'practice of local self-government', the fault lies not with the Australian Administration but with the nature of social and political organization in New Guinea and the level of advancement of the people. There were no well-developed indigenous political institutions in New Guinea such as were found in some parts of Africa and as such there was no proper basis on which to establish very quickly the structure of proper Native Administration. The development of this institution in New Guinea had to be 'a plant of slow and tender growth'. The criticism of most scholars is always based on the standpoint of the success of Indirect Rule in West Africa. It was, however, the existence of well organized Emirates and kingdoms with highly developed political institutions found in a place like Nigeria which made the application of Indirect Rule by Lord Lugard highly successful.

28 Lord Hailey in his Introduction to Mair, Australia in New Guinea, p. XVII.

The same difficulty as was encountered in New Guinea confronted British Colonial Administration in the eastern part of Nigeria, but even here the problem was relatively easy as the people in that part of the country speak the same language. The same thing cannot be said for New Guinea.

Court for Native Affairs

In New Guinea, there were no indigenous native court institutions. This, however, did not mean that the people were without any system of regulating social conduct and behaviour. The means were just not institutionalized. Disputes were generally settled by village elders at informal meetings while justice was meted out either by imposition of social sanctions on the offenders or in some cases by resort to acts of brutal revenge. The Australian Administration sensibly realized that European concept of law and justice could not be introduced into New Guinea society. For this reason, Courts for Native Affairs were set up in all administrative districts. The jurisdiction of these courts was limited to matters "between natives and other natives" and such matters as were set out in the Native Regulations of 1924. These regulations dealt with certain types of offences which do not normally come within

31 Loc. cit.
the scope of European criminal law, such as sorcery, adultery, refusing to be inoculated and the like.\textsuperscript{32}

All the District Officers and the Assistant District Officers as well as the Director of District Services were members of these Courts. In addition, the Administrator had the power to appoint any person to be a member of these Courts. In deciding cases pains were taken to understand native points of view, laws, and customs. Indeed the Native Administration Regulation provided that the Courts should become well acquainted with native law and customs and "must take judicial notice of all native customs, and give effect to them in so far as they are not contrary to the principles of humanity or in conflict with any law or ordinances in force in the Territory.\textsuperscript{33}

In all these Courts the official language was either the native language of a particular locality where the Court was situated or pidgin-English. Records of all cases were, however, kept in English. In cases where parties involved in a law-suit were ignorant of pidgin-English an interpreter was made available. In this business of deciding cases in accordance with native law and customs,

\textsuperscript{32} Other offences dealt with included contempt of court, failing to assist a District Officer, prostitution, bribery, escaping from custody, etc.

the District Officers were often faced with perplexing problems arising from the divergencies in customs and law of the various fragmented communities in New Guinea. Very often they had to rely purely on sound commonsense in passing judgements because of the conflicting customs and traditions of the peoples. This case tried by a District Officer at Madang illustrates this clearly.

A native girl had been 'sold' in marriage by her parents to a man of a neighbouring tribe. The husband died shortly after the marriage, and a dispute arose concerning the status of the widow. According to the custom of her own tribe she was supposed to return to her parents for 'resale'; the custom of her deceased husband's tribe, with whom she resided, dictated that she automatically became wife of her late husband's brother.

Representatives of the two tribes involved, unable to come to an understanding, brought the case before the District Officer. The latter decided that she should marry her brother-in-law since she was still a resident of the village into which she married -- possession being nine points of law in his sight. But the girl ran away or was spirited back to her own tribe and the case reopened.

In the second instance the District Officer decided to let the girl choose for herself, and when she indicated a desire to return to her parents the officials thought the matter had been settled. It was not long before she was sold again in marriage; but disliking her new mate, she deserted him and the officer was called on a third time to rectify the situation. He took the
remaining course which he could think of and married her to one of his police troops. 34

In this rough and ready way justice was administered by the officials of the Administration.

Taxation

When the German Administration imposed a headtax on the natives in 1907, the aim was to ensure a constant flow of labour to the European plantations. This is one of the classical means by which labour can be indirectly compelled. 35 The German policy was continued by the Australian Administration which, however, denied that its aim was to compel labour. Rather it maintained that its aim was to raise revenue and to inculcate in the natives "some sense of responsibility and some recognition of his own status as a citizen." 36

In 1921 a tax of ten shillings per annum was imposed on all natives in all taxable areas. 37 Certain classes of people were exempted from payments. These included all indentured labourers, all the village officials

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35 A head tax varying from 5 marks to 7 marks per head was imposed on male adult natives in districts declared liable to taxation. Indentured labourers were exempted. See Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 101.

36 Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 301.

37 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 102. In 1926 all areas under control were declared taxable areas.
(luluais and tultuls), members of the native police, mission teachers, a native physically unfit to work, and a father of four or more living children by one wife.\textsuperscript{38} The exemption of these peoples from tax-payment was altogether unfair, for these were the only people, with few exceptions, who were in a position to pay taxes by virtue of the fact that they received wages. The average native who engaged in subsistence farming had little or no savings from which to pay the head tax and, therefore, found it burdensome. In any case, the policy of exemption was a vicious circle for in most cases the taxes were paid out of the salaries of these people who were exempted as most people deliberately sent out their younger folks to work on the plantations in order to be able to pay the taxes. The result is that many people were driven into the arms of the recruiters. This defeats the argument of the Administration that head tax was not levied to compel labour.

Apart from the head tax, an education tax was levied on the natives. In 1921 an education tax of five shillings per annum was levied on all natives. In 1922 this was increased to ten shillings per annum.\textsuperscript{39} It was later cancelled.

The first criticism that can be advanced in

\textsuperscript{38} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 18.
respect of the taxation policy of the Administration is that the amount of tax paid by each native was excessive particularly when compared with the amount paid by the European community. This was pointed out by the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1929. The Commission observed that the European population paid only £218 in taxes whereas native population paid direct taxes amounting to £20,451. It pointed out that a rough calculation revealed that the European paid 1/6 1/2d per head in direct taxation and the natives 10/- per head and this in a country where the European community was relatively large and where it owned a considerable part of the best land and the largest plantations and where it played a bigger part in the economic life than the native inhabitants. The same criticism was indirectly repeated when Lord Lugard (a member of the Commission) inquired during the eighteenth session as to whether the non-native populations; including the companies were bearing their fair share of taxes. The Australian Government defended its taxation policy by the untenable argument that the Europeans contributed just as much as the natives by way of indirect taxation, such as company registration fee, motor traffic tax and the like.

40 P.M.C. Minutes, 15th Session (1929), p. 55.
41 Ibid., 18th Session (1930), p. 56.
It did not add, however, that they had to pay this because of the economic position and wealth. If the natives had their own business or vehicles they too would have had to pay these indirect taxes.

The question might be raised that the 6/- education tax paid by the Europeans for each labourer employed made up for the paltry amount they paid by way of direct taxes. But from what can be gathered from the Annual Report, it would appear that the Administration regarded this as part of labourers' wages and perhaps used it to justify the poor wages paid to the New Guinea labourers. "It (Education levy) is in effect an additional payment of 1/- per month, although not mentioned in the labourers' contract of service."^43

Cargo Cult

During the 1930's, the Administration was confronted with a peculiar native problem which deserves mentioning here. This problem arose from the so-called 'Cargo Cult'. This sort of movement or outbreak had been experienced before this in Papua and in the neighbouring Dutch colony of New Guinea. It is a movement peculiar to

primitive peoples. Each of these movements was in every case led by some native with strong personality who claimed contact with the spirit of the ancestral dead. It was always accompanied by wild and hysterical dancing, shrieking and swooning and with a prophecy that on an appointed day, a ship loaded with a cargo of European goods would arrive, and the white men would be driven away never to return. Instructions were generally issued that on such a day no work should be done and that the people should slaughter their pigs and cattle and put on their best dresses in anticipation of the 'cargo ship'. The following extract taken from the 1935-36 Annual Report illustrates a typical 'cargo cult' movement:

In February 1934, a native, Sanop, with five followers of the village of Gogohei created a new movement.

In the presence of a large gathering they fell into trances and foretold coming events. They said a steamer would arrive with food, axes, horses, dogs, firearms and other things for the natives; that on the arrival of this steamer, Sanop and his followers would be the principal men in the District and that all other villages would have to work for Gogohei.

For sometime scarcely any attention was paid to Sanop's prophesies. He

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44 Similar movements have been recorded in North America amongst the North American Indians before 1890. The best known are the "Ghost Dances"; also in Kenya — Watu wa Mungu ("The men of God"); and amongst the Bantu in South Africa and the people of New Hebrides [Espiritu Santo].
announced that the ship would arrive on Good Friday, but that the only [sic.] people who were without food and pigs would share in the cargoes. Some of the people immediately killed their pigs. Feasts were held, and gardens were neglected.

The steamer did not arrive on Good Friday, but Sanop by his influence was able to keep the people in suspense for a whole week before they eventually broke away and returned to normal life. 45

Sanop and his followers were imprisoned. In 1935 he organized again a similar outbreak. Several such movements throughout the Territory are on record. They tended to dislocate the normal run of life and were at times accompanied by mass demonstrations and violence. The anthropologists who had investigated these movements claimed that they were a latent form of anti-Europeanism. 46 The most important thing about them from the point of view of the present study is that they represented a deep resentment, genuine or otherwise, against certain aspects of European rule and might be detrimental both to the interests of the natives and the Administration if not checked in time. Cases of this nature were always seriously dealt with by the


46 W.E.H. Stanner, The South Seas in Transition, Sydney, Australian Publishing Company, 1953, p. 63. Stanner claims that side by side with the element of anti-Europeanism in this movement are motives of personal gain — desire for power, sexual access to women otherwise unattainable, malconversion of the gifts offered to the spirit of the ancestral dead, etc.
Administration and heavy terms of imprisonment meted out to leaders of such movements. Though the means of dealing with these outbreaks was quite sound, nevertheless it was not altogether adequate. Something more than this was required. There is the need for sympathetic understanding of the difficulties the New Guinea natives were going through as a result of the mental confusion and social maladjustment which is not an unusual feature of a primitive society undergoing a rapid transition as a result of contact with higher civilization. Chinnery an anthropologist in the Service of the New Guinea Administration, has this to say:

The condition in some parts of New Guinea today is that of people who have been abruptly thrown into the melting-pot of changing events without adequate assistance to adjust themselves, and amongst the most serious problems confronting the officials of the Administration is that of lifting them out of their confusion and redirecting them. 47

The need for sympathetic understanding of the problems of the natives was emphasized by C. W. Groves who was a teacher and later an anthropologist in New Guinea. In a conversation between him and Sarak, a native of Tabar in New Guinea, he related how Sarak declared "Oh, master, why didn't white men come and talk to us and learn about our

ways, and understand us, in those earliest days, as our late missionary did and as you do today.\textsuperscript{48} This, says Groves, was an inarticulate expression of the 'misunderstanding, all the disturbance of social life and the consequent personal bewilderment and mental malaise',\textsuperscript{49} that was going on in New Guinea Society. He rightly concluded that what the natives needed was not so much the magistrate but a special branch of the Administrative service which would concentrate upon the task of directing and adjusting the lives of the natives in the village.\textsuperscript{50}


\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 101.
The story of economic activities in New Guinea centres on the production of copra and gold. New Guinea is a very fertile country with great economic potentialities. Various crops can be grown though the crop that lends itself to easy cultivation is the coconut. As a result throughout the era of German rule and the period of mandate Administration there was excessive concentration on the growing of coconut almost to the exclusion of every other crop. This was particularly noticeable during the period of the Australian Administration. Previous to this, the Germans had tried to grow other crops like cocoa, rubber, sugar, coffee, banana, tobacco, arrowroot, oil, cotton and kapok, though not on a large scale. But under the Mandate Rule very little effort was made to encourage the growth of these other products. The reason is that most of these competed with the industries which had been developed in tropical areas of Australia. Thus there was no great interest in developing the same in New Guinea. This dependence of New Guinea on one cash crop was economically dangerous and unsound. This was realized by the Administration because
as early as 1924 the Director of Agriculture was com-
plaining that "the planting of coconuts has been carried
out so extensively on European plantations to the exclusion
of other crops; the natives inhabitants have been so much
pressed to plant coconuts in their villages ... that the
Territory may be said to be labouring under the desolating
blight of an obsession of coconut planting...."¹ So great
was this obsession that almost every item of food had to
be imported into the Territory. This evil of a one crop
economy was not fully realized by the planters themselves
till the time of the "Great Economic Depression" of the
'thirties. New Guinea, like other primary producing
countries, felt the heavy hand of the depression. In 1930,
for instance, copra amounted to 87 per cent of the total
exports but by 1934 it had dropped to 16 per cent mainly
because of the depression and to a lesser extent because
of the rapid development of the gold industry.² The value
of copra fell so low that many planters had to wind up
their business. Fortunately, the Territory was saved from
economic chaos by the gold discovery which had been made in
1926. Though there was a recovery after the depression, it
was not altogether complete for several other reasons.

There was now less demand for copra as whale oil and other

² Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1930-1931, p. 69;
1933-1934, p. 78.
vegetables oils provided good substitutes for soap manufacture. In addition, the price of butter in many countries became so cheap that there was a reduction in the demand for margarine in which coconut oil is the main ingredient. Finally, the quotas and import restrictions which were in operation in different parts of the world considerably reduced copra prices. Despite this, copra still continued to contribute substantially to the revenue of the Territory accounting for over 25 per cent of the total revenue.\(^3\) It remained the greatest cash crop throughout the mandate period, the copra produced in the Territory accounting for one-twentieth of the total world supply.\(^4\)

As one would normally expect, the production of copra and other cash crops was mainly confined to the European planters who made use of native labourers on their plantations. The natives contributed little or nothing to the agricultural exploitation of the Territory except in very few and almost negligible cases. They had not yet gone beyond the level of subsistence farming and the shifting system of cultivation was still widely prevalent. The question of native agriculture was indeed an important one as it was tied up with the problem of health. The natives lived mainly on one or two starchy foods which they obtained

\(^3\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1938-1939, p. 100.
from taro root, supplemented in some cases by coconut and fish. This did not provide for the natives the well-balanced diet necessary to maintain good health. The Administration was conscious of this and aimed at the outset to instruct the natives in better agricultural methods and to encourage them to cultivate new food crops as supplements to those already under cultivation on native farms. In addition, it aimed at encouraging the growth of cash crops by the natives and at teaching them the necessary task of pest eradication. This task was entrusted to agricultural instructors who were to visit native villages periodically and impart to them instructions on better methods of agriculture, distribute new plants and seed, teaching them how to cultivate them and making sure that the natives cultivated areas of land adequate to provide them with their necessities. Often natives were compelled to increase the areas of land under cultivation so as to protect them against the possibility of food shortage. In addition two pest officers were required to inspect periodically all native villages under control.

In areas near centres of European activities the response of some very few natives to the use of modern techniques of agriculture was encouraging and was already

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5 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1925[1926, p. 31.
bearing fruit. In such areas the natives were already producing yields greater than their needs and the excess was being sold both to the plantations and to the Administration. Moreover, some of them had started engaging in production of cash crops like copra but their contribution to the economic life of the Territory by way of agricultural production was not much.

The Administration faced two difficulties in the task of persuading the natives to adopt better methods of farming. The first was the conservatism typical of all human beings which hindered quick acceptance of foreign ideas and foreign methods. The New Guinea natives had been for generations subsistence farmers. Throughout that period there was no need to produce a surplus because there was no trade with other parts of the world. Moreover, the native was not accustomed to the money-economy typical of the highly civilized societies of the Western world. His wants were few — a shelter over his head which was easily built, a little clothing and some food to keep body and soul together. His methods of farming were very crude, stone age implements were employed in cultivation. There was no compelling economic necessity for him to change his methods. Nature was an over-indulgent mother to him and there was

land in abundance. As a result of all these factors, he could not see why the Administration had to compel him to renounce the time-honoured ways and customs of his ancestors. For this reason, he was slow to adapt himself to new situations and demands. To convince him of the need for better techniques required a sympathetic approach and a consistent and painstaking supervision. This was what the Administration was not in a position to give as a result of shortage of staff. As early as 1924 the Director of Agriculture was complaining of the inadequacy of staff devoted to the supervision of native agricultural activities:

The staff was inadequate and there was no continuity of personal contact and effort with the native inhabitants necessary for any success in the direction of improvement of native agriculture. Only occasional and sporadic inspection at long intervals, and the effect of the work done at one visit is dissipated long before a second visit can be made.7

There was no indication that anything was done to improve the situation, for the 1927-1928 Report carried the same complaint: "It is not possible for two or three European inspectors to carry out such instructional work on hundreds of native groves and gardens."8 To remedy the situation, a decision was taken whereby native agricultural assistants

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were to be trained and entrusted with the task of supervising the other natives in their agricultural activities. For this purpose, an agricultural school was opened at Keravat where 20 to 30 natives were given training lasting three years in the cultivation of food and economic crops, crop rotation and essentials of tropical agriculture. On completion of the course, some were employed as native assistants by the Administration whilst others were sent back to their various villages with the hope that they might impart to fellow villagers something of the knowledge they had acquired whilst under training. The introduction of this training scheme helped to some extent in improving the situation. The white agricultural instructors who were formerly on the jobs were unable to speak the native languages and this hindered considerably their effectiveness. Moreover, the natives were somehow suspicious of these white agricultural officers and the element of trust that was lacking prevented any good result being achieved. It was surprising that the Administration did not realize this in time and thus make provision for agricultural training. In addition, the employment of native agricultural assistants helped considerably to improve the staffing situation though it was still painfully inadequate. As a result no great progress was made in the task of improving native agriculture.

Another bar to the quick adaptation of natives to new methods was the labour policy of the Administration. The New Guinea Administration fostered the system of contract labour. This system took away from various villages those young men who would have proved more responsive to new ideas and methods. It might be argued that the employment of such men provided a useful introduction to better agricultural methods, but the very fact that many of them stayed continuously on the plantation and did not return home to put their experience into practice completely negated this.

Land Policy

The system of landholding established by Germany during her administration of New Guinea was freehold tenure. Under this system some native lands were alienated to the German companies and settlers in the Territory. By 1914 a total of 702,220 acres had already been alienated. The rights of the holders of such alienated lands were confirmed by the Australian Administration after the establishment of civil control. Immediate steps were then taken to safeguard for the natives the rights to their land and to ensure that they did not thoughtlessly dispose of land which might be useful to them at some future date. The 1922 Land Ordinance prohibited the sale of native land to anybody other than

10 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 95.
the Administration. Applications for native owned land had to be made to the District Officer who was to ascertain the willingness of the natives to transfer the land and decide whether such transfer would be detrimental to native interests. If the native was willing and the land could be transferred without endangering native interests and if the Administration did not require the land for purposes of native reserves, roads, landing places and timber reserves, then the application was forwarded to the Administrator to be approved. Unfortunately this provision was not at times strictly enforced and instances had occurred whereby the District Officer's recommendation against alienation had been rejected on the grounds that commercial activities necessitated it and these activities were for the wider interests of the Territory.

The Administration possessed the power of declaring as crown land any land in the Territory which appeared to be ownerless after a certain fixed period. To safeguard native rights, it was stipulated that consideration must be given to any claim of ownership if such was forthcoming. If such a claim was found to be valid, then the land had to be returned to the claimant. Under Article 12 of the same Ordinance the Administrator was vested with the power to

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11 For the detailed provisions of the 1922 Land Ordinance see Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, pp. 96-97.

12 Mair, Australia in New Guinea, p. 95.
set up a Commission to decide questions connected with uncultivated and unoccupied lands and all cases of land dispute in which a native claimant was involved. If such a claim was rejected by the Commission an appeal lay to the Central Court.

To meet the needs of the European settlers, a system of leasehold was established in place of the freehold system which had been in practice under the German rule. There were five classes of leases -- agricultural, pastoral, residence or business, special and mission. Under the agricultural lease no individual was permitted to hold more than 2,000 hectares of land and the unimproved value of such land must not exceed £5,000. No such lease was to last for more than 99 years and an annual rent of 5 per cent of the unimproved value of the land was imposed as land tax. One-fifth of the land must be planted within the first five years, two-fifths within the first ten and three-quarters within the first twenty years. In case of pastoral lease, the maximum area an individual could hold was 4,000 hectares and this for a period of 30 years. A rent of two and a half per cent of the value of the land was charged. Such leases had to be assessed every 10 years but during the first 10 years, the annual rent was not to exceed 10 shillings for every 400 hectares. The total area of land acquired under various leases in 1940 amounted to 63,078 hectares.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1939-1940, p. 116.
There is no doubt that the land policy of the Administration was a sound one. Unnecessary alienation of land was prevented. By 1940 out of a total area of 24,086,440 hectares only 365,602 hectares had so far been alienated. Despite this, a land problem still existed in the Territory but this was confined to such small islands as New Britain and New Ireland and those other places where mission and commercial activities had given birth to large concentrations of natives and in places where the reduction in death rate led to over-crowding. In such areas, land hunger on the part of the natives had begun to manifest itself. It might seem ridiculous that a land problem existed in the Territory because a greater part of the land remained unalienated. It must not be forgotten, however, that in a society like New Guinea inhabitants of an area where shortages of land existed could not obtain land from other areas since the people were still at that stage of development where anybody not belonging to their particular group was looked upon as a complete stranger. As early as 1924 the Administration had tried to solve this problem by initiating a policy of land resumption in areas where land alienation was excessive and had proclaimed native reserves in areas where the demand for land was almost insatiable. By 1940 the total area of land under native reserves was 10,736

Moreover, the system of long lease was fraught with future land problems. Agricultural lands were leased out for as long a period as 99 years. It is not unlikely, therefore, that before the expiration of such leases native demands for land would have been so great that land shortage might occur in the Territory.

Mining

The greatest source of wealth to New Guinea from 1930 onwards was gold. Since the discovery of the island by European explorers in the sixteenth century, hope of the discovery of gold had always been entertained. From that time till the twentieth century some sporadic attempts were made to discover gold in the Territory by people of various nationalities. Indeed, one of the reasons for Australian interest in the Territory was the hope of the discovery of gold. In 1870, small findings were made near Port Moresby. This immediately led to a great inrush of Australians and a great clamour on their part that the Imperial Government should annex the Territory. But as the findings soon petered out, the question of annexation was shelved. This failure did not in any way dampen the hope of gold-seekers who continued the search spasmodically. Even the annexation

of north-eastern New Guinea by Germany in 1884 did not prevent Australian gold-seekers from searching for gold in that section of the island of New Guinea. The German Administration stimulated by the hope of the discovery of gold carried out operations to this end but no luck attended their efforts. Small findings were struck here and there but no more. It was not until 1926 that the hopes of the gold-seekers were finally rewarded. In that year W. G. Royal, A. Chisholm and R. W. Glasson, discovered gold at Edie Creek.\(^\text{16}\) From this time onward New Guinea took its place as one of the gold-producing areas in the world. The story of the development of the gold field was not an easy one. Its development was at first slow as a result of transport difficulties. The gold-bearing field was located in the midst of the jungle. The approach to it was a very difficult one. Series of highlands, rapidly moving streams, and dense and almost impenetrable tropical forest posed a barrier to easy movement. The journey from the coast to the area took seven days.\(^\text{17}\) Gold prospecting was very difficult because of the rugged nature of the country and the thick forest which covered its surface. Mining equipment had to be carried by natives from the port of Salamaua over hill and down dale for a distance of sixty-five miles and as the

\(^{16}\) Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, p. 221.

\(^{17}\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1925-1926, p. 23.
limit of the load allowed to a native porter was only fifty pounds, heavy machinery needed for prospecting could not be transported to the area.\textsuperscript{18} As a result, the earliest pioneers had to work under the most trying conditions but they were never dismayed as the hope of economic gain was a stimulus to them. The problem of transportation was solved by the spectacular development of air transport in the Territory.\textsuperscript{19} This made possible a rapid expansion of the gold industry. It was estimated that in 1937 alone local air-craft flew over 1.5 million miles, and carried over 13,000 passengers and 11,000 tons of freight for the industry.\textsuperscript{20} Labourers, equipment, food and other supplies needed on the goldfield had to be transported by plane. This made the cost of prospecting very high and consequently the big companies soon squeezed out individual prospectors. Apart from Morobe goldfield, small gold fields existed throughout the Territory particularly in the Sepik District and Bougainville. It was this discovery of gold that saved the Territory from economic paralysis during the period of economic depression of the thirties. From 1930 onwards, gold took the pride of place as the chief product of the

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20 Stanner, \textit{The South Seas in Transition}, p. 35.
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country constituting by 1940 two-thirds of the total export.\textsuperscript{21} Gold valued at £19 million was obtained in the Territory between 1926 and 1940. Other minerals were also obtained in the Territory but not on a large scale.\textsuperscript{22}

Apart from gold and these minerals, it was believed that oil existed in New Guinea. During the 1930's therefore, the Australian Government engaged actively in the search for oil, but throughout the period of the mandate Administration, oil was not found in any commercial quantity.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Labour}

The role of the New Guinea natives in the economic exploitation of their Territory was not a significant one. It was essentially that of providing the labour force for the European plantations. They had not yet reached the stage of development at which the exploitation of the economic resources of their Territory could be left in their hands. For this reason, European capital and settlers were encouraged and welcomed in the Territory since this was the only means by which the country could be economically developed. The policy of attracting white settlers and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Annual Report to the League, 1939-1940, p. 63.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Annual Reports to the League of Nations, 1926-1940.
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encouraging the natives to work for them as labourers was deliberately encouraged by the Administration. This was given expression in the Administrator's speech to the Legislative Council in May 1933 when he said:

We realize that the prosperity of the European residents and the development of the native population must go hand in hand ... the prosperity of the European largely depends on native labour and the development and advancement of the native race depends upon the means which the prosperity of the European residents provide.24

Thus when civil control was established in 1921, the system of indentured labour which had been established by the Germans was retained and carefully fostered. Care was taken to expunge some of the evils which were already noticeable in the system by means of carefully drawn up labour regulations. Two important Native Labour Ordinances were passed during the period of the mandate Administration -- the first in 1922 and the second in 1925.25 These Native Labour Ordinances were comprehensive in scope and dealt in detail with all facets of the indenture system of labour -- recruitment, working conditions, wages, repatriation and the like.

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24 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-1933, p. 148; see also P.M.C. Minutes, 18th Session (1930), p. 65.

25 For the Labour Ordinance see Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, pp. 53-60; 1934-1935.
Recruitment

Under the 1922 Labour Ordinance all recruiters were to possess recruiting licences which were only issued to men of good character approved by the Administrator. All recruiters had to enter into a bond as a guarantee against the violation of labour laws, and the licences were liable to cancellation if recruiters were found guilty of breaches of the recruitment regulations. Recruiting licences were issued only to Europeans. All Asians, particularly Chinese, were barred from such rights because the Chinese recruiters had proved themselves very unscrupulous under the German regime. As a rule, no native was given such a right.

To safeguard native recruits, it was laid down that all contracts must be in writing and that duplicates be filed with the District Officer. On recruitment, a medical examination was conducted for all recruited natives. In addition, each was to appear before the District Officer, who was to ascertain his willingness to be recruited. Any labourer found to be illegally recruited had to be sent back to his village at the recruiter's expense. This was an essential precaution because the Administration permitted

26 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1914-1921, p. 22; see also Interim and Final Reports of Royal Commission on Late German New Guinea, p. 59; P.M.C. Minutes, 18th Session (1930), p. 65.
the practice of utilizing native chiefs as agents of the recruiters. The Chiefs were paid a sum ranging from ten shillings to one pound for each native recruited depending on the length of service. The Chiefs found this lucrative, and naturally exerted pressures on fellow-villagers to accept recruitment. However, the inquiry made by the District Officer did not prove an effective safeguard, for in the majority of cases the natives were too much afraid of their chiefs to confess that they had been recruited against their consent. Why the Administration allowed this to continue is difficult to explain because it was not unaware of its abuses. The Permanent Mandate Commission objected to this practice on several occasions. Despite this, nothing was done until 1932 when the practice was prohibited by ordinance.

Certain classes of people could not be recruited, including the old, the unhealthy, all administration officials -- chiefs or luluais, tultuls and medical tultuls, and missionary teachers. Apart from these, all male natives above the age of twelve years could be recruited. In addition, girls over ten years of age and unmarried women

27 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 53.
could be recruited by female employers for domestic work. The recruitment of natives of twelve years of age is open to objection. These boys were obviously too young for contract labour and their employment on plantation work was definitely detrimental to their health. This aspect of the recruitment regulations was criticized both by the missionaries and by the Permanent Mandates Commission. At their annual meeting in 1927, the New Guinea missionaries passed a resolution urging on the New Guinea Administration the desirability of raising the minimum recruiting age to 16. This was endorsed by the Permanent Mandates Commission.30 The Administration, however, was deaf to all pleas and it was not until 1932 that any steps were taken to rectify the obvious evil. In that year the recruiting age for boys was raised to fourteen and in the following year the age limit for girls was also raised. But it is disappointing to record that under the 1935 Native Labour Ordinance males of twelve years of age were still permitted to be recruited for lighter domestic work and 14 year old males could be recruited for any job whatsoever.31 The Australian Government justified its stand by the untenable argument that the natives were sufficiently developed at that age to justify their being recruited.32

30 P.M.C. Minutes, 22nd Session (1932), p. 66.
31 Native Labour Ordinance, 1935, Section 14.
The Ordinance prohibited indiscriminate recruiting in the Territory. The Administrator, under the Ordinance, possessed the power to forbid recruitment at any place and within any area. Recruitment of natives from areas above 3,000 feet was forbidden. This was to prevent the spread of malaria to such natives who were unaccustomed to the disease and thereby easily succumbed to it. The power of controlling indiscriminate recruitment was employed by the Administration on several occasions to prevent excessive recruiting or recruitment of unhealthy natives.33

Apart from criticisms stemming from certain clauses of the Native Labour Ordinance, several other criticisms can be advanced against the practical operation of the recruitment provisions. The effectiveness of the provisions was entirely dependent on constant supervision. This necessarily demanded a larger administrative staff than the Administration ever possessed. A study of the labour conditions in the Territory throughout the period of the mandate Administration revealed that in so many places, and particularly on the Morobe goldfield, the Administration found it impossible to enforce the provisions. S. W. Reed, an American sociologist, maintained that it was a common saying in New Guinea that "there never was nor will be an

33 See for instance Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1935-1936, p. 30. According to the report 50 villages were closed to recruitment in that year.
honest recruiter".34 This is very true. There were constant complaints from missionaries, from the Permanent Mandates Commission and in Australian newspapers of the grave abuses that existed in connection with recruitment in the Territory. But the Australian Government always maintained that all was well. The missionaries and the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission, however, were never to be put off by such assurances. At the Conference of New Guinea missionaries held in 1927, a Report was issued on the subject of illegal recruiting which is worth quoting as later events confirmed it:

... Already the demand for native labourers is such a great one that recruiting is becoming a heavy burden on the people. One recruiting vessel follows the other and one recruiter walks on the still warm footsteps of the one just gone before. By means of cheating, threatening and deceiving, boys are led to follow the recruiters. Not long ago a recruiter sent his boys to some hill people to tell them to come because the missionaries desired to see them. After they reached the valley they found themselves at the mercy of the recruiter. Another sent his boys into an uncontrolled area with guns and they by force brought out a number of boys and one girl. In addition to this, patrol officers go and requisition the boys whom the recruits were unable to persuade in the above mentioned ways, and they also take men above the age allowed to recruiters. Some weeks ago approximately 400 natives were in this manner taken out of Azera and at present the same is taking place north of Finschhafen. For the sake of gold-seekers, hundreds of natives are sacrificed.35


35 Extract taken from P.M.C. Minutes, 15th Session (1929), p. 50.
Mr. H. A. Grimshaw, the International Labour Organization's representative on the Permanent Mandates Commission, drew attention to this report and to the fact that it was read in the presence of the Commissioner for Native Affairs who did not refute it. Lord Lugard also took the Australian representative to task. Making use of copies of a report of certain cases which were tried by Judges Wanliss and Philips of New Guinea, he quoted extracts to substantiate his assertion. He referred to the summing up of a case (Albert v. Dudley) in which the judge remarked that "It is more or less a custom with some recruiters at any rate to capture some of the villagers as hostages and use them as a means of obtaining recruits." In the second case (Rex v. Miau and Tanga) Judge Philips noted that "the evidence showed that the wives of some of the natives were kept in custody as hostages". As a result of this barrage of criticisms, a Commission was appointed in 1927 by the Australian Government to look into and report upon alleged irregularities in connection with recruiting in the gold bearing Morobe District. The Commission's findings confirmed all that had been said concerning labour conditions in the Territory. It was found that an officer of the Administration had recruited unwilling natives, seriously

36 P.M.C. Minutes, 15th Session (1929), p. 49.

emptied certain villages of able-bodied married men, signed on natives whom it was forbidden to recruit under the Native Labour Ordinance, ordered natives to supply him and his party with food without adequate payment, and allowed private recruiters to accompany him on his recruiting expeditions and on certain occasions offered them his assistance in obtaining labourers. In addition, certain recruiters were found guilty of illegal recruiting. The Commission recommended that all illegal contracts be cancelled and licences of certain recruiters be revoked and that compensation be paid to natives who had been forced to supply food free of charge to the Administration officer and his party. The Officer was convicted and sentenced to concurrent terms of imprisonment of twelve months and six months respectively. After this, the Administration made great efforts to see that illegal recruiting was stamped out but its efforts were not very successful. As late as 1937 the Marist Mission was complaining of "recruitment which empties many villages of the young folks, as it happened recently in Buka". 38 The area was immediately closed to recruiting by the Administration.

Over-recruiting was another problem connected with the indenture system. It had the obnoxious effect of producing social disintegration of the native society and

38 Taken from P.M.C. Minutes, 31st Session (1937), p. 168.
causing a decline in the birth rate because most of the people engaged on contract labour were young men between the ages of 16 and 40. Taking away such people from their homes unaccompanied by their wives was one of the causes of decline in population. It is true that the Administrator had the power to prohibit recruitment in certain areas if in his opinion it was resulting in depopulation. But it was difficult to know when to call a halt and in several cases the evil had already been done before action was taken. The question of excessive recruiting was of very great concern to the Permanent Mandates Commission and this concern was expressed on many occasions. In 1936, for instance, the Commission observed that "excessive recruiting was liable to undermine the social structure as it removed too many natives from their homes."\(^{39}\) Identical views were expressed in subsequent years. This excessive recruiting was absolutely incompatible with the declared policy of the Administration to preserve native customs and institutions.

**Conditions of Work**

By the Labour Ordinance in force in the Territory, the working hours of indentured labourers, with the exception of harvest time or the loading and discharging of vessels,

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\(^{39}\) P.M.C. Minutes, 29th Session (1936), p. 24.
was fixed at 10 hours a day with 1 1/2 hours break for rest and lunch and this for a six-day week. This was later reduced to 55 hours a week when the practice of working for a half-day only on Saturday was introduced.

With the discovery of gold in 1926, there was an influx of gold-diggers into the Territory all demanding labour and as the conditions in the mines were different from those on the plantations, special provision had to be made as regards labour conditions in the mines. In 1931 and in subsequent years regulations were passed fixing 8 hours a day for all labourers working in the mines with a break at mid-day. Hitherto night work had not been allowed in the Territory but owing to the great demand for labour in the goldfield, the Administration was forced to give way on this. Night work was now allowed under special permission but it soon became the practice. The Administration was taken to task on this by the International Labour Organization's representative on the Permanent Mandates Commission, but it maintained that the natives themselves enjoyed it and that medical examination did not in any way reveal that it was detrimental to their health. There are no statistics showing cases of ill-health caused by night work to prove the Administration wrong but the argument of the Administration can be accepted with misgivings in view of the high death rate on the goldfield.

For all factory workers the working hours were
not to exceed 50 hours a week but for labourers employed as copra driers 60 hours a week was laid down. Overtime work was allowed but it had to be paid for.

The Administration made elaborate provisions for the care of native labourers. All employers of labour had to provide suitable accommodation for their labourers. Such accommodation was to be weatherproof and the floors made of cement to ensure that they were not damp. Beds were also to be provided. These buildings were to be inspected fortnightly and all plantations inspected once a year to ensure that the regulations were enforced. Provision was to be made for adequate latrine system. Good as these provisions are, they could not be properly enforced particularly on the goldfield owing to shortage of staff. The very fact that dysentery was very prevalent in the area, due to the use of streams by natives as latrines, confirmed the laxity characteristic of attempts to enforce these provisions.\textsuperscript{40}

Provisions were also drawn up regarding clothing and food. As regards clothing, the demands were very simple. Because it was an offence for native men to wear any clothing on the upper part of the body,\textsuperscript{41} they were to be provided only with a loin-cloth once a month and a

\textsuperscript{40} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1933-1934, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{41} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1928-1929, p. 121.
blanket every year. For natives employed at high altitudes, clothing suitable for the cold weather, and means of drying such clothing, had to be provided. The Administration's regulations forbidding clothing on the upper part of the body was a very strange one. It was claimed that natives were not in the habit of keeping their clothes clean and that therefore the clothes became vermin-infested. It was also claimed that the natives were in the habit of keeping on their wet clothes which caused them to catch pneumonia. What the natives needed was education, not prohibition from wearing clothes. In any case, the regulation did not seem to have achieved the desired effect of preventing pneumonia, for many of the natives caught pneumonia by exposure. According to the Australian Government, the death of many natives on the goldfield was due to pneumonia.42

As regards food, a ration was worked out by the Agricultural Department in order to ensure that labourers were well-fed on a balanced diet. A special diet was carefully worked out for natives engaged in strenuous work such as stevedores, pearl-fishers, boats' crews or quarrymen. The unfortunate thing was that the regulations were not strictly enforced. What is more, the rations were based on the foodstuffs available in the Territory, but as there

42 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1936-1937, p. 76.
was too much concentration on copra production, nothing was done to cultivate food crops. The result was that the natives were fed on tinned meat and imported rice -- food to which they were not accustomed and which was largely responsible for the cases of dysentry so common in the Territory. The Administration itself agreed that the high death rate in the mines was due to food deficiencies.  

Elaborate medical provision was made for safeguarding the health of indentured labourers. All employers of labour were charged with the responsibility of providing medical care for their labourers. They were required to provide suitable buildings as sick wards which must have accommodation for 10 per cent of their labour force. By the 1921 Ordinance, any employer having in his service between 75 and 100 labourers must provide a coloured medical assistant and if over 100 labourers an expert European medical assistant to cater to the health of the employees. This was modified in 1922 as it was found difficult to enforce. By the 1922 Ordinance any employer having a labour force of between 100 and 500 was required to employ a person qualified to render first aid; if over 500, a medical officer was required on a full time basis. All employers were to report deaths of labourers promptly to the Public Health Department. Inspections were to be carried out

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periodically by medical patrols to ensure that the labourers remained fit and that the medical regulations were being complied with. Such medical patrols possessed extensive powers. They had the right to destroy any unsuitable buildings, and to remove and send to the hospital any native labourer found with venereal disease. They were also charged with the duty of inspecting all labourers at the end of their contract to ensure that they were medically fit before being sent home. If a labourer was not fit, he was retained on the plantation and treated at the expense of his employer until he was found well enough to proceed home. All these were excellent regulations if they were properly enforced. But there was too much laxity in their enforcement. The 1922 provision that the labourers on various plantations should be medically examined once a year was found impossible to enforce as there was no adequate staff and so it was struck out in 1933. The conditions of labour on the goldfield despite the excellent medical regulations were deplorable. The death rate was always high. Epidemics of dysentry, which was a constant feature of life on the goldfield, were due to inadequate provision of latrines for native use and food deficiencies arising from the failure of the officials to see that natives were fed on stipulated balanced diet. This much was admitted by the Administration.\(^4^4\) Pneumonia

\(^{44}\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-1933, p. 65; 1933-1934, p. 59.
also partly accounted for the high death rate. This was because the natives from lowland areas were recruited for work on a higher altitude over 6000 feet under unaccustomed weather conditions -- a flagrant violation of the Native Labour Regulations. So bad were conditions on the gold-field that the Permanent Mandates Commission had to register its protest on several occasions.45

Provisions were inserted in the Native Labour Ordinance to safeguard the natives from maltreatment by their employers. It was made an offence liable to a £50 fine or six months imprisonment for any person to assault or maltreat a native. On the other hand to ensure that the employers received adequate labour for their wages, penal sanctions amounting to 14 days pay or 2 weeks imprisonment were imposed on natives for breaches of contract of labour. H. A. Grimshaw, the International Labour Organization's representative on the Permanent Mandates Commission rightly pointed out that the penalties were enormous in comparison with the wages. The wage for an adult labourer was five shillings a month. Failure to perform the work presented by the contract was punished by a fine which amounted to a fortnight's pay (two shillings and sixpence). He concluded that either the wages were too low or the penalties were

too high. Cases of desertion were punishable by three months imprisonment and that period was added to the unexpired contract.

Despite these regulations drawn up to control relationship between the employers and their labourers, labour conditions throughout the period under survey were bad. Regulations against ill-treatment of the natives were not strictly enforced and ill-treatment of native labourers was still common. The reason for this is that the plantations were widely scattered all over the Territory and in many cases at considerable distances from the Administrative centres. The number of officers available for carrying out labour regulations were so few that the degree of supervision necessary to ensure the proper observance of the regulations was almost non-existent. The annual figures of conviction of European settlers for such offences as assault or maltreatment of natives as recorded in the Annual Report to the League was proof that the labour provisions as regards ill-treatment of the natives were not being properly enforced.

As a result of ill-treatment of natives and for other reasons, cases of desertion by native labourers were very common despite the penalty such an action entailed.

46 P.M.C. Minutes, 13th Session (1928), p. 31.
About 300 natives were convicted each year for desertion. This revealed that all was not well with the conditions under which the labourers worked. This was pointed out to the Australian Government by the Permanent Mandates Commission. The Administration maintained that cases of desertion were not due to poor labour conditions but to the irresponsible nature of the natives, the unstable living conditions, desires to attend some village ceremonies, and fear of epidemics like dysentry. In addition, it admitted that the planters possessed little or no experience in the handling of the natives. This admission, little as the Administration might have realized, bore witness to the fact that the labourers were not being well-treated. The labourers on the other hand strongly asserted that it was their dissatisfaction either with their employers or with the poor conditions under which they worked that was the prime cause for their desertion. Alvin Decker, who made a thorough study of labour conditions in the Territory, maintained that the reasons put forward by the Administration were completely one-sided. Apart from the ill-treatment of natives which led to their deserting, he charged the Administration with pursuing a recruitment policy which


48 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-33, pp. 38, 64-65; 1933-34, pp. 34-35.

49 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1933-1934, p. 34.
emphasized the recruiting of irresponsible types of natives:

> It has already been pointed out that a large percentage of the labour recruits came from wild areas only recently pacified by government patrols, and since these natives are only a step removed from the stone-age in culture and know nothing of the routine of plantation and mining work, it is easier for them to become discouraged and want to escape to their villages than for natives who have had more contact with Europeans.\(^{50}\)

The Permanent Mandates Commission was altogether unconvinced by the arguments advanced by the Australian Government and demanded that something be done to improve labour conditions in the Territory.\(^{51}\)

**Wages**

The wages paid to native labourers in New Guinea were very poor. The wage for an adult male was fixed at five shillings a month and the maximum at ten shillings. In practice, except in the gold mines, the majority of the labourers belonged to the five shillings a month wage group and throughout the period under review the wages of an ordinary labourer never exceeded six shillings. To ensure that labourers should not receive higher wages, experienced

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ones were prevented from seeking jobs with new employers whereby they might bargain for higher pay. They were required to go back to their old employers. This had the effect of hindering the desire for self-improvement. This was criticized by the Permanent Mandates Commission, but it continued to be in existence till 1935. In that year it was laid down that a labourer on re-engagement after three years' contract should have an increase from five shillings to six. Women and boys were paid only four shillings a month.

The unfairness of the New Guinea wage scale is greatly emphasized when contrasted with the wages paid to native labourers in the adjacent Australian Colony of Papua and in the British Solomon Islands. In Papua an adult male received ten shillings a month in wages and in the Solomon Islands it was still higher. A number of reasons were put forward by the Administration to justify the low wages paid to native labourers in the Territory. It maintained that the wants of the natives were few and if given a larger wage he might not be able to make use of it. A specious argument and a sordid rationalization which condoned gross injustice for the sheer benefit of the white population.

52 P.M.C. Minutes, 5th Session (1924), pp. 136, 137; 6th Session (1925), pp. 89-90; see also Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-1933, p. 171.

53 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 52.
Whatever might happen to such wages should not be the concern of any man. If even the natives were unable to make use of their money properly, they could never get to know how to do this without being saddled with the responsibility of doing it. The Administration also maintained that since each employer of native labour had to contribute one shilling a month for each labourer employed to the Native Education Trust Fund, and since they received on recruitment a present of 'hand-money' and because throughout their term of contract they were well fed and their health catered for -- all these compensated the natives for the poor wages they received. It is only necessary to point out that the same conditions as regards health and 'hand-money' applied to natives in other places like Papua where they were not regarded as compensating for deficiency in wages. It is important to note that the employer of a native labourer in New Guinea paid less than employers in any of the Pacific Mandates. Thirdly, the Administration maintained that a labourer in New Guinea had charge of only seven acres of coconut plantation while in Papua the average labourer looked after ten acres. As a result, the average labourer in New Guinea had to be paid half of the average labourer's wage in Papua.


55 For the reasons put forward by the Administration in favour of the low wages paid, see Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 52.
Provisions for natives in cases of illness and accidents were woefully inadequate. By the 1935 Labour Ordinance, a labourer in case of illness or accident was entitled to four weeks' sick leave with pay. After this, he was no longer entitled to any payment though he was still entitled to free medical attention up to two months. If after two months he was still not well, his contract was to be terminated and he had to be repatriated to his village. No compensation was paid to labourers who were invalided from service as a result of injury or accident nor was compensation paid to the family of a labourer who died from an accident while under contract. It is true that by the Laws Repeal and Adopting Ordinance, 1921, by which the Employers' Liability Law of Papua was made applicable to New Guinea, provision was made by which a labourer or his family were to receive an equivalent of three years pay in case of total disability or death. But as there was no single recorded case of compensation in the Annual Reports throughout the period of the mandate Administration and as many thousands of natives might have died by accident while under contract it might be safely assumed that this provision as far as the natives were concerned was never operative.

Repatriation

Under the indenture system in force in the
Territory, a contract lasted for three years. At the end of the contract a labourer might be repatriated. The Permanent Mandates Commission was never in favour of a three year contract period and demanded once or twice that the period be shortened on the grounds that such a long absence from home was incompatible with the policy of preserving native ways of life and that it led to social disintegration.\textsuperscript{56} The Administration, however, refused to countenance this. It maintained that such a long period of service was desirable as it took the new recruits almost a year to learn how to work properly and that if the employer was to receive adequate returns for his wages, it was necessary that the period of contract be long.\textsuperscript{57} The planters not only backed up the argument but even went further to demand a longer period on the grounds that the labourers were just beginning to be of any real use at the end of three years and that repatriating them would involve once more the costly business of recruiting and training a new labour force.\textsuperscript{58} Perhaps as a result of the stand of the planters, the three year repatriation provision was never strictly enforced. A labourer, if willing, was always

\textsuperscript{56} P.M.C. Minutes, 18th Session (1930), p. 64; 25th Session (1934), p. 25.

\textsuperscript{57} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-1933, p. 171; P.M.C. Minutes, 23rd Session (1933), p. 28.

\textsuperscript{58} Report of the Minister for Home and Territories on Visit to Papua and New Guinea, 1927, p. 75. Appendix to Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1927-1928.
allowed to be engaged on a new contract with the same employer at the end of three years. But in this case, he might be given some time to visit his village before starting on a new contract service. This was criticized by the missionaries who maintained that it was even the practice of the Administration in some cases to allow labourers to remain continuously on the same plantation for a period of twelve years. In the 1935 Native Labour Ordinance the Administration came into the open by making it legal for a labourer to be re-engaged after three years for another three years with two exceptions. Any labourer who had been working continuously for five years must be given a three months leave and a skilled workman and a domestic servant must be given a month's leave before starting on a new contract.

One of the greatest evils of keeping contract labourers for a long period on the European plantations was that it tended to lower the moral stamina of the natives. Most of the natives taken away to the plantations were active young men accustomed to sexual activation and since they were not accompanied by their wives they tended to satisfy their sexual urge by resorting to sodomy, to sexual relations with the few native wives who had accompanied their husbands and by attempted rape on the white women. Sexual offences were even committed on the bodies of dead
females.  

The 1939 Labour Commission

In 1939, the Australian Government, anxious about labour conditions in New Guinea and sensitive to the criticisms of the Permanent Mandates Commission, appointed a Commission to look into labour conditions and make recommendations for improvement. The Report of the Commission which was submitted in 1940 confirmed that all that has been said concerning labour conditions in New Guinea. As regards recruitment and its effect on native society, the Commission had this to say.

We cannot say with certainty that natives have met the demand for labour without detriment to native life ... we are of the opinion that when the figures for the Territory as a whole are considered in the mass no harm is apparent but that several villages or areas have been over-recruited.

In another passage on recruitment it maintained that 'the whole scheme of native development was based on the continuation of village life and the Administration cannot ignore the probable effects of excessive recruiting on village life.'

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60 Cited in Stanner, *The South Seas in Transition*, p. 54.
The Commission maintained that the Section of the Native Labour Ordinance which sought to remedy the social effect of the indenture system on native society by forbidding continuous employment of a labourer for many years without allowing him a visit to his village had been rendered a dead letter in some areas by the way in which it had been administered. "We consider the failure of the Administration to endorse this vital provision astonishing and regrettable." It recommended that recruiting and repatriation provisions be stringently enforced, that better standards of medical examination, housing, diet and general welfare be set up. Moreover, it condemned the conditions of work on the plantations, emphasized the need for payment of reasonable compensation for death or injury sustained in the course of employment. Finally, it dwelt on the inadequacy of the methods and regularity of inspection and on the apparent laxity in enforcing the labour Ordinance. "Unless legislation is given life by active administration it is of little value, except perhaps to deceive."

The above analysis reveals that though comprehensive Labour Ordinances were passed to protect native labourers the conditions of labour in the Territory were

62 Ibid., p. 56.
undesirable. This was partly the result of the indenture system of labour in existence in the Territory and partly the ineffectiveness of the Administration in enforcing the Labour laws.
CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL AND MORAL PROGRESS

Education

The Role of the Missions

The history of Education in New Guinea dated from the 19th century which was one of great missionary activity throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Christian men and women fired by the zeal to share the good tidings of Christ with their 'less fortunate' brethren in other parts of the world went out from the different European countries carrying the banner of Christ. History abounds with the work and achievements of these heroic men and women, who, undeterred by the climate, geography or the hostility of the people to whom they were taking the gospel, went forward bravely carrying the message of Christ to the four corners of the world. New Guinea was not unaffected by this wave of religious enthusiasm, for the missionaries had been active in New Guinea long before the establishment of European control.¹

In New Guinea, as well as in the other places where they went, the work of conversion always went hand in hand with the work of education. This is partly due to the need for the converted natives to be able to read the Bible themselves and partly to the need to train natives who in turn would assist the missionaries in propagating the gospel not only amongst their own kith and kin but also amongst natives of other Territories. As a result of the educational activities of these missionaries, there were already in New Guinea 676 schools embracing a total population of 22,199 pupils at the time Australian civil control was established in 1921.2 There were six different Missions operating in New Guinea at this time — the Lutheran Mission which operated at Morobe, Aitape and Madang; the Methodist Missionary Society which carried on its own activities in Rabaul, Talasae and New Ireland; the Seventh Day Adventists; the Mission of the Most Sacred Heart which had centres at Rabaul, Manus and New Ireland, the Mission of the Holy Ghost which held sway in Madang, and the Marist Mission in Kieta.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missions</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>4,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>9,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>4,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Ghost</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3,286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Marist Mission had 10 schools with 1,400 pupils attending.

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2 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 90.
3 Ibid., p. 90.
The change in Administration of the Territory did not in any way affect the activities of the various missions for one of the terms of the Mandates had provided for the establish­ment of freedom of conscience in all mandated Territories. As a result, the missionaries continued their activities unworried about the political changes which had taken place as a result of the war.

Three types of schools were operated by the Missions -- elementary schools in the villages, intermediate boarding schools at Mission Headquarters and high schools. The village schools were manned by staffs of native teachers and the standard of education in these schools was extremely low. Instruction in religious knowledge, sanitation and tropical hygiene was imparted to the students in the vernaculars. From the village schools, the most promising students passed on to the intermediate schools. Here they were taught by European teachers with the assistance of native teachers. From the intermediate schools, the better students passed on to the high schools. The high schools were strictly speaking Teacher Training Institutions for here teachers were trained both for the village schools and the intermediate schools.

In the field of Technical Education the Missions

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were not behind. The Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Methodist Mission devoted much attention to this type of education. The Sacred Heart Mission had a technical school at Vunapope which was described as having "workshops for practically all trades", and another Technical Centre at Tallihgap. These schools taught subjects such as carpentry, fitting, boat-building, printing, painting, house-building, cooking, washing, and sewing. The Methodist Mission had a Training School at Vunarima for 150 boys and 37 girls. Here such subjects as hat-making, laundry work, semaphore, morse signalling and ambulance were taught. The Lutheran Mission also operated a Technical Centre where carpentry, general handicrafts, cooking, washing and sewing were taught. The activities of the Mission in the field of Technical Education were greatly commended by the Education Commission appointed by the Australian Government in 1929:

The environment and atmosphere of these institutions, apart from the instructions and training, have an uplifting effect upon the native minds, and should exercise a powerful influence in inculcating what is best in civilized life.

Throughout the period under survey, the various

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6 Loc. cit.
Missions continued to expand their religious and educational activities. As new areas of the country were opened up and brought under control, the various Missions rushed forward to establish new stations and village schools. In other places, they even served as frontiersmen opening up new territories and they played no small role as civilizing agents amongst the natives. By 1939, they had established all over the Territory 2,329 village schools, 158 elementary schools, 44 high, intermediate and technical schools and 35 training centres. The total number of pupils attending all classes of schools was 68,773. Most of these were, however, in the village schools.

One or two criticisms can be advanced against the educational activities of the Missions. First, in all the schools established in the Territory, with very few exceptions, there was no teaching of the English language and instructions were imparted in the vernaculars. This reduced to some extent the effectiveness of these educational services as the education they were giving the natives would not altogether be worthwhile if they (the natives) could not speak English. Furthermore, in a society of New Guinea type, where one village could hardly understand the other, the usefulness of education conducted in the vernaculars was greatly limited. The missionaries themselves were not.

unconscious of this but they opposed strongly the teaching of English because they believed that the difficulties that would accompany such a step would be too great. This was made clear at the Mission Conference held in 1927:

While the Administration and the Mission may be successful in teaching English to a limited number of selected natives in a few advanced schools, the practical difficulties of imposing so advanced a language on the rank and file of so primitive a people are so great that it would not be practicable to introduce English as a universal language in the Territory with a reasonably short time. 8

This argument of the Missions that the backwardness of the people precluded the introduction of the teaching of English is not without some justification considering the level of advancement of the natives and the fact that it is easier too for them to learn in their own tongues than English. However, some attempts should have been made to impart some knowledge of the English language. The second criticism that may be levelled was, that there was no standardized system of education and no coordination amongst the various Missions in the field of education. Each one set up its own standard, unmindful of the others. Throughout the period under survey, the Missions consistently refused

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8 Cited in P.M.C. Minutes, 20th Session (1931), p. 25. Most of the missionaries were Germans who could not speak the English language properly. It would have been difficult, had they been willing to teach the language to the natives even if difficulties had not existed in the adoption of such a measure.
to submit their educational activities to supervision by the Administration which would have led to a general standard being set up and maintained by the system of inspection. To obviate this possibility they constantly refused to be subsidized by the Administration. As a result, educational activities remained uncoordinated. Furthermore, many of the village schools were of very low standard and some were not worth the name of schools at all. The Commissioner appointed in 1929 to investigate educational activities in the Territory visited one of these schools and was far from impressed by what he saw:

I visited, incidentally, one village school, in the charge of a native teacher. The pupils were dirty and undisciplined, and derived no benefit from the so-called teaching. Neglect was apparent everywhere, and the village would have been no worse off had the school not existed. 9

Despite these shortcomings, however, the Missions within the limitations set by available funds and under the most trying conditions carried out excellent services in the field of education. They played a greater role and achieved better success than the Australian Administration which had been entrusted with the task of seeing to the moral and material well-being of the natives.

The Role of the Administration

When the mandate over New Guinea was awarded to Australia, it was accompanied by a proviso that she should take as a 'sacred obligation' the moral and material welfare of the natives. To discharge this duty properly it is necessary that the people of New Guinea be educated. Education is the basis of all progress -- material and moral. The eradication of diseases which constituted one of the greatest curses of the New Guinea Society, the fostering of economic development, political progress and moral well-being can only be achieved if the curtain of ignorance, fear, and superstition which hung thick and dark over New Guinea for many generations could be removed. And this could only be achieved by education. Therefore, in the attempt to ascertain whether Australia faithfully discharged her trust, the educational progress of the Territory must definitely occupy an important place.

With the establishment of civil control in 1921 the Administration was able to devote itself to the task of carrying out the sacred duty. As regards education the declared aim of the Administration was:

To provide such educational facilities as will afford all natives of the Territory an opportunity of qualifying themselves to
participate in the economic and social life of their own country.  

This lofty aim was reaffirmed again and again. The Administration consistently maintained that its policy was to educate the native with a view to equipping him to control his own destinies under its supervision. An examination of the educational activities of the Administration in the period under survey did not justify these claims. The history of education in New Guinea so far as the Administration was concerned was one of procrastination, of hopes deferred and promises unfulfilled.

At the outset the aim of the Administration was to work hand in hand with the Missions, but it hoped to provide more advanced education than that given by the Missions. Students from 10 to 12 years of age were to be recruited from the Mission Schools to the Government Schools where they would receive a better form of education.  

But this was found impossible. The schools run by the Missions did not engage in the teaching of English language and so the possibility of recruiting pupils from such schools who would be qualified enough to receive the benefit of relatively advanced education to be conducted in English did not exist. As a result, the Administration decided to establish its own

10 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1926-1927, p. 35.  
schools. To meet the financial demands of education, an Education Trust Fund was created. The fund was to be obtained by levying a tax not exceeding five shillings per annum on all natives subject to taxation.\textsuperscript{12} This was increased to be ten shillings per annum in 1922 but was later cancelled and a substitute introduced.\textsuperscript{13} A tax of one shilling later increased to six shillings per annum was imposed on all employers of labour for every native indentured labourer employed.\textsuperscript{14} After 1933 this tax was paid into general revenue instead of a separate fund. A scheme was then drawn up. It was proposed that an elementary school for children from 8 to 10 years of age be established with the aim of training the natives for their general betterment and for employment in the lower grades of the Civil Service, then a Technical School at Rabaul (the capital) for training the natives as workers in the various handicrafts and a school of Domestic Economy to train natives as domestic servants.\textsuperscript{15} This was not bad for a beginning and had there been improvement later on things might have worked well enough. The only objection that can be offered against this scheme was the desire to create a Domestic School to train natives as domestic servants. This definitely was not

\textsuperscript{12} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{13} Loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{14} Loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 89.
devised in the interest of the natives. Rather it was in the interest of the European settlers. This was, of course, in perfect agreement with the European philosophy that the natives were to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water".

After drawing up this scheme, the task of translating it into reality now began. An elementary school was opened at Kokopo with 50 pupils for a start and a School of Domestic Economy at Rabaul. The Technical School was also opened at Rabaul to provide instruction in writing, English, simple arithmetic, carpentry, rattan work, machine work, motor engineering and plumbing. The language of instruction throughout these Government schools was English. After this somewhat enthusiastic beginning the rest of the story was one of almost complete stagnation. In the first year of native education the sum of £20,000 was devoted to the task.\(^{16}\) This, however, constituted the greatest amount spent for any year during the period of the mandate Administration. It was gradually cut down till it reached the melancholy figure of £3,903 in 1934-35.\(^ {17}\)

The meagre educational activities of the Administration had never lacked critics right from the outset. The Planters and Traders Association who were not favourably disposed to the education of the natives maintained in a

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petition to the Government that "the present policy of providing a book education for a few natives in a school in Rabaul may impress the tourist and the uninitiated". In 1927 the Minister for Home and Territories who visited New Guinea agreed to the necessity of expansion in the field of education though he admitted that the crux of the problem was the question of the cost. However, he promised to submit a recommendation to the Cabinet along these lines.

As a result of criticisms from planters and the Permanent Mandates Commission the Administration announced in 1927 that elementary schools would be opened in each of the nine districts of the Territory. Needless to say this remained throughout the period a paper scheme. The Administration further stated that it had been making a study of the various systems of education in force in other native countries. It declared that when sufficient information had been collected, a Committee would meet, study it, and recommend a system that would adequately meet the needs of New Guinea. It is disappointing to record that the Committee never met.

In 1929, the Director of Education for Queensland,

19 See P.M.C. Minutes, 15th Session (1929), p. 75.
20 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1926-1927, p. 35.
Mr. B. J. Mckenna, was appointed to conduct a survey of the existing system of education and make recommendations. His report confirmed how little the Administration had been doing in the field of education since the establishment of Civil control in 1921. The report dwelt on the complete inadequacy of the fund allotted for education.

Viewing, however, the conditions of the mandate, and the present state of local finances, I am of the opinion that a Federal grant for native education is highly desirable and I commend this aspect of the question to the Federal authorities for serious consideration.  

The report recommended that Government should assume responsibility for all native education but that the village schools should continue to be run by the missions under Government supervision. It proposed that schools should be established at permanent commercial and industrial centres for boys and girls between 6 and 13 years of age and that attendance at these schools should be made compulsory in respect of those living within a two-mile radius. Furthermore, it recommended that a college for training native teachers be established and that before a staff of native teachers were trained, European teachers should be used. Moreover, he recommended that at the completion of an elementary course of seven years, the most suitable pupils

be selected for a further course of four years at one or other of such schools as might be established by the Government for this purpose. The report ended on a note of appeal:

In justice to the native population, in compliance with the conditions of the mandates by which the Territory was placed under the Australian control, the establishment of a system of education leading from the kindergarten to trades, shops, agricultural and other skilled work becomes necessary.23

The Report was accepted by the Australian Government as the basis for future educational policy of the Territory. The Government maintained, with some justification, that all the recommendations could not be carried out owing to the existing financial situation both in the Territory and the Commonwealth.24 With this declaration, the Report was thrown into a corner never again to be examined. The Commission was not, however, altogether without result for as a result of its recommendation, two more schools were opened, one at Nodup and the other at Chimbu on the highlands. After this, there is very little to mention by way of educational development in the Territory. Yet it is pathetic to record that throughout this period constant demands were made by the natives of some districts for the establishment of Government schools in


24 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1929-1930, p. 27.
Mair records that the natives of Madang demanded that a Government school should be established in their district. The people were informed that their demand would only be considered if they would set up a school according to the standard required by the Administration. This was no discouragement to the natives who got together and with the help of a kind official proceeded forthwith by communal effort to erect the school building which took them only four weeks. The school was not opened until 1941 as no teacher was made available. This was the position of things right up to the end of mandate rule. It is therefore no exaggeration when Mair described the history of native education in New Guinea as consisting "largely of postponement of action pending results of discussions, conferences, and what not."  

The record of the Administration in the field of education after twenty years was a very dismal one. Reed described it as "the most sterile of all the Australian Government's undertakings". Impartial investigation sees no reason to contradict this. According to the Annual Reports 1939-40, there were only six Government-owned

25 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-1933, p. 44.
26 Mair, Australia in New Guinea, p. 171.
27 Ibid., p. 170.
elementary schools with an enrolment of 491 pupils, an Agricultural School at Keravat and the Technical School at Rabaul with an enrolment of 97\textsuperscript{29} in the Territory. Moreover, all these schools, with the sole exception of the one in Chimbu, were in the vicinity of the Administrative centres and nothing was done for the education of the countless others living in the villages all over the Territory. Even some of these very few schools suffered constantly from lack of adequate staff. For instance, the Technical School as late as 1930 had only two teachers on the staff -- an instructor in carpentry and building and an assistant instructor.\textsuperscript{30} The number was not increased even as late as 1940. How it was able to train as many as 97 students in the school was a miracle. Indeed as a result of the inadequacy of the staff, a system of apprenticing the boys under training to the Public Works Department was evolved. This system came under fire from the Commission of Inquiry appointed in 1929 to look into educational activities in New Guinea.

The present system of apprenticing boys to the Public Works Department is highly objectionable, unless the object is to facilitate the erection of buildings rather than to impart a technical training.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1939–1940, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{30} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1929–1930, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{31} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1929–1930, Appendix C, p. 128.
The Commissioner went on to point out that the tradesmen under whom the boys worked were not acquainted with teaching methods, and were unskilled in the proper methods of handling pupils, that as a result technical training was not being imparted at all and the pupils being subjected to improper methods developed a disgust for the work and derived no benefit from the experience.

Even those few natives who were being educated had little prospect of employment with the Administration. This was due to the policy of making New Guinea a haven for the Australian unemployed. Reed maintained rightly that there was no place for an educated native in New Guinea:

A few may become teachers, and each year a dozen or so from the Technical Schools get positions demanding some slight skill. But there are no clerical positions, and only a few of the most menial jobs are open to natives -- educated or not. Many positions which might well be filled by natives who have received a rudimentary education are reserved for men from the ranks of Australian unemployed.32

This is no doubt a sad reflection of the use of the mandate entrusted to Australia. This sort of policy is not peculiar to Australia. It has always been the practice in almost all Colonial territories. In fact, one of the potent causes of the rise of nationalism in most colonies had been the demand

32 Reed, *The Making of Modern New Guinea*, p. 188.
of the educated elements for better opportunities for Government employment. Moreover, there is always a difference between a colony which is almost a personal possession of a Colonial Power and a mandated Territory which is purely a trust handed over by an international body with a proviso that such a territory would be administered in the interest of the native inhabitants. This policy of reserving most jobs for the Australians killed the incentive of the educated natives for further self-improvement in the field of education. This accounted for one of those reasons why there was little enthusiasm on the part of the Administration to expand its educational activities.

Several other reasons for the failure of the Administration in the field of education can be advanced. One was the inadequacy of the fund devoted to the task of education. Even with the discovery of gold and consequent increase in the revenue of the Territory little was done to increase the amount of money devoted to education. The trifling amount spent on education even when the economic condition of the Territory was very good was a subject of severe criticism on the part of the Mandates Commission. M. Rappard thought and rightly so that the expenditure of £3,903 on native education out of the £380,000 revenue of the Territory was rather disproportionate. He pleaded that steps be taken to allow the natives to share to a greater extent in the prosperity of the Territory.33

33 P.M.C. Minutes, 29th Session (1936), p. 21.
This sort of criticism was a constant feature during the examination of Australian Annual Reports.

One other important reason is the hostility of the white settlers towards the education of the natives. The settlers were constantly afraid that any policy of educating the natives would deprive them of the sources of labour for their plantations. This has always been the general pattern of things in any territory where European settlers had come in contact with native population.

The process of native education on European lines serves to stimulate the antagonism of the white man, for it means that the coloured man, as he becomes divorced from his native life and occupations and is equipped for trade and skilled handicraft, becomes a competitor instead of being merely a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. 34

The white population in New Guinea was no exception. They did all they could to stand in the way of educating the natives. This was abundantly made clear in the report of the Commissioner appointed in 1929 to survey educational activities in New Guinea. In its report, the Commission attacked the Europeans for standing in the way of educating the natives:

In the Territory associated with the Rabaul Administration an educational

policy had been outlined which, had effect been given to it, would have proved quite effective; but at the present it cannot be said that much is being done to carry out what was intended. Local conditions present an unusual and peculiar feature. There exists a large native population upon which has been thrust an enterprising trading people, filled with the spirit of business, and bent on utilizing the native labour as far as possible in the development of their business, but imbued with the idea that it is undesirable to educate the natives to any material extent. The hostility of the non-official white residents of the Territory to any system of education was the most surprising of many features noted in connexion with life in the Territory. The prevailing belief is that such training makes the native more cunning, generates and develops evil qualities, makes him disinclined for work, and renders him a less pliant instrument in the hands of his master. Any suggestion of appeal to the better side of the native mind is met with derision.

In surveying the history of native education in New Guinea one is left with the strong conviction that the Government policy was greatly influenced by the attitude of the European population. The Administration always danced to the tune of these selfish planters. In 1929, for instance, when the Government planned to send a number of its brilliant students from New Guinea to Australia for higher education; the European population protested strongly and as a result the scheme had to be abandoned. The Rabaul Times never took pains to hide its feeling of joy at the abandonment of this

scheme as it enthusiastically welcomed the decision:

We learn with pleasure that the seven natives who were to be sent to Australia did not go owing to representations made by the Citizens' Association. This should go a long way towards satisfying those who expressed their indignation, and their number is legion.36

As a result of the above factors, the attempts of the Administration to provide education for the New Guinea natives was one of complete and abject failure. It is, therefore, not surprising that at the last session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, Miss Dannevig, the education expert on the Commission, declared that "she knew of no territory under mandate in which education progressed so slowly".37

Public Health

One of the greatest problems facing the Administration in New Guinea was that of health. New Guinea society may be fairly described as one labouring under the deadly weight of diseases. The heavy hand of disease with its paralyzing sting was everywhere. Diseases of malaria, malnutrition, hookworm, yaws, tropical ulcer, dysentery, pneumonia, leprosy and various kinds of skin diseases were

37 P.M.C. Minutes, 36th Session (1939), p. 145.
widespread, taking toll of the lives of many and reducing the physical and mental efficiency of the rest. Malaria was particularly prevalent amongst the coastal inhabitants and those on the lowlands and accounted partly for the high rate of infant mortality. Hookworm was widespread and was responsible for the chronic nature of tropical sores common with New Guinea natives. This disease lessens resistance to other diseases, particularly pneumonia, with consequent fatal results. Yaws too was very widespread. It is a horrible, contagious disease which leaves ugly spots on its victims. In most cases, these diseases have become chronic as a result of years of lack of treatment and, therefore, the period of healing them was necessarily long. To make matters worse, the natives themselves had little or no knowledge of medicine. Belief in witchcraft and sorcery as the cause of disease was rampant and faith in sacrifice, magic, and fetish worship as their cures was deeply ingrained in the people. The low level of existence, and the absence of any knowledge of hygiene and sanitation were potent and aggravating factors in the spread of various diseases. The task confronting the Administration was therefore a very difficult one. It involved not only the healing and prevention of diseases but also much more. Pains had to be taken to destroy native belief in the efficacy of sourcery and instill confidence in the value of modern medicine. It also involved an almost complete readjustment of native life. The native had to be taught to build better houses,
to keep their homes, villages and surroundings clean and to learn to take nutritious diet. This is indeed an uphill task and it necessitated as Sir James Barret said "a gradual process of education, civic training, and the induction of personal responsibility for cleanliness and sanitation, necessitated improved agriculture and in fact, it required a complete readaptation of the native to a new mode of life." 38

The Australian Administration showed from the outset a great concern for the health of the natives and its approach to the problem of health was much more energetic than, for instance, its approach to the problem of education, though it was likewise handicapped in this field by the perennial question of lack of funds and shortage of staff. In a statement of policy made to the Permanent Mandates Commission, Australia maintained that she recognized as a duty of paramount importance the eradication of native diseases and accepted the responsibility for the medical care and treatment of the natives. Furthermore she declared that she considered all efforts to carry out the responsibilities imposed upon it by the mandate in connection with the welfare of the natives would be of no avail if the inhabitants were allowed to be decimated by diseases. 39 Sincere attempts

39 P.M.C. Minutes, 9th Session (1926), p. 20.
were made by the officials of the Administration to translate this statement of policy into reality within the limitations set by available funds and staff. A Department of Health headed by an expert in tropical medicine was organized. In 1921 the staff was made up of seven medical officers, eighteen medical assistants, a bacteriologist, a dispenser, two sanitary inspectors, one sanitary engineer and a body of native staff. Native hospitals were immediately established — one in each of the ten administrative centres to cater for the health of the native indentured labourers on European plantations. To meet the needs of those countless natives in areas far removed from the Administrative centres the system of medical patrol was instituted. This is a very cheap and, if properly conducted, efficient system and should have served well if it had been expanded but this was something which the Administration was never in a position to do. A medical patrol unit was attached to each Administrative district. Each unit was charged with the responsibility of patrolling those villages under the control of the Administration. It checked on the general conditions of health of the natives and on sanitation, and administered inoculation against malaria and yaws as it went along, sending to the hospital cases which were considered too serious to be treated while on patrol. The patrol, in addition, was to visit plantations, mission headquarters and

40 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 66.
mining camps annually, investigating whether due precautions were being taken by employers to safeguard the health of the natives. It was to report promptly all breaches of health regulations. This system should have served very well if the Administration had been able to finance its expansion. But the chronic shortage of staff of medical assistants to whom the responsibility was entrusted, made it impossible for the patrol system to function adequately. The Administration was not unaware of this. The 1921-22 Report dealt with this problem:

It must be understood that in New Ireland district, as in other parts of the Territory, the outstation districts are so great and the means of transportation so limited, that patrols by medical officers or medical assistants cannot be undertaken as frequently as desirable....41

Though the report places its emphasis on the difficulty of transportation and the distances of the various outstation districts, the crux of the matter was the shortage of staff, for if adequate staff had been available, they would have been posted to those outstations and the problem would have been solved. This situation never improved throughout the period of the mandate administration. In 1936-37, for instance, there was only one Medical Assistant in the Sepik River area and he was responsible for inspecting each native

41 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 74.
inhabitant of each of the 100 villages spreading for a
distance of 265 river miles on either side of the river.
In addition, he had charge of the native hospital of 100
beds at Ambunti where he treated serious cases. This task
was totally impossible for any single individual and the
result was that many of the villages were never visited.  
In that same year a group of villages on the Yuat River
alarmed by the widespread nature of sickness and disease in
their midst sent a delegation to the District Officer to
plead for a visit of a medical patrol to their area. This
village had not received any visit from a medical patrol
for a period of 5 years.  

As the medical patrols could only carry on their
work periodically and the necessity of catering constantly
for the medical needs of the natives was very apparent,
the medical tultul system which had been inaugurated by
the Germans in 1903 was enthusiastically taken up and
expanded by the Administration.  

A medical tultul or
dokita boy was a native who, after undergoing training for
a period lasting three to five months in first aid,
elementary rules of sanitation, dressing of sores and
recognition of cases requiring hospital treatment, was sent


44 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1925-1926,
Appendix B, p. 65.
back to his village to look after the health of his people. Such a man was always chosen for his intelligence and after his training he was given a peaked cap with a Red Cross band on it. As each village was opened up and brought under control, a medical tultul was appointed and trained. This system of medical tultul was not adequate nor efficient in catering for the health of the natives. In the first case, the medical tultul's knowledge was purely rudimentary and he could not deal with serious cases. Such cases were sent to the hospital which lay at a distance of so many miles and which might take many days to reach owing to the poor transport facilities in the Territory. In so many cases the patients died before getting to the hospitals. Furthermore, many of them on getting back to their villages tended to forget quickly all that they had learned. This was recognized by the Administration which tried to remedy the situation by organizing refresher courses. To keep check over their work, medical patrols were instructed to visit each village every three months but this was found impossible as there were not enough medical assistants to undertake the patrol. The number of medical assistants in the Territory in 1939 was only 22. On the other hand the medical tultuls numbered 4,003. In that year according to official report only 1,186 of these 4,003 were inspected by

45 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 66.
medical patrol.\footnote{Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1939-1940, p. 48.} This was another proof of the inadequacy of the patrol system. According to the reports submitted by these patrols only 39.2 per cent of the medical tultuls visited were doing a reasonable job and the report emphasized the need for further improvement.\footnote{Loc. cit. 38.3 were said to be fair and 22.5 poor.} Because of these setbacks, it was only those natives in the Administrative centres where native hospitals existed, and those on their fringes, who were really receiving adequate medical attention and most of these were indentured labourers on European plantations. One cannot but be left with the impression that more care was devoted to the health of the indentured labourers who were economic assets to the white population than to the whole mass of the native population scattered all over the Territory. If this were not the case, the Administration should have established some of those ten Government hospitals in the inland areas of dense native population rather than establish all in the centres of European activities. The lack and the need of hospitals in such native areas was amply demonstrated during the period of the gold rush in 1926. During that year there was a serious epidemic of dysentry and pneumonia amongst the miners and the native labourers and there was not a single hospital at hand to deal with the situation. The
lives of many of these people were saved by the efforts of Mrs. Booth, a nurse and a wife of one of the miners, who rendered yeoman's service to the sick -- a service which was appreciated by the Australian Government and for which she was highly commended by the Permanent Mandates Commission.\footnote{48 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1926-1927, p. 78.}

One of the health problems the Administration had to grapple with was that of infant mortality which was one of the curses of New Guinea Society. Several factors were responsible for the high rate of infant mortality in the Territory -- the early marriage of many women, under-nourishment and lack of proper feeding of the infants and of the native population as a whole, complete lack of cleanliness in the way children were fed and handled and epidemics such as whooping cough.\footnote{49 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1926-1927, Appendix C, p. 115.} In 1930 the Administration seemed roused up at last to the need of tackling the problem. In that year, a decision was taken to establish throughout the Territory a chain of Infant Welfare Centres, the first one to be opened at Malabunga.\footnote{50 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1929-1930, p. 32.} A scheme was drawn up whereby the Malabunga centre would be manned by two nursing sisters who would be trained in infant welfare work. As the native women could neither understand nor speak pidgin-English, the nurses were to be required to
learn native dialect. All efforts were to be made by the Administration to get in contact with the native women in that area with a view to persuading mothers to bring infants to the Centre and pregnant women to come to the Centre for confinement where they would be taught correct management of their own health so that the infants might benefit from a full and proper maternal milk. In addition a census of children under one year of age would be taken and the progress of such children would be watched until the completion of their first year. This programme was not destined to be fully implemented. In 1931 the Centre at Malabunga was opened. In 1932, however, it was transferred to the Methodist Mission of Australasia. Up till that time the two nursing sisters had made but little progress in the study of native dialect and after the completion of 21 months tour, they refused to return to work in such an isolated area. On the other hand, the Methodist Mission, like the others, had a body of devoted men and women who were fluent in local languages, accustomed to life amongst the natives and regarded life in such native communities as a mission. An arrangement was entered into by which the Administration agreed to grant to the Mission £350 per annum to defray staff and maintenance expenses and also to provide free of charge the drugs that might be needed for

From this time onwards, the duty of providing care for the infants was left completely to the Missions. Similar arrangements were entered into with the other Missions. At Dalum in New Ireland an arrangement was made with the Catholic Mission of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus whereby the Mission agreed to establish an Infant Welfare Centre similar to the one at Malabunga. In addition, the Administration aided by way of grant of free milk the already active work of the Methodist Society of New Zealand in Kieta District and the Marist Mission in Soraken and Kieta areas.

One of the causes of the widespread nature of diseases in New Guinea was the attitude of the natives to diseased members of the community. People suffering from the worst type of contagious diseases lived under the same roof, shared the same food, beds and clothing with healthy people who in turn became victims of such diseases. For instance, lepers were never segregated by the natives and these lepers moved about very freely in the villages. The Germans, early in their administration of the Territory, established a Leper Station in Madang. This was taken up by the Australian Government. In 1931 an additional Leper

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53 Loc. cit.
54 Loc. cit.
Colony was established on the island of Anelaua near Kavieng but the Administration was unable to staff the station, and handed it over to the Sacred Heart Mission in 1934, at the same time agreeing to aid the Mission with free drugs and dressings. In addition, the Colony was to be under the direct control of the Administration Medical Officer at Kavieng and the staff of the Colony were, under special arrangement, to be trained at Makongai Leper Colony in Fiji. It is obvious that in its task of providing medical care for the natives, the Administration received considerable help from the Missions. Apart from the help rendered in the field of infant welfare and care and treatment of lepers, the Missions maintained hospitals and dispensaries of their own throughout the Territory but these were auxiliary to the Health Services provided by the Administration. By a special arrangement, the Administration supplied the Missions with the necessary drugs and appliances free of charge while the Missions furnished the Administration with medical returns showing the use to which the drugs had been put and the results of such treatment.

Apart from the Missions, other agencies were also used by the Administration. All employers of labour were

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55 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1932-1933, p. 50; also 1933-1934, p. 47.

charged with the responsibility of providing medical care for their labourers. In addition, the Administration entered into arrangements with the private companies which owned hospitals in the Territory under which such companies were to cater for any free natives needing medical attention, the Administration bearing the cost of such treatment which was to be two shillings per head.\textsuperscript{57}

The use of the Missions, the planters and private companies helped considerably in relieving the Administration of some of the burden of providing medical attention for the native population. Despite this, however, medical services were still inadequate to meet the needs of the Territory. Two things were responsible for this -- lack of adequate staff and lack of funds. This was a constant source of complaint by the Head of Medical Services as it affected every branch of that Service. The following extract taken from the Annual Report of the Head of the Medical Services speaks for itself:

\begin{quote}
As stated elsewhere, we have functioned throughout the whole period short of staff.... It has been necessary on certain stations to restrict patrol work, and in some instances the activities which had been laid down for the year have necessarily been postponed to a later date.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1928-1929, p. 30.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1926-1927, p. 145.
\end{itemize}
As regards the mosquito campaign it was stated that considerable difficulty was experienced that year in keeping the campaign up to standard owing to the frequent changes of sanitation staff which resulted in unskilled men being employed.\(^{59}\) The shortage of staff was a constant theme throughout the period of the mandate Administration. Indeed, in 1939 there were only 13 doctors in the employ of the Administration in the Territory and 30 medical Assistants to look after the health of the European, Asiatic and native populations.\(^{60}\) Even some of those employed by the Department were unqualified and inexperienced men. This was made clear in the 1926-27 Report.

In the early part of the year it was hoped that a system could be introduced which would permit of the gradual replacement of unqualified men performing medical work and their substitution by medical officers in the ratio of two medical assistants to one medical officer. It was thought that it would be possible to provide for gradual expansion elsewhere in the Territory by the absorption of certain of these medical assistants into new districts and the establishment of new sub-stations. The sudden necessity, however, for two medical officers and four medical assistants in the Salamaa area -- an unforeseen contingency -- entirely disorganized the tentative proposals and they were abandoned.\(^{61}\)


\(^{60}\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1939-1940, p. 43.

\(^{61}\) Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1926-1927, p. 112.
The shortage of staff and the consequent inability to provide adequate medical services can be traced to one important cause -- the lack of funds. The policy of making New Guinea pay for itself which was adopted by the Australian Government right from the outset was detrimental to the interests of the Territory. No underdeveloped country can pay for its own development without outside help. Early in 1921 a grant of £10,000 had been made to the New Guinea Administration by the Australian Government to be spent on providing medical services for the natives. This grant was later devoted to all aspects of native interests and by 1930 it ceased to be forthcoming. The stopping of this grant was highly regretted by Lord Lugard of the Permanent Mandates Commission who observed that such an action had rendered impossible the urgent work of expansion in the medical field. The lack of adequate funds was a very great obstacle to the Administration and this was echoed and re-echoed in the Annual Reports of the Head of Medical Services. In the 1924-25 Report it was stated that the central campaign of the year was devoted to the combatting of gonorrhea but that owing to lack of funds the campaign could not be pushed to a satisfactory conclusion. The Permanent Mandates Commission was seriously

62 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1921-1922, p. 64.
63 P.M.C. Minutes, 21st Session (1931), p. 25.
64 Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1924-1925, p. 17.
worried about it too. In 1926 Lord Lugard pointed out that the vote of £28,000 for public health was totally inadequate for so large a Territory.\textsuperscript{65} It was also a cause for concern amongst some members of the Australian Parliament. In a debate in the Senate on August 27, 1925 one of the Senators stated that instances had been brought to his notice of cases which had been treated up to a certain point and then dropped for lack of funds. He complained that the result was a waste of a proportion of the expenditure. He concluded that success could only be achieved by continuity of efforts until diseases were practically eradicated and he pleaded for an increase in the grant given to the New Guinea Administration for native welfare.\textsuperscript{66}

It is true that an increase was subsequently made in the amount devoted to medical services but throughout the period of the mandate Administration it was never adequate to meet the needs of the Territory.\textsuperscript{67} In fairness to Australia, it must, however, be admitted that the needs were really colossal.

\textsuperscript{65} P.M.C. Minutes, 9th Session (1926), p. 23.

\textsuperscript{66} H.S. Deb., August 27, 1925, p. 1747.

\textsuperscript{67} Total expenditure upon medical and sanitary services for the year including salaries, medical expenditure from Native Welfare vote and New Yorks medical expenditure was £96,405. See Annual Report to the League of Nations, 1939-1940, p. 43. No figure was given to show what proportion of this was spent on native health services.
CHAPTER VII

WAS THE "SACRED TRUST" FULFILLED?

Germany was stripped of her colonies after the First World War on the grounds that she had forfeited her right to these possessions by her deplorable record as a ruler of subject races. The Colonies were then assigned to various Powers under the mandate system accompanied by a proviso that these Powers should take as a sacred task "the moral and material well-being and the social progress of the native inhabitants". The natives were to be trained in such a way as to be able in the long run to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world. This provision contained in Article 22 of the League Covenant provided, therefore a standard whereby a mandatory power's record might be measured. What then is the verdict on Australia's exercise of her mandate over New Guinea? Did she carry out faithfully the sacred duty? Did she provide adequately for the moral and material welfare of the natives? Did she train them in such a way that they could stand by themselves under the 'strenuous conditions' of the modern world? To be able to give a fair assessment a number of factors must be taken into
consideration — the difficulties confronting her in the task of administering the Territory and her successes and failures.

Australia was faced with a number of difficulties in the task of morally and materially uplifting the New Guinea natives. The New Guinea inhabitants were very primitive. Head-hunting, cannibalism, inter-necine warfare, sorcery, and witchcraft were common features of the life of the people. A tremendous effort was therefore required if the people were to be raised from their Stone Age existence to twentieth century conditions of living. In addition, the nature of the country itself — its rugged mountains and dense jungle, its deep gorges and cataract-impeded swiftly flowing rivers — confronted Australia with a great problem. This, however, should not be over-stated because such difficulties were not altogether peculiar to New Guinea alone. They were to be found in other mandated Territories in Africa and the Pacific though less pronounced than in New Guinea. The Administration of New Guinea, just as that of any mandated Territory, called for sacrifice and a spirit of self-denial which was almost non-existent as far as Australia was concerned.

Moreover, Australia had no experience as a ruler of subject races. Important as this might be it was not too great a handicap because in undertaking the administration of backward peoples, she was not by any means
entering 'upon a path hitherto untrodden by man'. There were various colonial policies and practices already in existence which she could learn from if she were willing. In addition, Australia was herself at this time undergoing rapid economic development which demanded a great deal of her attention and energy.

And what about her successes and failures? Australia established peace and order in those areas which she was able to bring under control. In such areas, head-hunting, cannibalism, sorcery and witchcraft were stamped out. But the area of the Territory brought under control after 20 years of rule was not by any means impressive. It is true difficulties existed in the task of pacifying the country. Analysis reveals that the failure to establish control over a greater area of the Territory was not due to any natural setbacks. The chief reason was that Australia was not enthusiastic in bringing the whole Territory quickly under control. Inadequate, ill-equipped and ill-experienced staff were devoted to the job and in many cases the decision to bring new areas of the Territory under control was influenced by European economic activities and not by consideration of its benefits to the native inhabitants.

In the field of education, her record was deplorable. This was not due to any difficulties deriving from the nature of the people or the Territory but to the
unwillingness of the Australian Administration and the opposition of the white settlers to any scheme devised for the betterment of the natives. The amount devoted to educational services was very poor and even that amount was dwindling rather than increasing at a time when the Territory was enjoying great prosperity as a result of the development of the gold industry. It is therefore no exaggeration when Stanner maintains that "the educational services were primitive, even more starved for funds and wholly in mission hands".\(^1\) The natives themselves were not unaware that the Administration was not doing enough in this field. In an interesting conversation recorded by Ian Hogbin, a New Guinea native was asked why he had not teamed up at once with the allies during the Second World War in the same way as the negroes stuck to America and he replied, "The American Government taught the negroes to read and write and so made it possible for them to understand all about the War. Our Government gave us nothing. The little learning that we had came from the Missions."\(^2\)

The medical services provided for the natives were inadequate. Lack of staff and funds were responsible for this. Only those natives who were employed as indentured

\(^1\) Stanner, *The South Seas in Transition*, p. 30.

labourers on European plantations enjoyed the blessings of medical care as all the hospitals were established in the centres of European activities.

As regards labour conditions, Ordinances were passed embodying detailed provisions to safeguard the native labourers, but as these were not efficiently enforced they proved of very little value. With the discovery of gold in 1926 labour conditions particularly on the goldfield became very bad. Wage labour was poorly paid, and compensation for illness and accidents for injury sustained in the course of employment were hopelessly inadequate. The official doctrine behind the poor wages was well put by Mackenzie, an Australian historian, when he writes "Success in tropical Agriculture (in New Guinea) can be achieved only when labour ... is paid for on a scale far below the standard of the white man's wages".³

All the efforts of the Administration were directed toward the betterment of the relatively few white settlers in the Territory.

In the mandate Territory throughout the period preceding the Japanese invasion the Administration would appear to have been directly largely to dealing with conditions arising from the expansion of European commercial activity, rather than any

162

constructive attempt to deal with the needs of the native community.⁴

As for the relationship between the native inhabitants and the white population, it was one which was totally undesirable. The doctrine of white prestige reigned supreme. The belief that the natives must be 'taught their place' permeated the whole society. Natives were treated as underdogs and discriminated against. This attitude was well summed up by an article which appeared in the Rabaul Times of February 7, 1930.

It was a most disgusting sight to see a number of white men fraternizing with coloured men emanating from some (other) islands in the Pacific. The whites concerned evidently did not think it beneath their dignity to personally serve them with drink, and to cap it all, danced and sang freely with them. Heaven knows our prestige is low enough. Why are these Pacific Islanders allowed in a public bar -- because they are American subjects? The colour line must be drawn somewhere.⁵

To these white settlers the native problem, as Reed rightly points out, was synonymous with "keeping the natives in a servile position". No race-mixing was allowed, natives were barred from entering white stores and European children were fed on the doctrine of racial intolerance. Another

⁴ Lord Hailey in his Introduction to Mair, Australia in New Guinea, p. XVI.
⁵ Cited by Reed, The Making of Modern New Guinea, p. 248. For discussion of race-relations in New Guinea, see also Hogbur, Transformation Scene, Chap. XIII
extract from the same paper clearly illustrates this. On March 30, 1928 the paper carried an editorial which reads:

All things considered it is not to be wondered at that the natives in Rabaul are apt to grow insolent. Unfortunately for the permanent residents, there are a number of visitors to this place who have apparently no idea of how to treat the Kanakas. A glaring example of this took place recently when a number of white men from one of the ships in port challenged a party of Kanakas to a game of football. 6

It is true that the question of racial intolerance is a purely social affair over which the Administration had no control but Australia must be condemned for not taking steps to put an end to such discriminatory practices in the Territory.

It is this and other practices of the Australian Government which led to an outburst of righteous indignation on the part of Reed:

The Australians manage to pay formal homage to humanitarianism and, at the same time, achieve their mundane purposes by giving with one hand what they took with the other. Cloaked in undefined slogans and spurious rationalizations, discriminatory practices are as strong at present as they have been. 7

From the above analysis, it is quite obvious

7 Ibid., p. 245.
that Australia had failed to carry out the sacred trust. Several factors were responsible for this. Firstly, Australia's acceptance of the mandate over New Guinea was a grudging one. Her intention was to annex the Territory. "We tried to obtain direct control but President Wilson's Fourteen Points forbade ... then the mandate principle was accepted." The Mandate was, therefore, accepted as a compromise and not even a convenient one at that. Australia regarded the mandate as nothing more than a mere cloak for annexation. "The average Australian accepts the Mandates as the fruits of victory, if not quite the soil for which Australians died on Gallipoli or the fields of France." This unwillingness to accept the spirit of the mandate was significant. It indicated from the outset that she was not likely to carry out the sacred duty if it would involve any sacrifice on her part. And yet sacrifice and self-denial were needed if the sacred obligation was to be fulfilled.

Moreover, it was Australia's intention that the Territory should be of economic benefit to her. Throughout the discussion in Parliament of the Mandate for New Guinea only one or two members spoke of the importance of the sacred duty from the point of view of the natives. All the

8 Prime Minister Hughes in Australia, H.R. Deb., September 10, 1919, p. 12174.

others, including Hughes, the Prime Minister, dwelt glowingly and greedily on the economic possibilities which the Territory offered to Australia. This attitude was a significant pointer to the way in which the mandate was going to be exercised.

Right from the beginning of the mandate Administration, Australia adopted the policy of making the Territory pay for itself. This definitely was not conducive to the proper discharge of her responsibility. No underdeveloped country can pay for itself without outside help. This policy, therefore, constituted a deterrent factor to the proper exercise of her mandate. The policy was given expression in the 1921-22 Report. "The revenue from local sources has been so adjusted that no aid from the Commonwealth Government has been necessary for the maintenance of the Administration." This policy was strictly adhered to. Apart from the sum of £1,758 spent on hookworm campaign in 1921 and the grant of £10,000 made to the Territory in 1921-22, made permanent in 1925-26 and discontinued in 1930, no other grant was given to the Territory. This stands in contrast to the grant-in-aid of £50,000 per annum made to Papua -- an older and well-established colony and also with the annual subsidy of £52,000 made to the

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Territory by the German Government from 1905 to 1909 and
the sum of £86,000 proposed as a subsidy to the Territory
by Germany in 1914 shortly before the outbreak of the war. The consequence of this policy, as Prof. H. K. Bailey
rightly points out, was that:

While the seven specific guarantees under the mandate have been observed,
the positive obligation to promote to
the utmost the material and moral well-being of the inhabitants of the Territory
has fallen short of fulfillment. Health
measures, agricultural development,
native education, better communication,
are as a minimum ingredient of a policy
of well-being, but lack of money has
hampered all of them.12

One other important reason for Australia's failure
was the lack of interest on the part of her people in native
welfare and consequently the absence of that public interest
in the administration of New Guinea which would have provided
a stimulus to better administration.

The Administration of the Colony has
evoked little public interest in Australia.
The only interests that have been taken in
the Territory was on the question of the
position of the white residents....13

This is quite understandable. Nothing else could be

11 See H. K. Bailey, "History of the New Guinea Mandate"
Also E. L. Piesse "Financial Relations of the Territory of
New Guinea to the Commonwealth," in Eggleston, op. cit., p. 44.


13 Loc. cit.
expected of a country so permeated with the doctrine of the "White Australia" policy. Such international opinion as that created by the Permanent Mandates Commission, which would have provided checks on certain undesirable practices and policies of the Australian Government in New Guinea, were bitterly resented by her people. So bad was this feeling that Lord Lugard had to explain at the eighteenth session of the Commission's meeting that questions were asked:

With a view to affording the accredited representative an opportunity of denying false accusations or explaining the circumstances, and, if the accredited representative was not sufficiently familiar with the facts to give the necessary explanation, the question when recorded in the Minutes appeared to be merely an echo of hostile criticism. 14

Australia's failure can, therefore, be briefly summed up as that of a country accepting a responsibility which for various reasons she was ill-equipped and incapable of discharging and a system which was at that time alien to her temper and which ran counter to her economic ambitions.

14 P.M.C. Minutes, 18th Session (1930), p. 48.
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These Annual Reports are very valuable and constitute an essential source of information. Though at times they tend to be too legalistic, on the whole they afford reasonable material as a basis for the writing of the history of New Guinea under Australian rule.


This is a very valuable source. It contains a wealth of information on every aspect of Government policy in New Guinea. It provides excellent material on the geography, the native peoples, industries and missionary activities in the Territory.


2. Great Britain

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3. **League of Nations**

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Invaluable source material for any scholar working on the mandates. The Minutes are important supplements to the Annual Reports for they contain information which the mandatory powers were unwilling to record in those reports.

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This is written for travellers, businessmen and others who might be interested in the Pacific Islands. Provides some useful information.


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