

Appendix D. Dispatch Reporting Visit to the North-East Coast of the Possession. BNG, AR 10-18, 1890-91.

1890 report on Maclaren's visit (appendix d)

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Working there way up Cape Vogel, came to a Kapikapi with about 30 houses. Across from it was a small island known as Ikara or Opoteto Ikara. There were made up of two high coral masses about fifty to eighty feet, with some houses on the flat area on top (covered by trees). Get up by wooden ladders, appeared to be a refuge at times of attack.

"it seems that the whole of the people visited here are one tribe or confederation of septs, and that hostile incursions are made on them from Morata on the one hand, and from Collingwood Bay on the other, by a people which the Kapikapi men call Maisina, and of whom they are greatly afraid."

At Mukawa too, he found that the people expressed fear of the Maisina

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The next day, M. made his way along the coast which seemed to be sparsely inhabited. They anchored at Phillips Harbour, "which has apparently much to recommend it as an anchorage. It was so named in honour of the chief engineer of the "Merrie England."

"From Phillips Harbour the head of Collingwood Bay was examined. On the evening of the 29th we went in the whaleboat to a spot at the head of the bay whence smoke was seen to arise near some very tall trees, and which had the appearance of being a village site. As we got up near the place a large number of natives were seen on the beach running about among the houses and cocoanuts in a state of great excitement. No women or children were visible, but the men did not appear to be armed, and some of them came to the water's edge and made signals to us to land, several of them wading into the water to meet us, while others walked up cocoanut trees and began to throw down nuts, evidently meant for us. As we landed one man came forward holding in his right hand by hind legs a large yellow and white full-grown dingo. In a moment he swung it round his head and dashed it on the ground two or three times. The first blow seemed to break its neck. it was then laid down flat on the ground in front of us, and the great majority of the sixty or eighty men present retired back from the beach among the houses and trees behind. The man that took the lead in inviting us ashore received a piece of red cloth and a plane iron; but it was not without some difficulty that he was induced to come near enough a white man to take hold of these things. They wished that we should exchange presents by laying them on the ground, so that we and they should not come into immediate contact. We succeeded, however, in inducing perhaps about half-a-score of them to approach and shake hands. Our visit was only a short one, as night was near, and they expressed satisfaction at the intimation that we would return next day."

"On the 30th an inspection of the coast was begun at Phillips Harbour by boat, which was continued some miles beyond Keppel Point. ... The first village visited was small one of seven or eight houses, only about 300 yards from our anchorage. The occupants were shy

and avoided our people the previous evening, but some presents were left for them, and this morning they were joined by some natives from the villages on the other side of the bay, who doubtless informed them of our harmless intercourse with the people there. Some thirty of forty men met us as we landed, not carrying arms, but their spears were hid in the grass near. Besides these they use the stone club, to which they attach such very great value that they could not be induced so (sic) sell a single specimen; and for defensive purposes they employ a wooden shield covered by plaited cane, and shaped like a small gothic window, about two and a-half feet long and a foot broad at the lower end. Their women and children were not then in the village, but they were brought back during the day, and some of the men went on board the steamer in the afternoon. Although they were at first very timid, they were friendly when they saw that no harm was intended them. With this, and with the other villages in the head of Collingwood Bay, which collectively constitute the 'Maisina' tribe of the Kapi Kapi people, we had but scant success in holding oral communication, as this language did not appear to have much in common with the dialect of Murua and Awaiama. it was therefore plain that the utmost that could be done during this visit would be to convince the natives that we were friendly towards them, and to draw them into communication and show them the Europeans could supply them with articles useful in everyday life. A number of natives passed round by the beach and reached the second village almost as soon as we did. The male inhabitants came unarmed to meet us as we approach the beach in front of their village, and invited us to land; but they were unwilling that we should enter the village, which was hidden from view from the water by a thick intervening belt of trees. About thirty men were present, but neither women nor children. One man was induced to come with me into the village, and as we entered it we saw several men carrying away bundles of spears from the houses, which they deposited in the scrub not far //

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away. In the village were some pigs and quantities of taro and sugar-cane. the form of salutation known to these people seems to be to touch the nose and the navel. They have a few cocoanut trees in the village, and they brought us some nuts. The chief, whose name is Ainao, a man of about 55, blind of an eye, was very friendly, and so were all his people. They eat the betel-nut, but they possess none of the dexterity in carving limespoons, &c., so conspicuous in the Trobriand group. They do not tattoo, but suffer from *Tinea desquamans*. They seem to cut off the eyebrows instead of pulling them out, and many wear beards. No case of leprosy was noticed, but there were traces of elephantiasis. Many of them wear the hair in long matted ringlets. All wear a sihi of native cloth, apparently made from the bark of the bread-fruit tree, tied round the loins and passed between the legs. They wear armllets plaited from small ferns, and narrow shell rings with carrings (sic) of turtle or cocoanut shell, and strings of white cowries, large and small. The village consisted of a number of separate houses for family use, apparently each large enough for only one; but there is a large club-house for the accommodation of the males of the community. The houses are very inferior. The large club-house is only a roofed shed, with a sleeping platform six or eight feet high, running from end to end of the building. A peculiarity of the houses here, which was observed in general use on this coast as far as the boundary, is that on one side there is a veranda formed by carrying the roof of the house down in the same plane until it is about three feet from the ground. A platform is built under this, on which the occupants seat themselves, and lay past temporarily such things as fishing-nets, spears, and

the wide-mouthed clay-pots in which they cook. Their spears are made of palm-wood, and they seem to have no ebony.

"10. The next village visited appears to be called Augo. Some of our former friends got there before us, and we were received in a very kind manner. The chief kept out of sight at first, but soon appeared, and was very friendly. He did not carry arms. The thoughtless lighting of a match dispersed the whole assembly in such a state of consternation that they ran against each other, and several were knocked over; one ran on to a house-post with such blind force that he fell sprawling on the ground. But after a few minutes they were nearly all got back, and one native purchased a box of matches as soon as he understood what they were. We were well received at the large village we visited the previous evening. The chief and several of his people waded out to meet us, and no arms were visible. This community occupies a group of small collections of houses, probably about forty altogether, extending for half-a-mile along the coast. The tall old cocoanut and other great trees about furnish evidence that this is not a modern village site. There must have been more than a hundred able-bodied men present. Though friendly and unarmed they were very shy, and it was not possible to detain any given man near us more than a few minutes. They resembled the people met with in the smaller villages in everything save that they possessed a great many more ornaments and about half-a-score of large canoes. These were all drawn up high and dry on the beach. They are made of a single tree, about thirty-five to forty feet long, about two and a-half feet in width, and sharp at each end. They are provided with a very small outrigger, which is at an unusually great distance from the canoe; and on the cross sticks joining the canoe to the outrigger there is a platform about twelve feet square. No women or children were seen. The men were greatly afraid, and fled precipitately on seeing a looking-glass, but their confidence was soon restored. They did not understand the use of iron, and had no wish to obtain any; but some was left with them and they were shown how to employ it. Of tobacco they were, of course, quite ignorant, and we found that the pieces of bamboo they carried were used exclusively as nose flutes, and not as pipes. A large number of them ran away when a pocket compass was used to take some angles, but they finally ventured to examine it. We parted on very friendly terms, after they had made what appeared to be earnest inquiry as to whether we had come down from the clouds.

"11. The next village visited is a large one on a new site near the sea, about a mile further up the coast. The occupants were as friendly and less boisterous than the stronger community that are their neighbours on the south side. The village consists of about a score of houses only a few months old, on a level sandy site, surrounded by casuarina trees. The chief, Dibiki, a quiet respectable looking man of about fifty, and his son received us very kindly. They are well provided with canoes, and can turn out at least forty or fifty fighting men. The reason for their building a village on an entirely new site we could not discover. At this place I was not presented with a dog, but with a bundle of taro plants instead. They seemed to be poor in property and ornaments, and are probably refugees. From near this village a large native settlement could be seen near the bight of the bay, some four or five miles distant, and our course was directly thither. But a violent squall meeting us caused a landing to be made at a native house near the beach, rather less than half way to the northern village. On approaching this house, which was one of the usual type, built on very slender posts and with a veranda on the weather side, some noise was made to attract the attention of the inmates. A young man promptly appeared at the door of the house and began to shout out, "Wele, wele." It was evident that our approach in the heavy wind and rain had been unnoticed, and the state of alarm of the inmates was extremely great when they looked down

and saw a white face looking up at them. The young man who first appeared seemed to be the owner of the house, and his weapons were on the platform on the veranda, quite beyond his reach. After some hesitation he descended the ladder that lead up to the house, and although in a frightful state of alarm, was induced to accept a piece of scarlet cloth and some other trifle. There followed him a boy of about twelve, then a woman carrying a young child astride on her thigh, and clothed in a short petticoat of native cloth, descended, and in spite of every endeavour to get them to remain, all ran away in the rain to some houses at a little distance from us. They alarmed the inmates there, and all fled to the bush. In a short time, however, some of them appeared again at a little distance, no doubt greatly influenced by the small present given to the first man; and after some trouble friendly relations were established with the whole tribe, forty or fifty of which visited us. Of iron and tobacco they were entirely ignorant. Here, for the first time in the Possession we found people using stone adzes of a stone resembling jade in colour. Whether it is real nephrite or not cannot at present be said, but samples have been submitted to Mr. Jack for examination. This mineral takes a very keen edge, and is so tough that the thin edge does not chip or splinter. They would not exchange these jade adzes for steel. They seemed to be the only kind of adze used in the head of Collingwood Bay, and in the lower half of Holincote Bay, when they begin to be mixed with adzes of basalt.

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"12. The large village in the bight of the bay was reached about 3 p.m. The inhabitants were of their own accord coming to meet us unarmed, but a native came all the way along the beach from the village last visited, and reaching the spot almost at the same time as we did, introduced us to this people. This is the largest single village on the bay, containing probably 400 or 500 people. The site is evidently a very old one, and contains many cocoanut and other cultivated trees. The houses are arranged in small groups, which are at some distance from each other. They seemed to desire that we should spend the night there. Like their neighbours they did not know the use of iron or of tobacco, but they willingly exchanged their jade-stone adzes for a few small beads. A few women were seen, clad in short petticoats of native cloth. Here I was closely interrogated as to whether I had descended from the clouds. One man had a few small red beads in his nose, probably procured in the course of trade from those that had come into contact with the men fighting at the Sydney Islands. These people were wealthy in ornaments of the ordinary kind, headdresses of shells and feathers, earrings of shells and turtleshell, armlets of cocoanuts, strings of dogs' teeth and of small white cowrie shells. They do not tattoo, but were a sihi of coloured native cloth. They bury their dead in the village, and plant about the graves different kinds of dracænas and crotons. The houses are similar to those already described. Probably nearly 100 men escorted us to the beach in a very friendly manner, but all were suddenly dispersed through one of our party proceeding to light his pipe with a match. As we were leaving a dog was produced, to be killed for presentation to us, but we were able to prevent this and to save the dog's life. Some pieces of hoop-iron were given to them, but what they desired was small beads. The chief, who is a very intelligent man, treated us in the kindest manner. Unfortunately we could hold but little communication with them, save by signs. He pointed northward along the coast, and intimated that when we met people there we should touch the hose and navel. This was understood at the time to refer to the villages further along the coast, but about two miles beyond this we met a canoe with fourteen or

fifteen men, to which, no doubt, the chief referred, although that could not be made comprehensible at the time. The clamour of the natives in all these villages was so great that to obtain rest during the night it was deemed necessary to camp at some distance from any village, and we accordingly slept ashore on what appears to be the Keppel Point of the charts."

-- observed steam coming out from a vent near the peak of Mt. Victory and notes that a major earthquake felt across Papua (as far as POM) probably originated in the mountain.  
-- from here went on to explore the Cape Nelson region, naming Maclaren Harbour after the accompanying missionary

15 Maclaren notes that that harbour seemed best suited for the mission in that region

16 on visit to Oro bay, also selected for the mission -- guide shouted out "Oro Kaivara enao" but M. recognises that "Oro" might not be the right name for the tribe

-- somehow missed the Musa on this first trip (right up to the boundary) and perhaps even the Mambare

Notes that trepang fishermen had come as far as the head of Collingwood Bay, but thought that the natives were extremely savage beyond that point -- one of accomplishments of this tour was to learn of the large population, that friendly relations could be established, and that there were several good harbours (17-18).

Interestingly MacGregor felt that the trees in the area would be of too poor quality for export (18)