Macdonnell 1923

The land about 5 chains back from the river's bank is low and wet and the trees growing upon it are stunted and will probably not bear nuts for another four to five years. The natives now desire the whole area brought under the Native Plantations Ordinance. A rumour has got about that if the natives allow the Government to take a portion of the produce from their plantations, or even allow the Government to plant out the plantation whether copra is produced or not, will mean their exemption from tax. I have told them that more work will have to be done, and the ground cleared before the Government will consider the matter of exempting anyone.

GURUGURU today looks remarkably well, although the rising of the river flooded the plantation and washed away some trees growing near the water. I ordered the village constable to extend the clearing upstream and plant it with nuts.

Returned to MARA and collected tax until 11 p.m. There were no defaulters about half a dozen men who evidently could not raise money for tax, left their village some little time ago, and I understand have got work on a plantation near KAUMOA in the Eastern Division. However, I am writing to the R.M.C.O. about this, for I have my doubts in this matter. The MARA folk are a cunning lot, and the men may have simply gone away while I am here.

SUNDAY, 15th. APRIL, 1923.

Completed tax collecting from MARA and MARUA men, and then went across to BIRIA where I collected the tax from the men of both BIRIA villages and also from those of BIMARA. V.C. GUROJON of BIRIA reported at BIMARA after completing the tax collecting, I walked through the three villages and found all in order. The coconut trees planted along the beach between BIRIA and BIMARA, and those near BIMARA village are all doing well. There are about 120 trees, and about 50 in bearing. The men now rely upon copra to bring them in money, and have asked for bags. They tell me they have no money at present to buy bags and twine and needles, but if I supply these things, they will pay for them after they sell some copra. I think the request is reasonable.

From BIMARA I sailed across to BIRIA where there is a small village of 4 houses. These people are really MARUA men who have their gardens up BIRIA Creek, and have built houses at the mouth of the creek so they will have easy access to their gardens. An area of about two acres has recently been felled and planted ~~with~~

with coconuts at the mouth of this creek, and the soil appears to be suit-able for the cultivation of coconuts, so I have ordered the men to conti clearing along the foreshore. The idea is to gradually have the whole foreshore of Collingwood Bay, planted with coconuts. Of course there are places where the nuts will not grow, but only a small fraction of that where they will grow. There is some very good coconut land a short distance up BURI creek, which, in time will be put under coconuts, but first of all we will confine our attention to the planting of the seashore BURI Creek has its source in the MAMBAO Range and carries a large volume of water, and like all the creeks and rivers up this way, has a bad bar right across its mouth. I run right into the creek with the whaleboat, but a larger vessel could not get in at any xtime. The creek carries fresh water to its mouth in the wet season, and no distance up in the dry season. The next place called at was DUA where a clearing has just been made and about ten acres of coconuts already put in. This work is being done by the men of ULAU and GAVIGA (NEW IRELAND). There is no more good land on DUA so we were obliged to go further along the beach in the direction of BURI From DUA I went on to SEGA where the plantation proper owned by the men of the two last mentioned villages, has been made. Some of the trees are in bearing, and the others look strong and healthy. About 10 acres are growing well here. The place had just been cleaned up so I was able to make a good inspection of it.

SEGA Creek heads in the GOROFU hills about three miles from the coast. I take the whaleboat right into the creek, but this could not be done with a larger boat. There is a good anchorage for any vessel just off the mouth of SEGA.

The owners of SEGA plantation have agreed that their plantation be brought under the I.P.O. Much more work will have to be done by the men before they are entitled to exemption from tax. There are about 160 men who work -or are supposed to- on this plantation. They are a hard lot to manage, and only work spasmodically, unless under European supervision. Very few men from ULAU and GAVIGA are now away at work. Although a recruiter quite recently asked some of them to sign on, they refused and added that when the tax next fell due, they would sign on in one lot, as no one had any more money with which to pay taxes. I know that not one man will go away until he actually knows the tax is about to be collected.

Proceeded to the Rest House at GANJIGA where V.Cs. BOBOGI of this village, and [illegible] of UIAKU reported. Here the KAIBII women overwhelmed me with food. They said;- buy at any price; we have acres of taro and bananas in our gardens and are simply dying for a smoke. I told them that was all very well but how was I to carry it all to KUMI. I asked them to transport it to Cape Nelson, but this they declined to do, so I purchased just sufficient for the trip, and the women were obliged to take the rest away. This is always a good food district, so it shows that if the people do not work on their plantation, they evidently spend a good deal of their time in gardens and growing food. Beautiful bananas and taro are obtainable at UIAKU and GANJIGA. Darkness came on and stopped operations.

MONDAY 16th. APRIL, 1923.

The whole day was taken up tax collecting, paying Capital bonuses, and revising census of UIAKU with a population of 180.[illegible] Since April 1921, 16 natives of UIAKU have died, and 8 children have been born, showing an excess of 8 deaths over births. This is according to information given me by the people of UIAKU. I am inclined to think that some births have not been reported.

TUESDAY 17th. APRIL, 1923.

Continued tax collecting and revision of census of GANJIGA and BOMANDO No. 2, . The first named shows 7 deaths and 5 births, while the latter shows one birth. The natives do not attach as much importance to a birth as they do to a death, especially when the deceased is a young man. I have arranged with Ambrose DAKA, a Solomon Island native and Mission Teacher at UIAKU to endeavour to keep a correct record of all births and deaths, and have instructed the V.Cs. to make it their duty to report such to Ambrose DAKA. There were no tax defaulters in GANJIGA and BOMANDO No.2.

Inspected the area planted with coconuts between GANJIGA and BOMANDO and found the trees doing well. There is quite a nice avenue of trees along this mile stretch of beach. Now the planting is being carried on in the direction of IU-AI a good five miles to the north of the last mentioned village. In time it is hoped this will all be growing coconut trees. There is no reason why it should not.

A very hot walk along the beach brought me to IU-AI-U under the control of V.C. BOBARU .

IU-AI-U i the most northerly village of the MAISIN Tribe, and has a population of 74 natives. Here I collected tax and revised the census, and some natives whose names were not on the census. There was one tax defaulter at this village. The natives tell me that one death has occurred and 3 children have been born since the census was made in May, 1921.

While at IU-AI-U, I collected the tax from the people of BOMMOO No.1, about four miles inland from the beach. There were no defaulters. The revision of the census of this village showed 2 deaths and 2 births since 9/5/21.

Held C.M.F. during the evening. V.Cs. MAITO of ISIN AMBO, and BOREI of MERUMBI, BORIRI reported at IU-AI-U with a couple of small cases for hearing

WEDNESDAY 18th. APRIL, 1928.

Inspected the area planted with coconuts and found it not very clean. A small additional area has been cleared and planted. Picked up a female venereal patient at IU-AI-U.

Went on to MAMIREL and before lunch inspected ORIBORA village and with the exception of the V.Cs.house which requires repairing, all was found in order. During the afternoon with the Reverend A.J. Thompson, an inspection of the roads, plantation and villages of MAIRU, KULUMBUM, AI-APU MURU, and AITAI was made. Found all in order, and marked off an additional area for clearing and planting with coconuts.

The tax collecting at these villages was completed by me on my previous trip to this district. Got away from MAMIREL at 5'30 p.m. and reached TOMO at 8 O'clock. Found that V.C. SIVOMO and his men have just built a new Rest house with kitchen adjoining. Paid them for this.

THURSDAY 19th. APRIL, 1928.

At 6 a.m. commenced inspection of plantation under coconuts, and found it clean and all the "niaves" replanted with growing nuts. Ordered the V.C. to extend the clearing and plant more nuts. There are not many men at this village and they have done good work in plantation making, and deserve more than anyone else, exemption from tax. They are quite agreeable to having their plantation brought under the Native Plantations Ordinance.

Went on to GIGORI of the MAMAI Tribe. Here V.C. AGESARI reported, and together we went up to the U.M.S plantation. Found about half the plantation had not been cleaned. Seeing that I recently warned these men about keeping their plantation clean, I decided to make an example of some of them, so