

TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

1955 91
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In Reply
Please Quote

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Registry of Co-operative Societies.
Port Moresby,

30th May, 1955.

Memorandum for—



The Director,
Department of District Services
and Native Affairs,
PORT MORESBY.

Patrol Report No. 6 of 1954-55, Collingwood Bay

The above-mentioned report refers.

I note the comments of Mr. Bell on the Native Economic situation and welcome the detailed observation, which is only too often neglected in Patrol Reports.

It is anticipated that this year some extension of Co-operative activities in the Northern District will take place, but probably the Pongani group will be the furthest south that such extension will apply. How such work will affect the Wanigela side I do not know, but if past experience is any indication, an upsurge in the current ventures can be expected.

It is suggested that those ventures now operating be carefully scrutinised to ensure that no outright exploitation occurs. Where ventures are communalistic despite contrary advice, the best course of action is to interfere as little as possible and let the people work out their own problems. It is difficult to convince communalistic groups that problems exist with their particular method of operation unless such problems are allowed to develop and are made manifest. If a suppressive attitude is adopted by the Administration, it will result in a withdrawal of confidence, probably into Mission sponsorship and this in turn makes assessment of the position difficult since Missions (as does the Administration) tend to keep failures to themselves.

The introduction of Co-operatives at this stage would be faced with the stated belief of the people "this is our way" and cannot be expected to make much headway, even if staff made the introduction possible.

To sum up, an initial warning on a frank and friendly basis, followed by advice and assistance when asked for, with continual propoganda on planting, is the course of action recommended, and if the latter aspect receives impetus from the present communalist drive, so much the better later on. By this I do not mean that communal plantings are to be preferred to individual ownership, but communal coconuts are at least better than no coconuts.

I presume the frustration and unrest which may follow this current trend will be watched as a normal Administration problem.

cc. Pebrnae
11/6/55



Bon
11/6

G. Morris
(G. Morris),
Deputy Registrar

Also attending the school at WANIGELA are the following who are from other villages in the Collingwood Bay area:

Standard II	4	-	4
Standard III	9		9
Standard IV	12	1	13
Standard V	12	2	14
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	37	3	40
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

The main part of the teaching in the village schools is done in the vernacular. But at St. Peter's School the teaching of the higher grades is in English.

In all, the Mission is doing a good job with education in the district. Most of the natives realise it and are taking advantage of it. The younger children are as troublesome as ever. When they are older, they too will become enthusiastic about the opportunities open to those with education.

The Mission is having a great deal of trouble in Collingwood Bay with marriage and divorce. The Mainin people especially are gradually taken up their old habits of polygamy. This would be bad enough if it was not for the fact that most of the natives are married in church and the marriages are registered under the Marriage Ordinance, Papua. Where natives make a polygamous marriage or 'throw away' their legally wedded spouse the mission excommunicate the guilty party. However this does nothing to help to straighten out the legal position.

LAND MATTERS.

Whilst at KEWANSASAP the patrol went to the nearby island of OPAREA, which lies about a half mile off from the village. A small block of land was surveyed preparatory to purchase. After returning to the village the native owners were interviewed for the second time to arrange for finalisation. At this point the owners changed their mind and decided that they did not want to sell the land, nor did they wish to lease it for a number of years. This seems to be a common occurrence these days, natives refusing to sell their land at the final moment.

The land was to be purchased for lease to Mr. Cridland, Trader, who wanted to erect thereon a small copra store. The anchorage at KEWANSASAP is very poor and sandbanks require the copra to be transported over half a mile from the present bulk store. Although the natives do not wish to sell the land they have offered it to Mr. Cridland, free of charge, so that he can erect the store thereon.

CO-OPERATIVES.

At present there are no registered Co-operatives in the area. In the past there were a number of embryo co-operative societies which were formed immediately after the last war. These were formed by a few sharp characters who made quite a good thing out of it before they were finally wound up by Mr. Jackman in 1952. In their place the UIAKU Christian Village Society was formed and contrary to instructions received from Mr. Jackman started

CO-OPERATIVES cont.

marketing on a society basis and there was very little change except in name. For some time now the society has been lying idle whilst natives went to plantations for training in other lines. The coconut plantation commenced by Mr. Jackman is subject to periodic flooding and has been allowed to drift to bush.

All the peoples of Collingwood Bay are very co-operatively minded and have been ever since the war. The failures they have had in the last few years have in no way deterred them. They have seized upon co-operation as a means towards an end, a complete new order, by which they will advance both economically and socially. Any attempt to talk them out of this immediately breeds suspicion in their minds and they imagine they are being robbed of their chance of advancement. This was seen at GANGIGA where the villagers have all joined together and started a cocoa plantation. The 'company' as it is called, cuts across the two clans in the village and is planted on land owned by the two clans of the village, jointly with part of ~~the~~ one of the clans in IU'AI'IU village. Added to this fact is that the plantings are not made on an individual basis but by the village as a group. By native custom the land is owned by clans, but trees planted on clan owned land belong to the planter. It is not co-operation but collectivism, and, when the many pitfalls of this were pointed out the people insisted that, it was their way and, they were going to stick to it.

Each village around the UIAKU - WANIGELA area has its own 'company'. It is these companies that are doing all the economic enterprise in the area. Some are running smoke-houses drying copra, others planting cocoa and others pit-sawing timber for sale. All the companies have the urge for economic development but they lack aims. An example of this can be seen at KODIAP where the business of pitsawing is carried on. To date the Administration has paid out £100 for the finished product which is saw perfectly. In all £6 has been spent to buy shorts for the men but the remaining £94 is stored up in the village. When questioned, the men did not know what they were going to use it for, but assured the writer that it was not going to be wasted on amenities for the producers. With the money held collectively no one can claim his share. Since commencing operations, some of the pitsawers have left the village and gone to work in Samarai, whilst others have recently returned to the village and just commence work. It is hard to see how an equitable division of the amount earned can be made.

The people realise the necessity for trained people in their 'companies'. One native, Opeland King of NAUKA TE, commenced at the Co-operative school, Port Moresby, early this year. He is marked down, upon return to his village, to run a trade store and later to take care of the proceeds and arrange the marketing of the cocoa. A native of GANGIGA requested that he be permitted to go to the Co-operative school so that he can run the village cocoa plantation. His request has been forwarded on to the Co-operative section, but it is not thought that it will meet with approval since the boy is only Standard III in education. GARADI, an ex L/corporal of UIAKU, attended this school some years ago but, because of poor initial education, failed. He is the leader of the UIAKU 'company'.

Co-operatives are rapidly building up again. The leaders of the groups were told that no collection of capital was to be made. However unless something is done very soon, the post war fiasco will be repeated.