

Rev. S. Tomlinson to stand by as interpreter.

Robinson went to Giwa to conduct the enquiry, first inspecting the area where the fighting had taken place and the places where various incidents had occurred. The investigation lasted two days, 15 and 16 December 1903. The rape case was dealt with first. Three women appeared as witnesses. Only one woman was ravished though the evidence was conflicting. One accused policeman "was discharged on count of rape and convicted of being accessory before the fact".³⁰ Another policeman pleaded guilty. Both were fined £2.0.0. which was paid to the woman in trade goods as recompense. Monckton had previously stated categorically in his official report that the women and children had been sent away.³¹ The trial proved women were there. Ten policemen were charged with murder. Monckton repeated the story was given in his report, commenting that the bayonet was certainly a new weapon in the area, but it was used to "save innocents being killed". The convicted men were all examined as to the manner of their capture and what killing they witnessed.

All the police deny that Monckton told them that Giwa was a bad village and to kill the people only sparing Toata, Dararuga and V.C. They were to make them fast and to fight only with bayonets if village fought them. (32)

In his next despatch, No. 2 of 1904, Robinson reported the outcome. The evidence of the Paiwa prisoners could not

- 30. Judge Robinson's Notes. Criminal Sessions, Giwa Goodenough Bay, 15 and 16 December 1903. G 40. Vol. 1.
- 31. Report on Affairs of the N.E.D. 1902-03, op. cit. p. 33.
- 32. Judge Robinson's Notes, op. cit.

stand up to cross examination. All the stories told to Campbell had been nothing but hearsay. The Paiwa people had had a bad reputation for some time, at one time robbing Sir. W. MacGregor. The natives had a false impression of what jail terms were for. "I could obtain no evidence of any native killed in cold blood or save in armed resistance".³³ He went on to comment that native statements can never be depended upon, they say what they think you want to hear.

So much for the official story. Monckton's later account contained a number of differences. In this, Monckton cast Campbell in the role of the arch villain. His comments on Campbell were close to slander.

his ambition in life was to pass as an explorer and a fighting man. He had never been two miles inland on the mainland in his life, and his detachment of constabulary were so inefficient.... Campbell was highly desirous of having my highly trained men under his command... he wanted control of my two Divisions. (34)

Monckton went on to describe how the miners made a joke of Campbell, and how his own native constabulary and their wives used to burlesque Campbell taking drill.

Monckton's personal dislike of Campbell made him blind, perhaps wilfully so to the merits that several Administrators could distinguish in Campbell. It was Campbell who was singled out by the Royal Commissioners in 1907 as the

33. Robinson, Despatch No. 2 of 1904, 2/1/04. G32 Vol. 5.

34. Recollections, p. 81

fittest officer in the service to undertake the work as head of the new sub-department.... Mr. Campbell has controlled his Division greatly to the increased good order thereof, and has manifested a keen interest and competency in dealing with the native population. (35)

Monckton was not given control of the Northern Division as well as his own, until September 1903. That was about the same time that Campbell sent his letter to the Government Secretary about the Paiwa affair, but the way Monckton tells the story, would appear that he had had the Northern Division for some time and Campbell was now making this an excuse to discredit him in order to wrest the two divisions from him.

In the official report, Monckton said he was at the scene of the fight at the first village but was not at the second. After the fight at the first village, the fever coming on, he went back to the boat and rested, together with a constable who had a wounded foot. In the book, the fever was there at the beginning (it may well have been) and on the way to the first village he slipped while crossing a stream and wrenched his knee. When they got close to the village, he was clearly visible in his faded khaki drill, and

suddenly something hard and heavy caught me low in the body. I groaned and reeled. Sergeant Barigi and Corporal Bia... called to the men 'Our man is finished!'.... Thinking I was dead, Corporal Oia took command and rushed into the village and then a bloody slaughter and revenge took place... The Paiwa fled in terror. (36)

35. Royal Commission... Report. p. ci
36. Recollections, p. 78-9

Thus Monckton gave the impression things got out of control while he was unconscious. Barigi was a corporal in the report but is now a sergeant. Constable Agara was not even mentioned, nor was the subsequent trial of two police for rape. By changing the story in this way Monckton left the suspicion that despite the inquiry exonerating him and his police, there may have been some truth in the rumours after all.

Monckton did not deny that in this case the use of the bayonet was more deadly than if there had been shooting. In the latter case, they probably would have been demoralised and run away, as it was, it was hand to hand fighting, the spear being an unwieldy weapon against a bayonet used by a trained policeman. Le Hunte pointed this out to Monckton, and he had replied that if guns had been used he would have been accused of shooting down fleeing natives. 37

Monckton ended this account with a note of satisfaction. After the inquiry had exonerated his men, Monckton claimed Robinson sent a message to Campbell which he showed to Monckton.

Your over-weening vanity, jealousy and rancour have caused you to bring the most cruel and baseless charges against a brother officer and a fine detachment of constabulary, upon nothing but vague rumour and hearsay. You have caused needless anxiety to me and unnecessary expense to the Administration. Had Mr. Monckton pressed the case there would have been nothing for me to do but to ask for your resignation. As it is you are to take this letter as conveying a most severe reprimand. You will attend upon me in the Merrie England upon receipt of this, when I shall expect to receive some expression of contrition for your action. (38)

37. Le Hunte, Lt.Gov. to R.M.N.E.D. 21/5/03. G 91 Item 35/117
38. Recollections, p.85

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There does not appear to be any such letter in existence, and there is no evidence to suggest there ever was.

Robinson's impartiality in this enquiry also seems suspect to me. As previously noted, he admired Monckton and did appear to have accepted his methods. Robinson wrote in his diary "Engaged some time discussing matter with Monckton until lunch time."³⁹ Robinson's notes at the trial reveal that an old man lying sick in a house was killed, and that a "fair sized boy" was killed in the long grass. But because it was dark, and nobody could say they saw anyone killed with their own eyes, but only heard the struggles, he found the police not guilty.⁴⁰

It appears that Robinson wanted the police to be cleared, and with this in mind disregarded the circumstantial evidence. Even his reprimand to Musgrave because he expressed an opinion on the use of bayonets seems to favour Monckton. Furthermore, Robinson may well have been aware of Ballantyne and Abel's (and quite likely others') distrust of himself and reacted to discredit them. Religious rivalries could be another factor, Robinson was the son of an Anglican clergyman. If this partiality by Robinson is true, it may also explain Abel's persecution of Robinson over the Goaribari massacre a few months later, which Monckton so deplored.

39. Robinson's Diary 2/12/03. op. cit.

40. Judge Robinson's Notes. Criminal Sessions, Giwa, op. cit.

Yodda Valley Road

Monckton was given charge of the Northern Division (as well as the N.E. Division) in September, 1903. The cutting of the road to Yodda took a good deal of his time. The tribes who lived along the route had all previously been very wild, constantly warring and cannibalism was rife.

Through this country lay the shortest natural road to the Yodda valley, but it could only be traversed by strong forces of police, and with almost incessant fighting. Now the broad government road, built almost entirely by the people themselves, runs through it, and the lives of passengers - whether white or native - are almost as safe as in any other part of the Possession. (41)

Monckton certainly cherished the memory of this road as one of his greatest achievements in pacification. Years later he wrote:

Cut broad and straight, through enormous forest inhabited by savage warring tribes, no hostilities took place between my working parties and the local inhabitants. They came secretly at first to look and wonder, then they began bringing food for sale; then small parties started working, first side by side with my men and then alongside their hereditary enemies. Thus the road gradually became a sanctuary, upon which they established markets for the sale of food to passers-by, native or European. (42)

By September 1904, the Administrator, now Barton, could travel all the way up the road from Buna to Yodda, about seventy miles. To cross the Kumusi River, a heavy steel hawser with a

41. A.R.N.D. 1903-04 published in A.R. 1903-04, Appendix E. p.39.
42. Recollections, p. 63

travelling block had to be used. Barton noted the changed attitude of the people.

These people had only recently emerged from a condition of the rawest barbarism, and it was satisfactory to observe the cheerful confidence which now took the place of their former suspicion and hostility. Though, during recent years, they have lost a considerable number of their fighting men in hostile encounters with Government parties, it was quite clear that they have been sensible enough to see that submission is the only reasonable course open to them, and they have cheerfully accepted the new order of things. (43)

Buna Bay was not considered a satisfactory terminus for the road, and Oro Bay some twenty miles south was investigated as a possible alternative. For the time being the change was not effected.⁴⁴ The matter was still under consideration in 1906 when the Royal Commission met. The recommended that the change be made to Oro Bay after hearing expert advice.⁴⁵

It would seem however, that other users of the road were less pleased about it than Monckton and Barton. F.A. Rochfort complained to the Royal Commission that of seven to eight tons of stores he had landed at Buna, three to four tons were stolen,⁴⁶ evidently feeling that the government was not providing enough protection. The superintendent of roads in the Northern Division, John Seymour, considered the road was in anything but a satisfactory condition, but this was due to lack of money to pay labour to keep it in good repair. He considered it would cost

43. A.R. 1904-05, p. 4.

44. Ibid. p. 6.

45. Royal Commission... Report p. xxxvi

46. Royal Commission... Minutes of Evidence / 1875

between £2,000 and £3,000 including bridges.⁴⁷ Monckton asked the same question estimated £250 excluding bridges.⁴⁸ Obviously, Monckton's idea of what constituted a good road was inferior to that of his compatriots.

Relations with miners

In the North-Eastern Division, Monckton had no white population to consider in his administration, with the exception of the missionaries, and since they were Anglican he got along very well with them, unlike his relations with some missionaries in other divisions. However, the Northern Division contained two goldfields, on the Yodda and the Gira, and the presence of the miners tended to strain relations between black and white, and Monckton as Resident Magistrate was the arbiter.

Crimes committed by the white population tended to be out of all proportion to their small numbers.

The small white population has been responsible for two murders and one shooting with intent, while one individual who broke gaol had several of the most serious charges against him. Unfortunately, among the white community, there is a section by whom a native is regarded as a 'nigger', who has no right of redress against a European for any injury sustained, even though it is a case of life itself. Lamentable though such bias is, it is there, and with that section, however atrocious a European's crime may be, he is certain of sympathy and assistance in evading the law. (49)

47. Ibid. ¶ 1790

48. Ibid. ¶ 1856

49. A.R.N.D. 1904-05, published in A.R. 1904-05. Appendix G. p37.

The gaol break referred to was that of J.O'Brien, whose escape polarised opinion amongst the white population, was the subject of questions in the Australian parliament, and was further examined at the Royal Commission. It was a good illustration of the attitudes that Monckton had to deal with from the miners.

These attitudes and the relationships between all the groups concerned, officials, miners, police, villagers and labourers, have already been researched in a paper The Strange Case of Joe O'Brien by Hank Nelson, who came to the conclusion that Monckton's reporting on the matter was inaccurate on minor points and at times he contradicted his own official reports, in order to dramatise his own role.⁵⁰ With this I would agree, and would add that Monckton's bias towards his friends and against his antagonists would appear to be no less than that of which Barton was accused at the Royal Commission.

Rochfort was one of the leaders of that faction of the miners who subscribed to the attitude of European superiority over the Papuan even in law. W.J. Little was the leader of those who expressed their support for Monckton's idea of law and order.⁵¹ Rochfort did not rate a mention in either of Monckton's first two books, even though the O'Brien story together with an exaggerated dramatic capture by Monckton was told in Last Days.

50. Nelson, op. cit. p. 32.

51. Despatch No. 44 of 1905. (Barton) 13/6/05. Enclosure No.7 G.44 Item 5.

The omission is curious considering the furour raised in the Australian parliament over the O'Brien Affair.⁵² It rather seems that Monckton decided when writing his first two books, that what he could not write without emotion he would omit. Or it may be that there were then in 1921 and 1922 still too many people alive to challenge his account.

Rochfort was a thorn in Monckton's side. Monckton admitted Rochfort was honest enough, but he was forever complaining to the government or writing letters to Parliament about the incompetence and corruption of Monckton and his officers. He would try to trip up Monckton's inexperienced assistants on legal matters, but Monckton's lively account emphasised how he could always outwit Rochfort. Rochfort tried to have himself made a Justice of the Peace so that petitions signed by miners might seem to have some legality, but Monckton thwarted this as far as his power allowed.⁵³ When Barton, in reporting the matter of O'Brien's escape in a despatch, commented that Rochfort was better educated than many and "aspired to be made an Honorary Magistrate for the Possession"⁵⁴ Rochfort read about it, presumably in the Parliamentary Paper No. 28 of 1905, which dealt with the O'Brien affair, and wrote to Barton accusing him of libel, demanding an apology, in default of which he would sue.⁵⁵

52. The whole of Despatch No. 44 of 1905 together with its enclosures were printed by the Commonwealth Government as Parliamentary Paper No. 28 of 1905.

53. Recollections, p. 171-177

54. Barton, Despatch No. 44 of 1905, op. cit.

55. Rochfort to Barton 23/11/05 G.121 Item No. 28

At the Royal Commission Rochfort vigorously denied this and other statements made about him in the Parliamentary Paper,⁵⁶ and Barton in his evidence said he could not remember whether this idea was passed on to him by someone else, or had got the idea himself, in any case if Rochfort had only pointed the mistake out politely, he would have written regretting it!⁵⁷

There was another difference with Rochfort and some of the miners when a nomination for a seat on the Legislative Council from amongst the miners was wanted. The Administrator asked Monckton for a suggestion and he mentioned Mr. W.J. Little. The latter had been on several expeditions with Monckton and appeared to be a good friend of his. Monckton occasionally supported a prospecting trip in order to avoid a clash between prospectors and warlike Papuans.⁵⁸ Confirmation of Little's nomination was needed from the miners, and Monckton called meetings at Tamata, Buna Bay and the Yodda. There were no seconders for any of the names suggested, and everyone was more concerned whether any compensation would be paid, a question Monckton could not answer. By the time he could advise Barton of these proceedings, the Commonwealth Government had insisted on the matter being finalised and Barton had acted on the earlier suggestion.⁵⁹

56. Royal Commission... Minutes of Evidence. / 1880
57. Ibid. / 2504
58. Report on trip to Kumusi, N.D. Mar. 12, 1906, G 91, Item 415A
59. Royal Commission... Minutes of Evidence. / 1853

At the Royal Commission several miners complained about the manner of Mr. Little's nomination, saying he was Monckton's not the miners' nominee, though they personally had nothing against him.⁶⁰ Rochfort however obtained the signatures of 38 people from the Yodda goldfield nominating himself to the seat on the Legislative Council.⁶¹ The evidence suggests that Monckton was determined that Rochfort would not get the nomination for the Legislative Council. He used his position to thwart it and to get his own nominee, a less critical man, the seat.

Mount Albert Edward Expedition

Monckton's Mount Albert Edward Expedition would be regarded as his second most extensive exploring expedition, the Waria - Lakekamu expedition being greater. The only account of it available is that by Monckton himself. His official report was published in full in the Annual Report for 1905-06, without any comment from the Administrator. The same account appeared almost verbatim in Monckton's Last Days in New Guinea. He acknowledged a couple of paragraphs of his report, but in fact, very few paragraphs were omitted and very little rearrangement of sentences had taken place. A few, but not many extra anecdotes and comments were thrown into the book account.

60. Ibid. # 926-9, 1654-60. 1694-9

61. Rochfort to Barton 20/1/06. G 121 Item No. 50.

Of those whom he liked, Monckton was as unstinting in praise, as he was vehement in abuse of those he disliked. On this expedition, he was accompanied by the Rev. Percy Money, as Monckton could not spare any of his own officers from duty.

The entire success of the expedition was due to Money: he sketched mountains, he took observations when I was sick, he kept my people cheerful, and he carried the Bishop's boots to the top of the mountain! For Stone-Wigg had declared that, though he could not go himself, certainly his boots should reach the highest point in New Guinea! (62)

Although the expedition passed through an area occupied by tribes not yet under government control, there was almost no fighting, though neither were the tribes friendly. There was plenty of evidence that these tribes had been for some time stealing goods from the miners in the area, but Monckton seemed to consider that petty pilfering was to be expected in the circumstances, and hardly a matter for a punitive expedition. He pointed out that if a miner left his camp and went prospecting half a mile away, he should expect his unprotected goods to be stolen, but instead blamed the government for "want of protection".⁶³ In any case, a hostile collision with the Papuans would have meant the failure of the expedition, so Monckton took pains to avoid fighting. Arrows and spears were sent in their direction quite often, mostly

62. Last Days, p. 20

63. A.R.N.D. 1905-06, published in A.R. 1905-06, p. 40

without harm, and only one man was shot dead in self defence.

Monckton's determination to conquer Mount Albert Edward was shown when he was informed that there was trouble in his Division and asked by his officers to return to deal with it. He excused his non-return in his report by saying he had no confirmation of the report that a white man had been killed. But obviously he had no desire to return. He added frankly in his book.

On Mount Albert Edward I was doing a lot of most interesting survey work: I had reached the king pin of New Guinea, the spot that Sir William MacGregor had tried to reach. (64)

Later when no water could be found with which to make breakfast, his concern for the empty stomachs of his carriers was in the sure knowledge that

unless I could soon feed my men, the cold and starvation would cause them to fall in heaps under their loads and go sick, with consequent disaster to my attempt at Mount Albert Edward. (65)

Although the concern for his hungry carriers was mentioned in the report, the connection with the possible failure of the expedition was only added in the book.

The party did reach the summit, and did do a lot of survey work. He measured the highest point as 13,230 feet above sea level, thirty feet higher than the measurement made

64. Last Days, p. 40
65. Ibid. p. 45

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of Mount Victoria by MacGregor. However Mount Albert Edward is now shown as 13,100 feet, and Mount Victoria as 13,363 feet.⁶⁶ Monckton named another mountain of 11,000 feet after Bishop Stone-Wigg and recorded this in his report.⁶⁷ By the time his book was written the name of the latter had been changed to Mount Murray. Monckton commented sarcastically:

Doubtless Mr. Murray wishes to leave his name on the cartography of Papua, but why take the mountain of a great pioneer churchman? Surely there are plenty of unnamed mountains in New Guinea! (68)

Even while on this expedition, Monckton could not seem to get away from the bumbling officialdom he disliked so intensely. He claimed that the Government Storekeeper reduced the load of each bag of rice from 50 lb to 45 lb so as to be an easier load for each carrier, but continued to supply them at the same rate of 40 bags to the ton. Monckton did not find out for a year and in the meantime the carriers had been done out of 10% of their rice.⁶⁹ One might wonder why it took him a year to find out, though on the surface the charge seems quite serious. Monckton also had a tilt at officialdom by claiming that Port Moresby had stated the mountain ranges were uninhabited,

but here I now had the clearest evidence that the highest point in the interior was constantly occupied and used by natives. (70)

66. Map. Territory of Papua and New Guinea, drawn by Division of National Mapping, Dept. of Nat. Dev., Canberra, A.C.T. 1958.
67. Report by R.M.N.D. on Mt. Albert Edward Expedition, 2/6/06, published in A.R. 1905-06, p. 92
68. Last Days, p. 70
69. Ibid. p. 23
70. Ibid. p. 61

The expedition is most remembered, however, for the description of the "devil pig" that one of the constables and a carrier saw, while alone, and were nearly frightened out of their wits.

The description of the beast - which I beg to remark, is that of the police, not mine, culled from a mass of statements, is about 5 feet long, 3 feet 6 inches high, a tail like a horse, and cloven feet, black or dark skin, with pattern-like markings, a long snout, and calls with a long shrill note.... The description of Ogi and the carrier, owing to the 'funk' they fell into, is not of much value.... The fright of the men appears to bear out their story of a strange beast, as either of the men in question would assail the largest wild boar with no better weapon than a spear. (71)

He went on in the report to maintain that he was not supporting the story.

I don't wish to have any more fanciful stories of marvels in New Guinea fathered on to me. The only statement that I personally make is that the tracks of a cloven-footed graminiverous animal are to be found on Mount Albert Edward. (72)

He commented, that MacGregor had alluded to a 'long-snouted' animal seen on the Mount Scratchly expedition. A spoor had also been measured at four inches by four and a half inches, by Mr. Money.

Monckton in his book mentioned that he followed this up by sending the report to MacGregor for comment. He quoted

71. Report by R.M.N.D. on Mt. Albert Edward Expedition op. cit.p.91
72. Ibid.

MacGregor's reply.

if I remember aright in my dispatch reporting my first ascent of the Owen Stanley Range there is mention of the track of a large animal being seen at about 9000 feet on Mount Knutsford, the animal I never saw, but it was there, and not a small one either. (73)

To Monckton this made the

evidence of the existence of the beast... incontestable, even though neither Sir William MacGregor nor myself personally saw the animal. (74)

However, it seems to me that MacGregor's evidence is just as inconclusive as Monckton's first statement, and it would have been better to have left it that way instead of making the subsequent categorical remark. As he had foreseen for himself, such a description very soon joined the annals of the Loch Ness Monster and the Abominable Snowman of more recent years.

Murray commented in his book published in 1912, that the explorer D'Albertis had believed that large tracks are sometimes formed when the ground is soft, it spreads as it dries.⁷⁵ Obviously Murray had no time for the story, but he did not say so outright.

The matter was still being discussed in 1935. The Pacific Islands Monthly reported that an expedition was being formed to try and prove the existence of the "devil pig" but the myth was exploded by the Archbold Expedition.⁷⁶

73. Last Days, p. 55-56

74. Ibid. p. 56

75. Murray, J.H.P. Papua or British New Guinea. p. 307

76. Pacific Islands Monthly May 1935, p. 9; June 1935, p.28

Monckton's report was well illustrated by sketches of native artifacts seen, and a map of the summit of Mount Albert Edward with survey bearings of other peaks. The plentiful photos taken were apparently lost in the post. It also contained a short vocabulary of the Kambisa language which Mr. Money had prepared. Monckton included a recipe for pea soup which he said did wonders for the spirits of his men and advised future expeditions to take plenty of salt as the party had consumed 40 lb in 6 weeks due to the high altitude. He also advised giving each man 2 oz of solid chocolate a day. With regard to the latter, he added in his book:

In case the reader imagines that such luxuries were provided at Government expense, I may say that they were paid for out of my personal pay. In fact, a heavy expedition frequently left me in debt for months! (77)

The expedition was indeed a creditable achievement, but there is little doubt that Monckton did seek personal glory and that there were others who felt he should have been attending to the affairs of his Division. Murray in his evidence to the Royal Commission left no doubt as to his opinion.

He was away for several weeks, taking with him a number of police. He left the station insufficiently defended, with the result that two of Mr. Meek's carriers were murdered. It is described, I believe officially, as a patrol to look after the interests of the miners on the Upper Gira. As a matter of fact, it was an exploring expedition for the express purpose of going to see the top of Mount Albert Edward... to my knowledge the expedition was planned as

long ago as last December.... I do not blame Mr. Monckton for going there, because any man would be glad of the opportunity to make such a trip: but I cannot think it was consistent with the performance of his duties as R.M. to allow him to go there. (78)

It was really rather unfortunate for Monckton that Mr. Meek's carriers were murdered just then. Despite Judge Murray's acid comment I do not think that if Monckton were at his station the carriers would have been saved. Even allowing for Monckton's customary bias against those who caused him trouble, his denial of A. Meek's charges at the Royal Commission⁷⁹ and repeating of them in Recollections⁸⁰ does seem valid. Meek's own account seems to suggest he was rather careless with the lives of his carriers.⁸¹

The Royal Commissioners

When the Royal Commissioners visited Papua in 1906, they saw more of Monckton than most officers. After visiting the south coast of Papua and the islands in the Merrie England they landed at Buna Bay in Monckton's division and from there walked overland via Kokoda and Yodda to Port Moresby. Presumably the reason for putting the Commissioners to such a strenuous hike was to enable them to take evidence from the miners on the Yodda, and perhaps also to give them a chance to understand the conditions under which the outside men of the service really worked.

78. Royal Commission... Minutes of Evidence / 2064

79. Ibid. / 1949-1952

80. Recollections, p. 187-190

81. Meek, A.S. A Naturalist in Cannibal Land. p. 160-168

For the first half of the journey, Monckton was detailed to be their official escort, and apparently impressed the Commissioners with his efficiency as they recommended him for a promotion and transfer to a less arduous Division. Colonel Kenneth Mackay, the chairman of the Commission, later described the journeyings of the Royal Commission in a book called Across Papua. Mackay had a "game" leg, and considering the nature of the terrain, one must agree with Monckton's sarcastic comment about officialdom on the matter.

Of course, as the tracks in Papua are rough and hilly, and sometimes very bad, a cavalry colonel with a game leg had been selected for the job; but his pluck and grit and cheerful nature made up for the game leg. (82)

Mackay completed the journey without having to be carried.

Monckton devoted nearly three chapters of his second book Last Days in New Guinea to that part of the journey in which he took part, but instead of giving us his own story he quoted almost entirely from Mackay's account. He claimed he did this because "such people's descriptions or writings are far in advance of anything I could do".⁸³ Certainly, Mackay's descriptions of the country through which they passed were better than Monckton's but rather overdone. The device of quoting from another, is a good way of recording praise for oneself, without appearing to blow one's own trumpet too much. As Mackay said,

82. Last Days. p. 127

83. Ibid. p. 147

it was Monckton who was ill with fever but "he was as plucky as they are made, and thanks to him we got away at eight",⁸⁴ and Monckton who had to go back to attend to two sick carriers, and Monckton again who had to go out at night after a very tiring day to look for some missing carriers.

At 10.30 he returned, and we knew of his coming by some earnest, simple words he let drop as he picked himself out of the bottom of the creek. (85)

Mackay was full of praise for the Papuan carriers and police, and gave full credit to Monckton who had been responsible for their training. As they parted company,

Our old escort presented arms, and so I parted with that good soldier, Sergeant Berigi, Oya the Magnificent, Dambia, Ogi of pig fame, and the rest, one and all smart men fit to go anywhere and well led to do anything.... Then we clasped Monckton's hand, and up into the heart of the hills he marched with his face set to a two months' tramp over unknown and possibly hostile country, there to bear alone the white man's burden... (86)

No wonder Monckton approved of Mackay and quoted him.

The Waria River - Lakekamu River Expedition

Monckton's expedition to the Waria River and the German frontier, and subsequent trip down the Lakekamu River on the other side of the ranges, thus crossing the island, was

84. Mackay, K Across Papua, p. 128

85. Ibid. p. 132

86. Ibid. p. 137-8

was possibly his greatest exploratory trip. But the controversy engendered over it, its unfortunate timing, and the lack of any official report, would seem to detract from its success, and Monckton immediately left the country disgusted.

Some years later, in 1912, Murray wrote

Mr. Monckton's journey across the island early in 1907 was a really notable achievement, but unfortunately there is no official record of it in existence. (87)

The Annual Report for 1906-1907 which Murray himself would have prepared contains no reference whatever to it. Even if there was no official report from Monckton in time for the annual report, surely such a major undertaking should have been mentioned in the Administrator's comments. However, Monckton, in his later description says,

In my description of my journey across New Guinea I do not pretend to adhere to strict chronological order; people who want that can read the official dispatch. (88)

No such despatch can now be found, but one certainly existed. In 1908, an article entitled "Mr. Monckton's journey across New Guinea" appeared in the Geographical Journal.⁸⁹ This had been sent in to the publishers by Dr. C.G. Seligman who said Monckton had allowed him to make a copy of his official report. He understood that Monckton had sent the editors an

87. Murray, op. cit. p. 309

88. Last Days, p. 208

89. Geographical Journal, Vol. 32 No. 5, Nov. 1908, p. 503-507.

account, but they obviously had not received the letter. This account consists of frustratingly brief extracts, which I shall compare with his book version shortly.

The reasons for the expedition were in reality a matter for official concern. Barton's despatches from October to December 1906 mentioned the matter several times. Two miners had left the Yodda to cross the country to the Upper Aikora River, and then north west to the Upper Waria, where they found rich alluvial gold. They came into contact with many Papuans and had some conflict. They also prospected another river in German territory. All this, Monckton reported to Barton when he had seen him at Buna Bay on 18 September. Monckton thought the gold bearing district lay in British territory. The question was, should there be an amendment to the Native Labour Ordinance, in order that Europeans taking Papuans into German territory, so as to reach the goldfields more easily, be not breaking the law? Barton recommended that the matter be left until Monckton had time to survey the area and make a report.

As far as the protection of British Papuans by their employers while temporarily outside the jurisdiction of this Government is concerned, I have no reason to suppose that there is any cause for apprehension, but the fact remains, that so long as they are in German Territory, this government is powerless to afford them protection of any kind. (90)

90. Barton. Despatch No. 103 of 1906, 2/10/06 G 54 Item 1.

Barton went on to say that he had directed Monckton to on no account give permission for miners to take Papuans across the border, but not to forcibly prevent miners from going themselves. As he pointed out, a survey of the boundary was a difficult undertaking, and should in fact be a joint British and German venture.

In conclusion, I may state that Mr. Beaver, Assistant R.M., has already proceeded to the Upper Waria District, and that the Resident Magistrate - Mr. Monckton - will hasten there as soon as the Royal Commissioners have concluded their enquiries in the Northern Division. (91)

A later despatch centred on the question as to whether an agreement should be entered into with Germany for free navigation of all rivers so that miners could approach the goldfields on the Waria from all directions. He observed that this would seem to be an advantage to the Germans. The route from the Gulf via the Lakekamu was discussed, but the country between was thought to be extremely rugged.

It will undoubtedly be the best solution to the difficulty if miners can be induced to go overland from Tamata to the Upper Waria.... The Resident Magistrate Northern Division is at present engaged in visiting the district, and until I receive his report it will not be possible to form an opinion in this regard. (92)

Nevertheless Barton still considered it to be expedient to conclude an agreement about the navigation of the rivers.

91. Barton. Despatch No. 103 of 1906, op. cit.

92. Barton. Despatch No. 137 of 1906, 3/12/06 G 54 Item 1.

Enclosed in this despatch, was a letter from Campbell, Resident Magistrate of the Eastern Division, who reported the find of gold on the Waria by a miner A. Darling, and requested that the government find a means of easier access. Enclosed also was the report from Darling about his find.⁹³

Barton's official instructions to Monckton, do not appear to be extant, but despite the mention of a possible access from the Lakekamu, it seems unlikely that a return that way was ordered or even suggested. The fact that Barton did not later support Monckton over the criticism of this matter, would seem to bear this out. However, it is quite evident, that Monckton always intended to cross the island and made no secret of it. While escorting the Royal Commissioners to the Yodda, he discussed the matter with them, in relation to what he had seen from the top of Mount Albert Edward.

and from its summit Monckton saw a land of forests, and plains, and lakes, and tumbled peaks, and winding from behind Mount Yule a track leading towards the Waria. He told me he was going to try to get back that way from the river to the sea. Since, I have been told, he did, wallowing for days in morasses and deadly swamps. (94)

Monckton's own account of the reasons do not differ from the above official despatches.

93. Ibid.

94. Mackay, op. cit. p. 136

In Last Days in New Guinea, Monckton divided his story of this trip into two. Firstly he gave what he said were letters written to his wife on the spot, and which she had kept. This may be a literary device, especially as he does not appear to have married her till 1910 at least.⁹⁵ He could not post them till he reached the coast again, and it is difficult to imagine anyone in such circumstances, with over 120 men in his charge, finding time to do extra writing besides keeping up his Journal. However, they do ring true. Secondly, he goes back and fills in the gaps not mentioned in the letter. These two accounts, plus that in the Geographical Journal make interesting comparison. They were each written for a different reader. The letters are a catalogue of misfortune and hardship looking for sympathy. The subsequent account concentrated on the attitude of the Papuans, and he returned to the theme of the masterful white man who always knows his way out of a fix. The geographical account is just that, and rather dull by comparison. Monckton is not at his best with description of places but at least we have dates and the names of places, and a number of geographical observations which should have been very helpful to those who followed him. However, the account of the attempt to journey down the Lakekamu on rafts, the subsequent spill into the river, and their efforts to extricate themselves from the mess they found themselves in, was given fairly fully in the journal and is almost word for

95. Encyclopedia of Papua and New Guinea. p. 792. The date is not clear.

word the account in the book. Four men were drowned on the expedition but eventually the party staggered into Port Moresby.

At Port Moresby he received a very cool reception, and was ordered to march his party overland straight back to Kokoda, even though he had arranged to have them taken back by sea at 5/- a head, less than the cost of the overland trip. But the order had to be obeyed and walk back they did.

Really about twenty hale men dragged our party across the mountains to Kokoda, which we finally reached without losing a man. (96)

Twenty out of 120 does seem rather an exaggeration. It was February when he arrived back at Kokoda.⁹⁷

Why such a cool reception? The key to this would seem to be the Royal Commission, the report of which was about due. It is unlikely that the recommendations it did make were to be a complete surprise to to the Port Moresby community. The Royal Commission recommended that A.M. Campbell be promoted to the Government Secretary's position and Musgrave be retired. It was Campbell, Monckton's old enemy, as Government Secretary, who gave the order to march the men back to Kokoda.⁹⁸ Barton, the Administrator, Monckton's friend, confirmed the order, but Monckton excused this.

96. Last Days , p. 252

97. Kokoda A.R. 1906-07. G. 91 Item 416A, mentions he left Kokoda 13 November, and returned in February.

98. Musgrave was on leave and Campbell was acting. Papua. Government Gazette, Vol. II, No. 1, 19 Jan 1907.

And after all Barton is not altogether to blame: if my party had got wiped out, he would probably have had some devilish awkward questions to answer for sending a single officer on the Waria job, and as it is, when my Report goes in, these Royal Commissioners are quite likely to draw attention to it. Now Barton can say that I exceeded his instructions, and was punished for doing so; and at the same time the Government has the benefit of my work. (99)

This passage is probably hindsight, as Barton was removed from office very shortly afterwards. Monckton was no doubt annoyed at Barton's lack of support at the time. Barton, after the accusations made at the Royal Commission, was possibly belatedly trying to demonstrate that he did not always favour his friends.

Reasons for leaving Papua

Monckton himself concluded his second book Last Days in New Guinea with a catalogue of the reasons why he left Papua. What he had to say amounted to the normal frustrations that men in positions such as he occupied in Colonial field service have always had to suffer. They think the bureaucracy in the capital, tends to place more importance on form filling and red tape, rather than assisting the man in the field to do his job efficiently. Monckton's particular gripe was with Government Stores who often issued rotten rations, the state of which would not be discovered till the patrol had gone bush and could get no replacements. Such incidents could have meant disaster to patrols with a commander less able to improvise than Monckton. There is

99. Last Days, p. 251

evidence that H.W. Champion, the storekeeper did deliberately cut down on the amount that Monckton ordered because he considered Monckton ordered over much, but this is not what Monckton was complaining about, though it was obviously a constant irritation.¹⁰⁰ Griffin in his book fully supported Monckton about the matter of the stores.

My sympathies are entirely with him. The storekeeper had never been out of Port Moresby, yet he took it upon himself to amend the requisitions of the men who had the experience, and who knew exactly what they wanted. (1)

To a short-staffed field officer, the number of pen-pushers at headquarters always seemed to be more than ample.

The over-population of non-producers is appalling. No wonder that periodically the whole of the revenue is spent on paying salaries, or that the country now rejoices in a large public debt and the natives in a poll tax. (2)

The Government was split into two camps and Barton's mishandling of one affair indirectly brought on the Royal Commission. Barton himself asked for the Royal Commission and Monckton claimed never to have been in favour of it,³ but this again was probably hindsight. As it turned out, Monckton's friends were the losers, although Monckton himself was not censored and indeed was recommended for promotion. But in the situation in Papua at the time, the Resident Magistrate's job

100. Stuart, Ian, Port Moresby, yesterday and today, p. 70
1. Griffin, op. cit. p. 117
2. Last Days, p. 255
3. Recollections, p. 181-2

would be quite unworkable if he was completely at odds with the Administrator and the Government Secretary. Musgrave as Government Secretary seems to have been considered by most of his subordinates and even his superiors as a fussy old bungler, but Monckton otherwise seems to have had no reason to dislike him. Campbell, Musgrave's successor however, Monckton detested.

Now while there had been a number of changes in Administrator, Monckton seemed to have been on good terms with them all. His admiration for MacGregor was profound, here was the only man he would admit to having a stronger personality than himself, and MacGregor's methods were taken as his guiding line for the whole of his career in British New Guinea. Monckton blamed the series of weak administrators who succeeded MacGregor for the deterioration in the public service. Le Hunte had experience but was away from the possession for two of his four years in office.⁴ Robinson's relations with Monckton have been dealt with. Barton was acceptable to Monckton as Administrator, because he allowed him a free hand in return for Monckton's support,⁵ but Monckton obviously considered him inadequate.

Now the then Governor, Captain Barton, was and still is a great friend of mine, but a more unsuitable man to govern a Crown colony it was impossible to conceive. He was a man fitted to adorn a court.... He, when for a short time he acted as R.M., did not like sleeping in mangrove swamps with crabs crawling over him and a stink so thick that you could see it... he did not

4. Last Days, p. 252
5. In this respect see Stuart's summing up of Barton's character, and his need to have loyal unquestioning officers, in Stuart, op cit. p. 75-6.

like examining his fingers for scabies, or getting his orderly to inspect his back for ringworm or his hair for crawlers. He was a most particular and fastidious man. (6)

A more valid reason for his unsuitability as Governor, was Monckton's transparent attempt to say of Barton the opposite to the Royal Commission's findings.

he was a man of untarnished honour and strict integrity, but he had a sort of haunting fear that he might lean towards his friends, and therefore always decided against them on principle, and usually decided wrongly; and on the converse side he was so afraid of being unjust that he invariably let off people by whom punishment had been richly deserved, because he either disliked them or was afraid of appearing prejudiced. (7)

But Barton was replaced by Murray and here for Monckton was a major personality clash, another strong character.

On 14 February 1907, after his return from the Waria, the Executive Council discussed Monckton's application for twelve months' leave of absence. It was ordered that consideration of this application be postponed pending an enquiry into certain matters dealing with police patrols in the Northern Division.⁸ Beaver, an assistant to Monckton, had gone to the Waria just before Monckton, and two of his guides had been killed by two of his police.⁹ Presumably Monckton was wanted to assist the enquiry. However on the 16 March 1907, Monckton handed his

6. Recollections, p. 124-5

7. Ibid. p. 8

8. Executive Council Minutes. Meeting No. 4, 14 February 1907. G. 64 Vol. 3.

9. Barton. Despatch No. 13 of 1907, 28/1/07. G. 32 Vol. 6.

resignation to Barton, and he made no bones about his distaste for Murray.

Kokoda
Northern Division
British N.G.
16 March 1907.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that in view of the fact this His Honour Judge Murray is assuming the Administratorship and in consequence of the scandalous treatment accorded to Your Excellency by a cabal of disloyal, jealous and intriguing officers under that gentleman's guidance, I have decided upon the termination of my forthcoming leave not to return to a service in which a gentleman cannot with honour serve. Furthermore in the light of recent events I have no hesitation in saying that I have no confidence in his Honour Judge Murray either as an Administrator or Judge. I have the honour to be Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient servant.

C.A.W. Monckton. (10)

At the same time, Monckton applied for a transfer to the Colonial Service, and Barton warmly supported it.

Mr. Monckton has held responsible positions in this Territory for the past ten years. He has been unusually successful in bringing savage tribes under Government influence, and in winning and retaining their confidence. He is possessed of considerable administrative ability. As a leader he has shown himself to be most successful. The results accomplished by the several expeditions which he has led, sometimes under circumstances of great difficulty and considerable peril, testify to his high qualities in this respect. (11)

At Barton's last Executive Council meeting, Monckton was granted

- 10. Despatch No. 34 of 1907, 5/4/07. G. 54 Item 2.
- 11. Despatch No. 31 of 1907, 3/4/07. G. 54 Item 2.

leave for twelve months, three months on full pay and nine months on half pay, and Barton informed the Council of Monckton's intention to resign at the end of it.¹²

Monckton does not appear to have joined the Colonial Service after all.¹³ But the pinpricks continued when Murray took over. When Monckton submitted a claim for travelling expenses for his trip Kokoda to Waria, the Executive Council ordered that he be asked for

further particulars as:- (i) when he left the Northern Division (ii) when he returned to the N.D. (iii) on what authority did he go out of the N.D. into the C.D. (14)

Although Monckton continually referred to his attacks of malaria while out on patrols, he never gave his deteriorating health as a reason for leaving. Griffin however thought this was important.

He was quite indefatigable, an excellent companion, and absolutely fearless; but he would not recognise that there was a limit to his powers, and towards the end of his time, his health suffered, and he was wise to leave when he did, as he was still a young man. (15)

What Monckton did not mention in Last Days, though alluded to in New Guinea Recollections were the differences with the miners over the appointment of Mr. Little to the

12. Executive Council Minutes, op. cit. Meeting No. 6, 4 April 1907.
13. Souter, G. New Guinea, the Last Unknown. p. 88
14. Executive Council Minutes, op. cit. Meeting No. 12, 4 May 1907.
15. Griffin, op. cit. p. 109.

Legislative Council, and the storm raised by the biologist Meek, which I have previously referred to. As early as 25 August 1906, before the Royal Commission, he wrote to Bishop Stone-Wigg.

I have been having a lively time since you left with the miners because Little was nominated to Council and have had a succession of personal attacks to meet. I'm very sick of it all. I have been required to report upon the charge of the 'scandalous' state of affairs, vide Meek in N.D. by the Commonwealth folk. The murders in the hills of Meek's boy I find is due to Meek interfering with the women.... I have decided to take my long leave at the end of the year and chuck the service for good... it is quite hopeless going on here unless one is to be the recipient of constant attacks in the press or through Labour Senators. (16)

No doubt Monckton's published reasons for leaving were genuine, but he was also coming under increasing public criticism. The fact is, his two major expeditions were not universally acclaimed, and the evidence points to his exceeding his instructions. He had become a law unto himself, the "king" of the Northern Division, and he resented any interference from outside. It was time for Monckton to take his departure.

Conclusion

A question that I would have liked to have answered is whether Monckton went around shooting Papuans unnecessarily. The weight of the evidence suggests he did. Griffin considered himself a friend of Monckton's "in spite of his propensity to

16. Monckton to (Stone-Wigg) 25/8/06. Dogura Papers.

shoot natives first and then talk to the survivors afterwards:
but he got over this as time went on".¹⁷ Remarks such as
Murray's

I do not say for a moment that the shooting of
these natives was not justified, as I do not
know the facts. I am only pointing out that a
great number are shot, and the two men who shoot
nearly all of them are the two particular friends
of His Excellency - Mr. Monckton and Mr. Bruce. (18)

are admittedly generalised and qualified by the speaker himself.
Lett, the biographer of Murray wrote,

As late as 1906 Monckton conducted a patrol to
the summit of Mount Albert Edward, accompanied
by one hundred carriers from the warlike Mambare
tribes who, armed with axes, were permitted to
attack a mob of mountain people which hung
annoyingly on the party's flanks. (19)

This must be hearsay, as it does not appear in Monckton's report,
and on this occasion he was accompanied by a minister of the
Anglican Church, who would be unlikely to keep silent about
such an attack. But such remarks seem to stick to the victim's
reputation. Today, oral evidence from the Northern District
ascribes unprovoked shooting incidents to Monckton.²⁰ A patrol
officer in a report as recently as 1970 comments "With people
like Monkton (sic) running amock (sic) in this area in the 1900's
these people haven't forgotten".²¹

Monckton himself did not help with his own "Shoot and loot"²²
remark in his discussion with Barton on tactics before the Doriri

17. Griffin, op. cit. p. 109
18. Royal Commission... Minutes of Evidence # 2062
19. Lett, L. Knights Errant of Papua, p. 9
20. Peter Wusi, Papaki Village. Personal Communication, July 1972.
21. Patrol Report Ioma No. 10 - 1969/70, 22/7/1970. (Mr. J.
Kup-Ogut, Patrol Officer)
22. Some Experiences, p. 208

expedition, but on most occasions, if there was a way of making friendly contact without his own men being killed, or of capturing the leaders in order to re-educate them to the ways of the government, he did so, in the latter case with considerable success. Oiogoba Sara of the Baruga tribe was a case in point. Winter commented on Monckton's handling of this case.

The Barugi attacked Mr. Monckton and party some eighteen months ago at night.... Mr. Monckton beat them off and then proceeded to their principal village and captured several of them including the chief of the tribe.... After being kept prisoners for some months at Cape Nelson, Oyogoba and his companions were sent home. Since then the Barugi have been on friendly terms with the Government. Oyogoba is a well-made, intelligent looking man, with more vigour and energy than natives usually possess; and for a native his influence is wide spread. (23)

Monckton's account as usual is far more dramatic.²⁴ It seems that the worst shooting occurred with people who already knew the power of firearms, but were still openly defiant, such as the Paiwa. Monckton claims he had no stomach for indiscriminately shooting those with no knowledge of fire power. .

The position was fast becoming ridiculous. I could not permit my party to be stopped or turned back by a few savages armed with spears across our path. To attempt to carry their position by a charge or rush would be the act of a lunatic, go around I could not and to use firearms against that crowded village to dislodge people, whose sole offence was that they regarded all strangers as enemies and to be kept from the country accordingly, would be an unjustifiable act. (25)

23. Winter. Despatch No. 80A. op. cit.

24. Some Experiences, p. 269-70

25. Report on trip to Kumusi, N.D. March 12, 1906, p. 7. op. cit.

Whatever the truth, his reputation for shooting first has been passed on to posterity.

Monckton's reputation as an explorer was widespread. The Geographical Journal published an article on "Recent Exploration in British New Guinea" in 1908,²⁶ and a good deal of this was devoted to a summary of Monckton's expeditions as culled from the annual reports of the time. In 1923 he was elected a member of the Royal Central Asian Society, and he was also a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Zoological Society and the Royal Geographical Society.²⁷

This examination of the accuracy of Monckton's books is by no means exhaustive. Much cannot be checked. There are a number of gaps in the monthly reports and correspondence between Cape Nelson, Tamata and Kokoda, and Port Moresby. The Administrators' despatches are reasonably complete, though many of the later ones of 1906 and 1907 have been ripped from the books and filed separately. It is assumed they may have been used during the Royal Commission of 1906. Many of the earlier despatches do not have copies in the Despatch book, only a note that it was sent, but for these same years the annual reports included the despatches in full. The incidents which have been examined, are therefore, those which have some other evidence for comparison.

Besides referring to his own notes, it is apparent that

26. Geographical Journal Vol. 32, 1908, p. 266-274
27. Encyclopedia of Papua and New Guinea, p. 792-3

Monckton drew extensively on published records, mainly those reports of his expeditions that had appeared in Annual reports. Often he has quoted himself and not always with acknowledgement. The only difference is that anecdotes have been thrown in as they have occurred. These anecdotes make most interesting reading as long as they are recognised for what they are. There is no way of checking their truth against written sources and the oral evidence as shown by John Waiko, throws serious doubt on Monckton's accounts of the situations. Nor were his opinions widely supported, especially with regard to Robinson. Nevertheless, despite the constant exaggeration of his own importance, Some Experiences of a New Guinea Resident Magistrate and Last Days in New Guinea are on the whole reasonably careful attempts to write of events as he saw them. The danger is, the average reader is unaware of what has been left out. New Guinea Recollections, as has been shown is very inaccurate indeed. Monckton sullied his reputation by writing it.

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