

NATIVE LANDS COMMISSION

The Chairman, Native Lands Commission,  
to the Colonial Secretary.

1912.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my report on the proceedings of the Native Lands Commission in the province of Colo West.

2. The opening sitting was held at Mavua, the chief village of the district of Mavua, on 9th August, 1912. This was merely a formal meeting at which all the Bulis of the province and of the districts contiguous to Colo West attended and reported the action taken by them on receipt of their summonses. The proceedings were then adjourned to Nalebaleba, some ten miles further up the Sigatoka River, where some days were spent in ascertaining the principal divisions of the people, and the names and domiciles of the leading yavusa.

I. The Constitution of Native Communities.

3. As it is impossible to avoid the constant use of the Fijian terms denoting tribal divisions and confederations, it is necessary that they be described at some length.

4. A yavusa consists of the direct agnate descendants of a single "Kalou-vu" or ancestor god, and every yavusa in Colo West traces its origin in this way. In almost every case tradition has it that this "kalou-vu" originated from the Kouvadra Range, the home of Degei, and he was presumably a descendant of that legendary founder of the Fijian race. Each "god" appears to have been accompanied by sundry female relations and the traditions as related to the Commission contain circumstantial details as to the journeyings of the "god" and the places which at nights were passed before he finally settled at some spot which was his choice of a home and there took to wife a woman of some neighbouring yavusa, and founded a family. If only one son was born the yavusa of necessity did not expand: the first family of two or more brothers, whether sons or later descendants of the original founder, gave rise to the divisions known as mataquali, the descendants of each son founding a separate mataquali. In a similar manner the first family of sons in each mataquali founded the various tokatoka. In some cases where certain tokatoka became very populous they again threw out subsidiary branches, but the latter do not always form separate land-owning units.

5. The founder of a yavusa was invariably deified after death, and worshipped by his descendants as a god. A "burekalou" or temple was erected as his shrine, and a tokatoka of junior mataquali became the hereditary priests. Each, too, was believed to inhabit the body of some living creature which was then "Tabu" to all the tribe. The choices of habitation were curious and varied - sharks, eels, rats, snakes, hawks and kingfishers being the most common.

6. The members of an original yavusa in its integrity were united by the tie of common blood and common worship, but in the inevitable wars and dissensions which took place subsequently complications arose by which some yavusa became broken and scattered and others became strengthened by the admission of other parties. There are cases in which a mataquali or even a small section of people, have either by choice or necessity, become separated from its original yavusa and discarded its own god in favour of the god of its adoption, has continued to live with that yavusa and has been allotted definite portions of land. In some cases the leader of the new arrivals, presumably when possessing some extraordinary personal qualities, was accepted by the adopting yavusa as its chief and the position has been held by his family ever since.

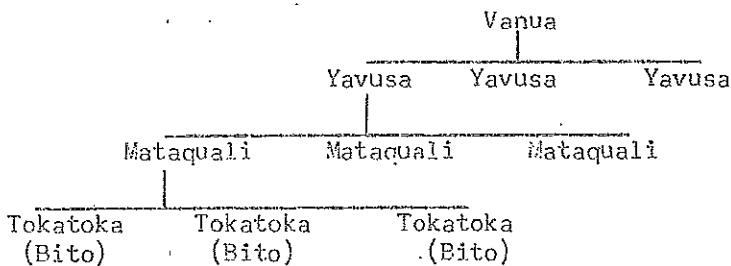
7. There are instances in which fragments of a mataquali have found their way to places remote from their original home and have there founded entirely fresh yavusa. A conspicuous example of this occurs in the case of the kal Korolevu, the chief yavusa of Serua, of which their Vunivalu is the head. These people were originally a fragment of the Noikoro yavusa, from the heart of Colo West, which fought its way down to the coast and attained its present position through its prowess in war.

8. The age of the yavusa in Colo West seems to be about eight generations, that is to say most of them claim to be able to trace their origin back to their original kalou-vu, and most of these pedigrees consist of about eight generations ending in the senior living member. Many of these pedigrees give one the impression of being quite genuine, but in a few cases it is to be feared that invention has freely supplemented tradition.

9. In the course of time, when the country becomes to be more closely populated, struggles for territory and other fighting took place, and while on the one hand many yavusa became broken and scattered there arose on the other hand confederations whereby several yavusa, or what remained of them, united together for mutual protection under a selected chief. Such a confederation was known as a "vanua".

10. In other parts of Fiji there were further confederations in which several "vanua" united under a powerful chief to form a "matanitu", such as Bau, Rewa, Cakaudrove, Bua and others, but this stage was never reached in Colo West.

11. The subjoined diagram shows the whole position at a glance:-



The members of a mataquali, and similarly of a tokatoka, are of common blood, and this also applies in ordinary circumstances to a yavusa. "Vanua" and "matanitu" are the result of amalgamations and represent the major and minor confederations. A tokatoka is known in Colo West as a "bito"

12. The province of Colo West consists chiefly of a number of independent yavusa. There were certain confederations, notably Naloto, Magodro, Noikoro, Masikawa, Mabai and Nabua. There was also at one time a very powerful fighting confederation known as the "Davutukia", but it became broken up through internal dissension and is now scattered through the districts of Bemana, Koroinasau and Korolevuiwai.

II. Local Conditions.

13. One of the most striking features in the communal system of Colo West is the absence of chiefly customs, and the character and manners of these people at the present time indicate great independence of will and impatience of control. They seem to have never rendered to their chiefs the obedience, deference and respect that is so marked in other provinces. There are numerous instances of the hereditary chief vacating his position in favour of a more efficient warrior; and while that is perhaps inevitable where tribes had to fight for their existence, it appears from the general history of the tribes that the chiefly position was almost nominal in times of peace. The people seemed to do nothing for their chiefs except when definitely ordered, and the orders had to be given with discretion. There was no "sevu" or presentation of the first fruits of the season, no "tama" or respectful greeting, no "veibuli" or ceremonious installation of a chief, no clapping of hands on touching the chief, (e.g. after shaking hands), or on his finishing a meal. In fact the chief appears to have been of little consequence except in actual

time of war, and the Commission could find no hereditary or customary titles or offices in the whole province which carry any special privileges in respect of land. When the leaders of the existing confederations were asked to define the rights or privileges that they could exercise over the lands of subject mataquali, all except one admitted at once that they had no rights over the soil, and that all they had ever been able to demand consisted in contributions of food and the personal labour of their people. The only claim to rights over land was made by the chief of Nolkoro. He claimed no special rights over the "Vanuatu" or hereditary lands of his people, but only over those which were acquired by conquest, and his claim was admitted. Even then when the claim came forward in concrete form he merely claimed a single piece of land as an appanage of his position.

14. The proprietary unit in the inland districts is the mataquali, but in the case of the now scattered Davutukia people, the unit of communal ownership is the "bito". There are a few special instances of family ownership.

15. There is no custom of personal adoption in Colo West, and no person can become a member of a mataquali other than that to which he belongs by birth. All children belong to the father's mataquali, and this even applies to illegitimate children where the father is known, and there was no case of a child whose father was not known.

16. The custom of succession is that which is fairly general in Fiji, and in view of the communal nature of all rights applies only to position, namely, that of head of a tribe or head of a family. If such a person dies leaving brothers, the position is held by each of the surviving brothers in turn, in order of seniority, and on the decease of the last brother reverts to the senior male in the succeeding generation - that is, the eldest son of the eldest brother, if there is one. The custom is undoubtedly well suited to barbaric tribes dependent for their existence on their efficiency as a fighting body, for it aims at having the ripest experience at its head. The custom was, however, frequently varied, as I have stated above, and a weak man replaced by one of more forceful character.

17. While the normal proprietary unit is the mataquali, or bito, as the case may be, there are many instances in which proprietary units have become broken up through internal quarrels, or flight from victorious enemies, and have thereafter occupied separate land, and have become separate proprietary units, and have no further claim upon the lands they abandoned. Such a position was an inevitable consequence of the latent hostility which appears to have always existed between the various communities, whether independent yavusa or confederations. Every man and every community owed a definite allegiance to some minor chief, and every minor chief in turn owed allegiance to a chief of a yavusa, and in the case of confederations the chief of the "vanau" exercised a certain amount of control over all. Any community or party which left the lands on which it was living and settled on land outside the sphere of influence of his chief could do only one of two things: it must either set up as an independent community prepared to defend itself against all comers, or it must be taken in by the community on whose land it settled and render allegiance to its chief. No man could eat his bread in two kingdoms. Thus where that which was once a single proprietary unit had been broken up by internal dissension or scattered by its conquerors, each fragment that left its land and settled elsewhere became a separate proprietary unit owing a separate allegiance, and its rights in the land from which it had migrated disappeared with the breaking off of its relations with the chief who ruled over it.

18. There is no individual ownership of land in Colo West in the European sense of the word. All ownership is corporate. Each family knows its own planting ground, and when a man clears a piece of virgin land and plants upon it he has the right to the sole usufruct of it thereafter, but he can transfer that right at any time, but only to another member of the proprietary unit. He does not own the soil, but merely the planting right, and that descends to his heirs or, failing issue, reverts to the proprietary unit.

19. The only recognized circumstances in which tribal lands were alienated in times of peace were cases in which a wandering tribe or part was taken (presumably as a prospective ally), and those in which lands were given as a marriage settlement. The latter was rare, and was confined to chiefly marriages which probably had considerable political significance. In such cases the bride's tribe gave a piece of land as her "lewe ni ketekete" (literally "contents of the basket") that is to say as part of her luggage, and such land was said to be "carried" to her husband, and became the property of the issue of the marriage and their agnate descendants.

20. In times of war and conquest land was at the disposal of the conquering chief, but in Colo West but little occupation of conquered territory seems to have taken place except in the district of Moikoro where Gusidrada, a great fighting chief, drove many yavusa out of the district and divided the land amongst his own people giving special portions to his eight sons and their descendants.

21. We could find no instances of land having been disposed of at any time by the "tatau ni mate" or "will" of a dying man. All witnesses agreed that the "tatau ni mate" related only to personal chattels and a general direction to his family to look after his planting lands, and that no-one could alienate any land in such a manner.

22. Women in Colo West do not in any case own separate rights in land except where they are the only survivors of a decadent proprietary unit. They are as a general rule dependent on their male relations, in fact, the position of most women in Colo West seems to be little better than that of servants.

### III. Procedure.

23. In investigating native land claims the key to the whole situation lies in the classification of the claimant communities, and this has proved in a large number of cases a most difficult matter. Once the claimants have been classified, and the various yavusa, mataquali, and Tokatoka set out in order and their origin and history obtained without difficulty and the disputes are easy to settle. The conspiracies and perjury which stand revealed from time to time are just appalling. The usual plan of the natives seems to be to hold meetings when the Commission is about to deal with their lands, at which they arrange what is to be told to the Commission and what is to be concealed. A favourite device is to arrange to conceal the existence of any proprietary units that appear to be likely to become extinct, and distribute the members among other units and then "pool" the land into one block. This of course is done with the sole object of avoiding reversion to the Crown of the lands of decadent units. Each witness in such cases comes forward with a carefully prepared story, which he repeats like a schoolboy, and when cross-examined resorts to either sullen silence or a dogged and absurd denial of knowledge of any facts beyond those in the original (prepared) statement. Occasionally when an old man begins to answer the questions and give interesting information there will be angry coughs and similar signals from his party, which usually have the effect of silencing him.

24. When these tactics are employed it is a sure sign that there is something being concealed, and it usually turns out that either some reduced proprietary unit is being suppressed, or that the people are claiming land which is properly Crown land. Where natives have for years been drawing the rents of lands which they know perfectly well are not theirs, it is only human nature to dislike investigations which reveal unpleasant truths, and it is for this reason that we experience so much difficulty. It must not be supposed that the natives welcome the Commission. They know that they have much to lose and nothing to gain if the truth comes out and they resort to every possible means to conceal the truth. The circumstances in which natives ask for the Commission are those in which there is an acute dispute between native claimants. Such disputes are the exceptions, and not the rule, for natives know their planting lands too well to dispute over them. Disputes are frequently over lands which do not rightly belong to either party, and each asks for a settlement on the chance of making a gain.

25. The system of enumeration adopted by the Commission has proved very effective, and the cross references by numbers to the relations of each person have proved to be of great value in checking frauds. In this way have been revealed several cases of persons attempting to register in two different mataquali, and in many instances the identity of separate units, whose existence had been concealed, has been discovered through the cross references. For instance, a person may be represented to be a member of some mataquali other than that to which he really belongs. His wife may belong to another district. When the Commission subsequently reaches that district and the wife is registered in her own mataquali, and inquiry is made as to the identity of her husband, her relations, not having been notified to assist in the fraud, give the name of his true mataquali. The matter is then taken up again by the Commission, and the concealed mataquali identified and classified. This has happened many times, and the Commission has thus discovered a large number of reduced tribes whose existence had been studiously concealed from previous Commissioners.

26. The work of the Commission in Colo West occupied from 9th August to the 20th November 1912. Sittings were held at Bukuya (for Maloto and Magodro districts), Vatubalavu (for Noikoro districts) and Vatukarasa (for Conua, Bermana, Koroinasau and Korolevuiwai districts). All sittings were attended by Ratu Simione Durutalo, who had been selected by the Provincial Council to act as Assessor. Mr. Boyd was recalled for other special duty on August 12th, and returned only in time to be present at the sittings held at Vatukarasa. Further inquiries were held at Mavua in May last relating to Noikoro and Maloto districts.

27. The classification of the tribes and their component parts will be found in Appendix A. Nearly 400 separate parcels of land were defined and their ownership decided. I am glad to be able to report that every decision of the Commission was unanimous.

#### IV. Lands of Vacant Ownership.

28. There are several parcels of land in respect of which no native claim was confirmed by the Commission. In some cases the land proved to be the property of proprietary units which have become extinct in recent years, in other cases the position as shown in the evidence indicated that the land was of vacant ownership at the time of Cession, and I may here state that the Commission regards the position at the time of Cession as the basis of all native titles. These lands are presumably at the disposal of the Crown, but the Commission can only declare that they have been the property of a community recently extinct, or that they are vacant lands, as the case may be.

29. A conspicuous instance of vacant land was found in the case of Maloto district. It appears that some years prior to Cession the whole of the tribes in Maloto were driven out of their land by other tribes, chiefly people from Magodro and Noikoro, and fled to various villages in Cualiyalatina. Later on, during the Cakobau regime, the Cualiyalatina people were attacked by the party which went into the mountains to avenge the murder of Europeans on the Ba River. Those of the Cualiyalatina people who were not killed were taken prisoners and kept at the village of Nasolo in Ba. The survivors of the Maloto refugees were also treated in the same manner. At the same time the Magodro people were attacked and men killed, and the survivors were taken as prisoners to the island of Koro. At the time of Cession the Cualiyalatina people (Colo North) and the Maloto (Colo West) were simply slaves - prisoners of war - living at Nasolo in Ba. The Magodro people (Colo West) were in similar circumstances at Koro. I may here say that these facts were carefully concealed from the Commission. In the case of Maloto we found this out before giving any decisions, but in the case of Magodro, we only heard after the special Provincial Council that they too had been prisoners of war. On looking up the records of the Bose Vakaturaga held in 1876 (vide Bose Vakaturaga report, 1876, resolution 6, page 35). Subsequently on a recommendation of the Bose Vakaturaga convened at Bau in December 1879, it was ordered that the Magodro people be re-established on their land (vide Bose Vakaturaga report, 1879-1880, resolution 9, page 81). It would seem therefore that their land was definitely restored to them by the 207

30. The case of Maloto is very different. The Magodro people were conquered by troops representing the government of the time and their land was restored to them by the Government which succeeded. The Naloto people, on the other hand, were not in occupation of their lands when the war occurred in which they were taken to Ba. Prior to that war they were simply refugees, and it has been clearly shown to the Commission that the whole of the Maloto had been living abandoned and unoccupied for some time. The people were therefore not in a position to exercise proprietary rights over any land anywhere, but were entirely dependent on the charity of the Qualiyalatina people to whom they had fled. Then, when the Qualiyalatina were conquered, their fate was necessarily shared by their dependents.

31. According to the evidence of the Naloto people themselves they lived at Nasolo for some years after Cession. They then made a request that they be allowed to re-occupy their land. Their application was not granted, but they were moved to the village of Toge, which lies between Nasolo and the Nalota lands, and some land was given them by the Taubera tribe of Ba. They continued to live under surveillance and were controlled by Ba. They remained in effect prisoners of war. After a number of years a portion of the Naloto people who originated from the other side of the Maloto range made a further application to be permitted to occupy the land of their forefathers. This request also seems to have been refused, but they were allowed to move on to the further slopes of the range. Then again, some eight years ago, they moved once more and occupied Nadruqa, a village situated on the lands of a Mataquali recently extinct. I have been unable so far to trace the correspondence relating to these recent moves, and as the Commission will shortly leave Suva I am compelled to give merely the above outline of facts as stated.

32. In view of these facts given in evidence the Commission held that none of the Naloto tribes can claim proprietorship of any of this land as a right. The land was vacant land at the time of Cession and for many years before that. The land was therefore at the disposal of the Crown, and the people, who are only a very small remnant of the original tribes, must simply take what the Government may please to award to them. The Commission can only find facts - it cannot award Crown Land.

33. The Commission has classified and recorded the various Naloto tribes and their members, and has taken note of the lands to which they respectively laid claim, but the whole of the claims have been disallowed.

34. In accordance with the Order in Council of the 19th November 1912, contained on page 2 of Minute Paper No.6158 of 1912, separate reports will be submitted on the cases in which mataquali have ceased to exist by the extinction of their members.

35. The practice has been adopted, for the first time, of requiring all claimants to mark out their claims before the inquiry by making mounds of earth and piles of stones at each point. This was not properly done at first; but it was done eventually, and many overlaps and ambiguities have been thereby avoided. Typed copies of all confirmed boundaries, in Fijian and English, have been supplied to the Commission of Lands.

36. The decisions of the Commission regarding Naloto and Moikoro districts have not yet been announced, as certain evidence came to light at the last moment regarding both districts which altered the whole aspect of affairs and necessitated the preparation of amended records. The documents are now ready and will be transmitted to the Provincial Scribe in due course. It will probably be convenient to fix the date of announcing them to coincide with the Provincial Council on the 10th September.

I have, etc.,

G.V. MAXWELL  
Chairman, Native Lands Commission.

THE CHAIRMAN, NATIVE LANDS COMMISSION,  
TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my report on the proceedings of the Native Lands Commission for the province of Madroga.

2. The Commission gave general notice to all concerned that the proceedings would be opened on 10th July 1912. As a new method of procedure was to be followed we went to Madroga on the 1st July in order to be in a position to assist the people and explain to them what was required. In spite of this the native officials and heads of communities displayed much indifference, and after spending nearly six weeks over work that need not have taken more than three, the Commission decided to leave Madroga and proceed to Colo West. We accordingly left Madroga in the middle of August and resumed proceedings in that province on 26th November 1912, having in the interval done the whole of Colo West.

3. The Commission conducted inquiries at the following centres:- Nasigatoka, Naduri, Narewa, Cuvu, Sanasana and Momi. There was an interval from 4th December 1912, to 3rd March 1913, during part of which I was on leave.

4. The constitution of the communities were found to be exactly similar to that in Colo West, but in the case of Madroga there are no independent yavusa. There are thirteen "Vanua" each comprising several "yavusa", and the whole of these Vanua were federated before Cession into one comprehensive "matanitu" under the chief of the yavusana vanua, who is one of the mataquali "Leweinadroga", in the yavusa "Louvatu". The present supreme chief is Ratu Luke Malase, uncle of the Roko. The heir apparent is the Roko.

5. The tradition as to the origin of this family is as follows:- At a date which would appear to be about the middle of the eighteenth century a number of yavusa had established themselves at Lomolomo, a village on the Sigatoka River, and had decided to elect a common chief. It is not quite clear who was elected; the honour is claimed by both the Koronikula and the Keasuna yavusa. In the course of the preparations for the installation ceremony a party went down to Cuvu to get food for the usual feast. On a point of the island of Yanuca they found a stranger who had been cast up by the sea. He was sitting on a rock eating some fruit of the "Mocelolo", tree which grows beautifully on the island. He appears to have been a man of striking appearance and personality; he was regarded by those who found him as a "god". They conducted him to Lomolomo where he was at once hailed by all as their chief, and placed on the "Vatu ni Veibuli" or coronation stone, and was installed with all due ceremony as their "Kalevu" (lit: "great one").

6. The name of the man who thus stepped into the position of honour was Wakanimolikula. He took to himself several wives and had a large family. It is said that he had a hoarse voice, possibly a permanent result of his adventures at sea, and his family was accordingly known as the Leweinadroga (people of the hoarse one).

7. In the course of time the several yavusa migrated from Lomolomo for various reasons and occupied land in what are now known as the districts of Sigatoka and Cuvu.

8. The principal divisions, or "vanua", comprising the "matanitu" or Madroga are:- the Noi Masevia and the Noi Yasawa in the Waicoba district, the Tabanivonoicake in the Tokonoko district, Nasigatoka, and Kadudu in Sigatoka district, Yacusuna in Cuvu district, Voua in Tuvu district, Tabanivonoira, Masogo and Mazoni in Malomalo district, and Malolo in the district of Kai. There are also Vatulele and Malolo, the former a single island and the latter a group of islands comprising the island of Malolo and what are known as the Mamanuca group.

9. The Commission has not visited these islands. They are self-contained, and there appears to be no pressing need for investigation of land claims there. They can be visited at any time. I understand that Vatulele was originally subject to Rewa.

10. The customs relating to land tenure in Nadroga are the same as those in Colo West, but there is far more "bito" ownership.

11. Although falling far short of the ornate and punctilious ceremonial with which all chiefly customs seem to have been carried out in such places as Bau, Rewa, of Cakaudrove, there seems to have been in Nadroga a constitution considerably more civilized than the rudimentary and inchoate social system obtaining in Colo West. Each community had a definite channel of communication through which formal reports were passed on to the high chief and his directions received. These channels were known as the "sala vakavanua" (paths of ceremony) and certain families were the hereditary messengers with whom lay the duty of conveying the message from one chief to the next in order. The position of the chiefs seems to have been well established and recognised.

12. The history of Nadroga has been mainly affected by five "wars". The battle was waged by Nabekasiqa, grandson of Wakanimolikula, and great grandfather of the present Roko. The cause of this campaign was a "solevu" (ceremonious presentation of food and property) at Namotutu, near Lomawai, at which some people from Yasawas who had been harboured and fed at Namotutu, and had subsequently returned to their homes, made a presentation of food to their former hosts. Part of the presentation consisted of "madrai" (native bread) made of "yabia" (arrowroot). Some women of rank belonging to Takuruvakarua, the "bito" of the high chief, laid hands on some of the "madrai" and the Namotutu people struck them and refused to allot them a portion. The women went away deeply offended at the interval and reported to their chief. Nabekasiqa at once raised a war party, and ravaged the whole of the villages of Malomalo and Wai. Many were killed and those that survived fled in many directions. Some were caught and taken prisoners. Their lands were taken by Nabekasiqa, but many tribes were subsequently re-established on their lands by his successor, Makadriudriu. On returning from the victory Nabekasiqa, apparently flushed with success, continued his campaign up the Sigatoka river, but was killed at Narara.

13. The second important campaign was carried on by Nakadriudriu, the younger brother and successor of Nabekasiqa. The offence in this case was committed by the Leweinadroga at Nasama (Sigatoka), a branch of the chief's own mataquali. Some bananas were planted on the island of Kaba as a complimentary gift to a young child of the chiefly family of Nabekasiqa. Some members of the Nasama branch of the mataquali went and pulled them up and trampled on the garden. Makadriudriu gathered a war party and the Nasama people on their side, and presented whales' teeth to various tribes to enlist their aid. The Cuvu army and its allies under Makadriudriu attacked Nasama and defeated the enemy with slaughter and carried the war through the districts of Nokonoko, Tua and Malomalo, burning the villages of all those who had taken the side of the enemy. Prior to the commencement of hostilities the Nasoni people and some of the Tabanivonaira people loyal to Cuvu were sent for protection to the island of Navo.

14. Another campaign of Makadriudriu was against the Lomawai people who had killed friends of his. In this the Leweiwei, and Leweilolo yavusa were attacked and slaughtered in great numbers. The survivors fled to Mateonabonu (the site of the present cricket ground at Lautoka). They were brought back many years later and established at Nabila, in Momi district. They never returned to their original homes.

15. The fourth campaign was known as the "valu ni lotu" or "war of Christianity". This was conducted by Ratu Kini Nanovo, son of Nabekasiqa and grandfather of the present Roko. Having accepted Christianity he established it as far as he could by the simple and cogent means of killing or driving out all tribes who were not inclined to accept the new faith. He carried his crusade through the southern portion of Colo West burning and slaughtering as he went, and then applied that same method of conversion to the tribes in the hill districts of Waicoba and Tuva.



16. The fifth was the expedition sent by the Government in 1876 to quell the rebellion in Colo West.

17. These events resulted in repeated redispersions of the tribes. Those who were on the stronger side remained on their own lands and increased in numbers and consequently in power. Others were broken up into scattered fragments and their numbers decreased both by actual slaughter and by reason of the conditions under which they had to live. When a tribe had been living in slavery or exile for some years it was customary, if they appeared disposed to be properly submissive to the chief who conquered them to re-establish them on their lands and restore their rights of ownership. In such cases there were definite ceremonies to be performed. First came the "Tauvu" in which the vanquished humbled themselves abjectly before the chief and presented whale teeth and native property as a thanksgiving for sparing their lives. This took place as soon as possible after their return. After that, as soon as the first food crops were ripe, they presented a portion of them to the chief. This was the "vakacoko" or provisioning of the place. Then after sufficient time had elapsed to enable them to prepare "masi" (bark cloth) and other valued articles of native manufacture a great "solevu" or presentation of goods and food was tendered to the chief. This took place at the principal village of the pardoned tribe and was known as the "vakalutu ni vanua" or restoration of lands.

18. In Madroga it was not usual for the chief to reserve certain choice pieces of planting land for himself. In some cases the tribes were for political reasons established on other lands instead of those which they had occupied before conquest. As a combined result of spontaneous migrations and the fortunes and misfortunes of war there are comparatively few tribes living on the lands which their ancestors originally settled.

19. Here and there are to be found scattered families who are not landowners at all. These are the descendants of single individuals who for one reason or another left their own tribes in times long past and went to live with others. In some cases the man was a fugitive hiding from the vengeance of a chief to whom he had given offence, in some he was a coward who had deserted in time of war, in others he had merely quarrelled with his own tribe and gone off in anger to one to which he was related by marriage or through his mother. No land was definitely allotted to such people. They merely lived as dependents of the tribe with which they took refuge and planted here and there with permission. The position of such a person was that of a "vulaqi" (stranger) and he lost his proprietary rights in the lands of his own tribe. If his tribe wished for a reconciliation the customary procedure was the "veilakovi" "vakavanua" or ceremonious fetching, in which the relatives of the truant would present whales' teeth to his hosts and take him back to his home. If this were not done the separation was absolute.

20. I regret that the classification of one group in the district of Momi had to be abandoned on account of their reckless perjury and subsequent reticence. The group is known as Nakaria. Their first witness declared that their traditional ancestor-god was one Vuvusawaka. He had a paper in his hand to which he was referring. I demanded to see the document and it proved to be covered with a series of trial pedigrees all starting with one Veto. On my asking who Veto was, the witness, a rather "flash" young man, started up and tried to recover the document, and boldly swore that he had never heard of Veto, and that Veto was nobody at all. Another witness, an old man and therefore more likely to be conversant with old traditions, declared that Veto and Vuvusawaka were two separate kalou-vu and gave some account of them, but on hearing angry murmurs from his party suddenly became very reticent and professed entire ignorance of anything and everything. Other witnesses were tried, but all obviously had something to conceal and would not give intelligible answers to questions put by the Commission. The matter was adjourned and at a later sitting the witness who had previously denied all knowledge of Veto said that Veto was their kalou-vu and that they had never heard of Vuvusawaka until the day on which they first gave evidence and that one Vetaia had told him this name. There is no doubt in my mind or in that of my colleagues that the Nakaria really consist of two

yavusa who are endeavouring to represent themselves as one in order to "pool" their lands and conceal the existence of decadent mataquali with a view to preventing their lands reverting to the Crown. As it is impossible for the Commission to declare ownership without classifying the units and thus ascertaining their tenure, we merely took a note of the land claimed by these people without making any decision. No claim has been sufficiently established. At the last the witnesses, when confronted with their own inconsistency remained mute and would not answer any questions. I venture to recommend strongly that the rent of any leased land which may be found to be within the area claimed by these people be held in suspense until they can prove their claim. Otherwise they and others will gather the impression that by adopting a policy of passively resisting investigation they can retain possession of any land they claim. In other words they must be shown that the onus probandi lies on them.

21. I regret that it will not be possible to submit before our departure for Lau a detailed list of the tribes and their divisions as classified by the Commission. I propose, when the survey is completed to submit the list showing the various proprietary units, the numerical strength of each, and the area of its lands.

22. The many difficulties with which the Commission has had to contend have been partly set out in Minute Paper No.1200 of 1913, in which certain amendments of the law were proposed. I have only to add that the preventable inconveniences and annoyances were particularly apparent in Nadroga where the conduct of the natives was mainly responsible for the fact that Nadroga, which is only half the size of Colo West, occupied more than twice as much of our time.

I have, etc,

G.V. MAXWELL  
Chairman, Native Lands Commission.