

Telegrams: CHIEFMIN BAIRIKI



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER,
P.O. Box 68,
Bairiki, Tarawa,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands.

(In reply please quote) F. CM 18/7

22nd May, 1975

H.E. Maude Esq., OBE,
77 Arthur Circle, Forrest,
A.C.T. 2603,
Australia.

Dear Professor Maude,

Thank you very much for your letter of 30th April. It is very good of you to have gone to so much trouble. I fully appreciate your feeling about condensed and simplistic statements but I have found your letter extremely valuable in putting the apparently contradictory statements being made on Banaban origins in their proper perspective.

In so far as the Banabans today are concerned my only contact with them has been with the 35 young men who have reputedly come to resettle Ocean Island and with a team of 70 Banaban dancers who visited Tarawa under the leaderships of Mr. Tekoti Rotan. I failed to find one who did not have close relatives among the Gilbertese and whatever the Banaban ethnic origins may be they now seem to be so intermixed with the Gilbertese as to be virtually indistinguishable.

It is of course quite true that the question of Banaban ethnic history should have no real bearing on their claim to political independence. Unfortunately however Governments of today seem to give more weight to emotive arguments than perhaps they should and the precedent of Anguila has undoubtedly made Her Majesty Government highly sensitive in this regard.

Again sincere thanks for your assistance.

Yours sincerely
K.O. Shipley

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