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THE POLYNESIA COMPANY LIMITED OF MELBOURNE
AND FIJI, 1808-1883: A SOCIAL HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

Late in August 1870, the s.s. Allhambra, chartered by the Polynesia Company Limited of Melbourne and Fiji, to convey 170 Australians to the Islands, floated peacefully in the Pacific, and her passengers rested, as if between trances in a catalepsy. They were riddled with ambiguity, shot through with unreality and myth, for they thought they were destined to colonize Fiji for Britain. Excited shouts and cheers which had followed the Allhambra as she pulled away through Hobson's Bay, were not just parrot-cries of delayed adolescence, but the issue of a deception, and a prelude to seizure.


The ship's departure, like the departures of her prototypes, the Mayflower, the Buffale and the Tory, and other frailer vessels which had become the embodiment^{of the}/colonialist dream, was the product of converging sets of circumstances. First, there were circumstances in Fiji, the burning of a white man's house, a demand for reimbursement, an offer of cession, the efforts of a Fijian chief to extend his influence and remove the threat of Tongan imperial expansion. Secondly, there was the Imperial tradition, in its local Victorian form, as much a part of the passengers' baggage as the brass bedsteads, pianos and portmanteaux that filled the Allhambra's hold, and much more likely to remain intact. For the British Empire gave vivid and concrete embodiment to the popular Australian belief in the omniscience of Britain, but this could be traced back to a deeper belief, which was the secular man's understanding of himself as self-sufficient. Usually, only those who have successfully deceived themselves

in such a way are vulnerable to the deception of others. Thirdly there were the circumstances of the individuals themselves, the changes of fortune following the excitement of the gold rushes, shattered hopes, and the conditioned reflex of renewed optimism in response to repeated personal failure.

This thesis aims to be a slice of social history, an attempt to trace how men lived and felt about, what they would have called a part of their lives, and what "the historian" calls, a particular "historical situation". What has evolved is not a study of the Polynesia Company in the context of nineteenth century imperialism, as originally intended, but one of the Polynesia Company in the wider, and more elusive context of deception, for imperialism, is just one of the things that begins in minds and mouths.

CHAPTER ONE

" 'You know', Tweedledee added very gravely,
'its one of the most serious things that can happen
to one in battle - to get one's head cut off.' "
Lewis Carroll.



It was to obviate the necessity of annexing, or of accepting territorial responsibilities of any kind in the Pacific, both repugnant to Britain's treasury, that power had been invested in the commanders of British and American naval vessels to exercise control over the activities of British and American subjects, engaged in transitory commercial activities, or living permanently in the Islands. Since the early 1840's however, it had become obvious that indigenous authorities were neither inclined, nor often, competent to deal with the perpetrators of misdeeds towards Europeans forming part of the communities ostensibly answerable to them, in the manner, and with the severity Europeans thought just. Naval commanders consequently assumed the responsibility of enforcing compensation for the unsatisfied claims of damage to person and property, demanded by Europeans. Subsequently, complaints of violence and appeals for restitution awaited every visit of a naval vessel.

The claim of John B. Williams, American commercial agent, styled "consul", in Fiji, was the largest and most serious of a string of claims dating from 1844, when David Whippy, another American, had been driven from Levuka.¹ Williams lived on the small island of Nukulau, and while celebrating American Independence in 1849 "by firing cannon and setting off squibs and crackers... his house caught fire and burned".² Crowds of

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1. Melville, Caroline, "Levuka and David Whippy". (typescript) 1967, p.6.
 2. Hepe, C. W., "Sketches of Polynesia - the Fijis", Blackwood's Magazine, July 1869, p. 46.

natives collected, and in the confusion, some of Williams' property was stolen.

The incident itself was ludicrous; it would have been impossible to decide what had been stolen, and what burned, but Williams meticulously assessed damages sustained to be worth \$3006, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents,¹ and his position as "consul" enabled him to press more forcefully, and finally, more effectively for compensation. The blame was delegated to Cakobau, chief of an unproductive, twenty-acre islet, Bau, off the east coast of Viti Levu, although the actual culprits were allied to Rewa, at that time, under attack from Bau.²

Cakobau's real authority in Fiji was slight: his influence/like that of all Fijian chiefs, fluctuated with his successes in war. But he was acknowledged master of Viti Levu, and his coastal primacy explained but did not substantiate, the title of "Tui Viti"³ which had received widespread currency among Europeans. The assumption of the title, however hollow politically, in Williams' eyes, made Cakobau liable for discharging obligations accruing to the title. Without any subsequent loss sustained, Williams added \$721, twelve months later. In January 1851, he added another \$350 and in April of that year, his claim stood at \$5001, 38c.,⁴ and Captain Macgruder of U.S.S. St. Mary's was met with his squeal of outraged protest.

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1. Cyclopaedia of Fiji... 1907, p. 95.
 2. Scarr, D.A., "Cakobau and Ma'afu: contenders for pre-eminence in Fiji", in Davidsen, J. and Scarr, D. (eds.), Pacific Islands Portraits, A.N.U., 1970, p. 100.
 3. "King of Fiji".
 4. Cyclopaedia of Fiji ..., p. 95.

Macgruder did not thoroughly investigate the claims then current, but left David Whippy and the Wesleyan missionary, Calvert to arbitrate and report their findings to the next American vessel to stop at Levuka.

In 1853, a boat belonging to some white residents of Levuka, was stolen. Its crew escaped and reported the theft, and a punitive expedition was organized. Malaki,¹ the home of the offenders and subject to Viwa, was burned. The Chief of Viwa allegedly demanded from Cakobau, the right to avenge himself for the destruction of Malaki, by burning Levuka.² Cakobau denied all knowledge of the matter, but Levuka was reduced to ashes, Americans, like Whippy and Chamberlain and Company of Salem,³ suffered genuine losses, and Cakobau was held responsible for authorizing the destruction.

Oppressive as the Americans' claims may have been, Cakobau was otherwise engaged. In 1848, Henry Ma'afu, a Tongan noble and contender for the Tongan throne, appeared in Fiji and set in train a struggle for power which pre-occupied Cakobau for the next twenty years. Tongans had always been in Fiji, and relations had always been essentially pacific. Missionary activity in Fiji was largely dependent on the fervour of Tongan native teachers and centred initially around Lakeba and Lau where a large population of Tongans was already established. Later, they were valued by Fijians as mercenaries. George Tupou, King of Tonga, recognised Ma'afu as a possible rival and prudently dispatched him to Fiji, ostensibly to watch over Tongan interests there.

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1. A small island off the North East coast of Viti Levu.
 2. Dunn, T.C., extracts from a letter to the editor of the New York Herald, 9 Nov. 1856. Reproduced in de Ricci, Our New Province in the South Seas, London 1875, p. 134.
 3. Derrick, R.A., A History of Fiji, Vol. I, 1946, p. 134.

Initially, Ma'afu referred solicitations by Fijian chiefs for military aid, to Cakobau, for whom, along with the Wesleyan mission, he professed to be fighting. But his first exploit at Lomalema ended in a victory which made him master of Vanua Balavu, where by the late 1850's, with 800 Tongans and six canoes,¹ he had made his presence felt in Fijian politics.

In 1853, the year Levuka was burned, Cakobau was troubled with news of a pending revolt, led by Ratu Mara, at Kaba, on the Viti Levu mainland, which held a large store of Cakobau's munitions.² Intellectually attentive to the underlying advantages of Christianity, namely, military and moral support from Christian Tonga and the Wesleyan mission respectively, Cakobau became a Christian the following year. The action probably lost him as much influence among his own people, as it gained him among Tongans, but it enabled him to apply to George Tupou for help, in return for a large canoe. Kaba was taken in 1855. Ma'afu distinguished himself and appeals from Fijians for military aid increased, along with Cakobau's awareness of the threat that Ma'afu's presence and influence posed to his own authority.

The arrival of U.S.S. John Adams in October 1855 temporarily interrupted Cakobau's Tongan troubles. American claims, all charged to Cakobau, had risen to \$30,000, and included damages estimated at \$1000 to the American trading schooner Elizabeth, robbed at Totoga; \$3000 compensation for loss of property and violence done to Shallack and Macomber on Namuka; compensation for damages sustained by James Williams on Namuka, assessed at \$3000;

1. Scarr, D, "Cakobau and Ma'afu...", p. 107.

2. ibid., p. 104.

Whippy claimed \$4,000 and John Williams' claim had magically increased to \$15000.¹

Rev. Calvert, in his capacity as arbitrator, wrote to Commander Boutwell on his arrival in Fiji. He questioned the accuracy of John Williams' claim and by doing so, effectively punctured the latter's pride. Williams informed Calvert that

... it was considered a piece of presumption for him to interfere in matters concerning American citizens, or their interests, as he [Williams] and Commander Boutwell were fully competent to settle all such affairs without his assistance. ²

Rev. Waterhouse later described Boutwell as "a Southerner and a Papist", appellations which accurately reflect the spirit in which he conducted his inquiry into the justice of the American claims. Boutwell rejected the assistance and spurned the advice of Wesleyan missionaries, to whom a man susceptible to rational argument might have lent an ear, if only on the grounds that the missionaries had achieved amiable, though superficial relations with Fijians over the previous 15 years. Cakobau was black and

One thing was certain, that the white kitten had had nothing to do with it: - it was the black kitten's fault entirely. ³

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1. Derrick, R. A., op. cit., p. 135.
 2. Dunn, T. C., New York Herald, 9 Nov. 1856, in de Ricci, op. cit., p. 242.
 3. Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass.

Commodore Mervine, who had dispatched Boutwell to investigate the claims, had reasonably and equitably demanded that Boutwell should

... not take it for granted that all allegations against the supposed offenders are true, simply because claimants have filed their reports at the State Department.¹

Boutwell waived the instructions; the ways of gentility were not essential, but detrimental to his end.

Aside from Williams, who acted as courier, Boutwell interviewed no-one. He sent, instead, a patronizing, tyrannical and intimidating letter to Cakobau, informing him that

... the great chief who has charged me with this mission presides over a country whose resources are inexhaustible, and whose power to punish her enemies is beyond the comprehension of those who have never visited her empire... You are required to restore that [property] or its value, with interest, to ask pardon of my nation, and to promise to respect its flag for the future.²

Without waiting for a response, he wrote again to Cakobau, "the so-called Tui Viti" assuring him that his powder was quick and his balls were round, and appending an agreement for the Chief of Bau to sign admitting the justice of the claims and promising to pay within a year.³

1. Quoted in Cyclopaedia of Fiji..., p. 96.

2. Dunn, T. C., op. cit., p. 244.

3. ibid., p. 245.

Yagodamu, a chief in Bau, received and responded to Boutwell's first letter in Cakobau's absence. He refused to acknowledge John Williams' claim as just, declined to take any responsibility for the burning of Levuka, nor for the actions of Fijians on either Nukula or Namuka, neither island included in the Bau dominions.¹

Boutwell had expected a confession. Presented with an explanation, he became more shrill and assertive. He wrote that he was personally "satisfied of the guilt of Tui Viti as Chief of Bau", that he "knew the Viwa people robbed the Americans at Levuka, and that Bau sanctioned it", and that he was "well aware that there are other chiefs and their people guilty of having injured Americans", but that at the moment, he was "in pursuit of Bau". He also added, for the benefit of those unaware that

The brave never threaten, nor do the virtuous
boast of their chastity. I therefore do not
tell you of the consequences of a non-compliance
with these requirements.²

Calvert wrote to Commander Bailey of U.S.S. St. Mary's defending his alleged "interference" and implied, with admirable temperance of language, that Boutwell had "deviated" from his instructions. Bailey cautioned Boutwell, who, out of the goodness of his heart set upon deck of the

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1. Dunn, T. C., loc. cit., p. 246. He also alleged that Williams had already claimed recompense from "Phillips" late Chief of Rewa, who had promised to discharge the debt.
 2. ibid., p. 246.

John Adams, what Hitler might have called an arbitration court. He summoned Cakobau, allowed Rev. Waterhouse to act as his counsel, appointed a few well-tutored, and eager for promotion crew members to constitute a "board", then dissolved with the acids of ridicule and sarcasm, Waterhouse's defence, refused to allow him to call witnesses, decided all claims had been justly computed, and forced Cakobau to sign a document accepting responsibility.¹

With the exceptions of the claims of James Williams and that of the Elizabeth, all others were increased, and three new claimants, the Wilkinsons Brothers, Tom Ryder, and the owners of the Tim Pickering, had taken courage and collectively claimed \$8,300.² Boutwell then set sail, leaving Cakobau with a total of \$43,531 to pay the American consul in Fiji within two years: \$13,531 of this had been added during Boutwell's short stay in Fiji. Cakobau, with the assistance of Revs. Moore and Waterhouse, wrote to the U.S. Consul in Sydney protesting:

I did not sign the treaty with Captain Boutwell of my own accord, but under the greatest fear. He threatened to take me away to America, and stamped on the floor right in my face because I objected to give my signature, and then I was afraid and signed it... he told another chief that he would hang me...³

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1. Dunn, T. C., op. cit., p. 246; McIntyre, W. D. "Anglo-American Rivalry in the Pacific: the British Annexation of Fiji in 1874", Pac. Hist. Rev., Vol. 29, 1960, p. 364.
 2. Derrick, R. A., op. cit., p. 135.
 3. Dunn, T. C., op. cit., p. 251.

The protest was acknowledged and copies forwarded to Washington, but the French pressed hard on British and American ships in the Pacific, and aside from a pretest in the New York Times by Captain Dunn of the Dragon, which provoked Macgruder to write to Calvert admitting that

I well remember that I considered some of the claims preferred unjust, and thought Mr. Williams in the wrong, and so reported to the Government. ¹

no further action ensued. The debt and attendant threats faded in Cakobau's convenient mind, and John Williams whiled away his leisure hours, carefully computing the interest due to him and adding it to his claim.

No part of the debt had been paid when U.S.S. Vandalia arrived at Levuka in 1858. Cakobau was summoned and yet another signature was extorted by threat - this time attached to an agreement for payment of \$45,000 within one year.² The responsibility for enforcing liquidation of the debt was passed along from one warship to another, like a congenital disease which ought to be cured, and the debt became, coupled with Ma'afu's increasing influence, a much more urgent liability.

W. T. Pritchard, newly appointed British Consul in Fiji,³ offered a solution to Cakobau. He proposed the cession of Fiji to Britain in return for payment of the debt. Ma'afu opposed the suggestion. However, when assured by Wesleyan missionaries that Britain would inevitably accept Fiji,

1. Cyclopaedia of Fiji..., p. 96.
2. Derrick, R. A., op. cit., p. 139.
3. September, 1858.

and in the hope of securing for himself the governorship of Lau and Vanua Balavu, he, and at his insistence, Tui Cakau, Tui Bua, Tui Nayau, Bete and Riteva signed the deed.¹ By no means all Fijian chiefs acquiesced in the proposal to cede; many were not partial to the prospect of Cakobau as guardian of native affairs, an office he had never, in any sense held before, should cession take place.² The document duly signed, Pritchard set off for London in November 1858, an over-enthusiastic advocate of annexation.

While Pritchard negotiated with Britain, Ma'afu did with Rewa. In 1859 he accepted the Beqa chief's offer of their island which Cakobau fondly regarded as one of his spoils from the battle of Kaba; and he induced the leading chiefs of Kadavu, another of these spoils in Cakobau's view, to place themselves under him.³ Ma'afu's power now stretched from Lakeba to the Yasawas where, as well as Kadavu, he could levy produce, and his power to windward was greater than Bau's had ever been. Cakobau hoped that cession would not only discharge the debt but check Ma'afu's ambition, but Cakobau's decision to cede incensed George Tupou who demanded \$60,000 from Cakobau for his help in subduing Kaba, in order to make his displeasure felt.⁴ Brower, American consul in Fiji, stepped in and threatened that America, with customary arbitrariness, would transfer liability for the debt to Tonga, if by intervention in Fiji, George should prevent Cakobau from paying it.

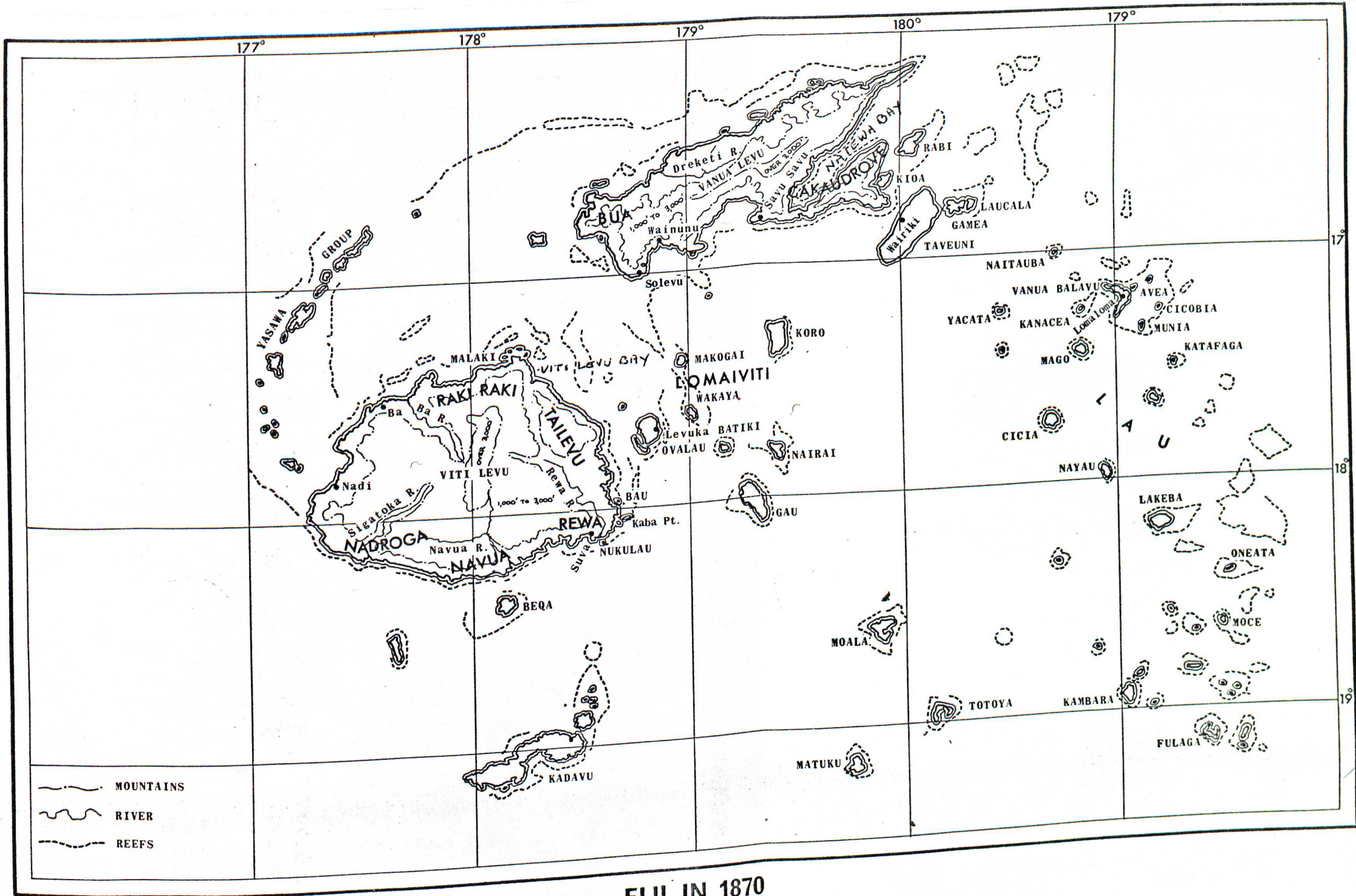
1. Scarr, D., "Cakobau and Ma'afu...", p. 111.

2. Cakobau offered, in return for liquidation of the debt, 200,000 acres of land to Britain for her official use, "if required".

3. Scarr, D., "Cakobau and Ma'afu...", p. 110.

4. ibid., p. 113.

5. ibid., p. 114.



FIJI IN 1870

APPENDIX I

Fritchard was not by any means, breaking fresh ground at Downing Street. Annexation had already been urged on the Government on the grounds of state, humanity, law and order, and the Admiralty had already expressed the opinion that a calling station between Sydney and Panama was indispensable, and that Fiji would nicely serve.¹

To the Foreign Office, Fritchard misrepresented the economic and strategic advantages of the acquisition of Fiji, and he contended that Cakobau's title was unquestionable. He forwarded samples of Fijian cotton to Manchester, pleaded at Exeter Hall for heathen natives, deprived of the light of God and the blessings of British rule. He believed that the looms of Lancashire were to be kept going with Fijian cotton, and that the dearth of rags in British paper mills, was to be made good by large importations of the bark of Fijian trees. He used the whole of his energy to promote what he believed to be the interests of both Fiji and Britain, but differed from his official superiors in believing these interests to be the same.

Even before Colonel Smythe was dispatched from Britain to compile a report on Fiji, most Colonial officials were either openly opposed or apprehensive. Sir W. Denison, for example, was greatly impressed by the Maori Wars in New Zealand, and drew the deduction that, as the Fijians were more numerous than the Maori, and at the same time more concentrated, the hostilities which he predicted, would be, by that much, the more bloody and the task of maintaining white supremacy, the more difficult.²

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1. Eldridge, C. E., "The Imperialism of the little England Era", N.Z.J.H., Vol. 1, No. 2, Oct. 1967, p. 171.
 2. Scholefield, G. H., The Pacific: Its Past and Future, London 1919, p. 78.

Smythe reached Levuka in July 1860. Then he, Pritchard and Bertheld Seemann, a botanist, travelled around the Islands, documenting their resources. Smythe reported back to Britain, unfavourably, finding many of Pritchard's assurances without foundation, in particular, his assessment of Cakobau's authority:

Cakobau has no title to the claim of King of Fiji. There is, in fact, no such title. He is only one, although probably the most influential of the numerous independent chiefs of Fiji, and has consequently no power to cede the sovereignty of the entire group to Her Majesty... He could not convey to Her Majesty, 200,000 acres of land... as he does not possess them... I am of the opinion that it would not be expedient that Her Majesty's Government should accept the offer. ¹

Smythe mentioned that Seemann's cotton-growing experiments had been marginally successful, but that "the supply of cotton in Fiji could never be otherwise than insignificant".² Seemann however, devoted a book to his successes. The offer of cession was rejected, but Pritchard's publicity in Colonial papers, inviting settlers to Fiji, and the whole question of annexation, together with Seemann's optimism, were etched indelibly in the minds of an imperialistic and highly speculative Australian public.

Cakobau, at the rejection of cession was once again saddled with the American debt, an influx of white settlers, responding to Pritchard's promotion

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1. Smythe, W. J., Report on the proposed cession of Fiji to Great Britain, p. 27.
 2. ibid., p. 35.

of Fiji, and Ma'afu ruled as governor of Lomaloma, claimed tribute in Lau, Habi, Taveuni, all the coastal villages of Vanua Levu, the Yasawas, Beqa and Nadroga.¹ Ma'afu alienated none of his land: the state he established was based on Tongan law. Land was made available to Europeans on lease only. In return for regular payment, Ma'afu offered considerably more security to Europeans than Cakobau could provide.

The knowledge that Ma'afu would intervene blocked Bau's activity in the Windward Islands. Cakobau still retained authority in Lomaviti, Northern Viti Levu, and Rewa, and Ba, on the west coast of Viti Levu, paid him some homage.² In the early 1860's, Fijian political power was exercised by Vuda, Nadroga, Rakiraki, Viva, Bua, Macuata, Cakaudrove, Lakeba, Navua, and Naduri, as well as Bau, Rewa and Ba,³ all on the coast of Viti Levu, where some new settlers took up land, with the promise from Cakobau, of protection from molestation, protection from chiefs whose authority, for the most part, was no less great than his own.

By 1864, there were about 350 white men in the Fiji islands, the majority of them British,⁴ and Cakobau had paid \$1368 towards the liquidation of American claims.⁵ The American Civil War prolonged his respite, as no ship could be spared for a Pacific cruise. In 1867, Cakobau was fighting

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1. Scarr, D., "Cakobau and Ma'afu...", p. 114.
 2. ibid., p. 117.
 3. Derrick, R.A., op. cit., p. 158.
 4. McIntyre, W. D., "Anglo-American Rivalry...", p. 365.
 5. ibid., p. 366.

unsuccessfully in the interior of Viti Levu, and alienating large tracts of land, in order to keep faith with a scattered and odd assortment of white cotton planters. His respite ended and troubles increased when U.S.S. Tuscarora arrived at Levuka in 1867. Captain Stanley remitted accrued interest, but when Cakobau procrastinated about signing a new agreement promising to pay the debt in four yearly instalments, Stanley turned the ship's guns on Levuka. Cakobau agreed to make the first payment on 1 May 1868, and pledged as security, 12,000 acres of his own land, namely, the islands of Moturiki, Nairai and Batiki.¹

As early as 1857, Charles St. Julian had predicted that "cotton will ultimately become the staple article of commerce in these islands".² Pritchard recorded that in the early sixties,

... every week parties of ten or twenty were arriving from the Australian Colonies in search of sheep lands, or from New Zealand in search of any place where they could escape the ravages of the Maori war.³

Copper and gold were found in Fiji and with the conclusion of the American Civil War in 1865, though the ban on exports was lifted, Southern plantations had been either ravaged or neglected, and for several years, exports of cotton did not revive sufficiently to cause a collapse of boom prices. In

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1. Derrick, R.A., op. cit., p. 177.
 2. St. Julian C., Official Report on the Latent Resources of Polynesia, 1857, p. 26.
 3. Pritchard, W. T., Polynesian Reminiscences, 1866, p. 253.

the meantime, Fiji was to prosper. In 1865, exports from Fiji amounted to £23,275; cotton represented £9,200 of the total. By 1869, the total value of exports was £57,000, and cotton represented £45,000.¹

Accounts and letters published in Australia and New Zealand by the relatives of planters living in Taveuni, lower Rewa, and the south coast of Viti Levu, the main cotton growing areas, stimulated interest. Probably the most successful of the early white planters, and consequently, the most influential, were the Ryder Brothers, who began operations on Mago, an island in Lau. George Ryder wrote to his parents in 1864,

Fiji goes ahead... as everyone is turning their attention to cotton, Coffee, and not to speak of cocconut oil - and every vessel going back full.²

Their success was well documented, unqualified however, by the obvious advantages in the way of finance, equipment (including a vessel) and good management, which the Ryders, as opposed to a one-time gold-panner, possessed.

To Victorians, engaged in a narcotic pursuit of profit, reports like these seemed bland assurances that anyone else could do the same thing if he cared to. The plight of other planters, like E. W. G. Lomborg on Bureta, who complained of the boredom, isolation, the caprice of Fijian labour and consequent tardy progress, the unpredictable weather, and most significantly,

1. Ross, G. S., Fiji and the Western Pacific, Geelong, 1909, p. 22.

2. "The Ryder Papers", 21 Dec. 1864.

"all this work" of which he wrote he was "sick and tired",¹ told a different story, often reaching the press, but rarely the minds of Victorians.

Charles St. Julian in 1857 suggested the formation of a company to make use of land in Fiji:

An acquisition of territorial rights might be made by a company... if they were not resident, their own government would retain over them its rights of interference. The possessions of the British East India Company are held in this way...²

The renewal of American quarter-deck justice with the arrival of the Tuscarora in 1857, and a debt to be paid by an ignorant Fijian chief, in the context of favourable publicity for Fiji, stuck in the throats of a group of Melbourne businessmen, who met to investigate the possibility of forming a company to liquidate the American debt, in return for land, which could then be resold to a panting Victorian public.

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1. Lomborg, E. W. G., "Diary 1864-1869".
 2. St. Julian, C., Official Report..., p. 29.

CHAPTER TWO

" 'The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam
yesterday, - never jam today'. "
Lewis Carroll.

At one end of the continuum of Victorians living in the 1860's were mining speculators, fascinated, not by mines, but share prices, and concentrated in Victoria's gambling edifice, the Stock Exchange, which both reflected and encouraged their adventurous optimism. Before the brief boom of gold-mining companies in 1858-60, there were about twelve firms occasionally dealing in shares, and of these, only those of Edward Khull, Baillie and Butters, and Clarke and Sons, conducted a business of any magnitude. A matter of months later, about twenty to thirty broking firms were operating in Melbourne, and unspecified numbers in Ballarat and Bendigo. Share-gazing became a much more prominent feature of Victoria's gold-oriented economy after August 1859, when mines were first added to the Melbourne share-list: by November the list had lengthened from 18 companies to 42.¹ A year later it included 50 or 60 companies, and already some of the earlier formations had ceased to exist. In 1865, there were over 500 limited liability mining companies with assets worth £3 million, and between 1865 and 1875, 4,000 new companies were formed;² most lived transient lives.

Some were fraudulent from the beginning. Others were not prepared with funds for the early years of constant expense necessary to find and follow a deep lead. Others bottomed after long and ruinous expenditure to find the soil below too poor to pay. Others that had begun to pay entered into litigation about boundaries of claims and the extent of underground

1. Hall, A. R., The Stock Exchange of Melbourne and the Victorian Economy, 1852-1900, A.N.U. 1968, p. 22.

2. ibid., p. 59.

drives and so lost all their profits: the Reform, the Bolivia, Atlas, Beehive, Concord and the Grand Junction¹ were names that, as early as 1862, awakened pathetic images of vanished coin to many a colonist.

But gold had done more to Victoria than to inject optimism and the gambling spirit, and to temporarily anchor its own population. It was also responsible for bombarding her with immigrants, mainly young adults. In consequence of this, Victoria entered the 1860's with a distorted age structure, destined to significantly affect her economic growth for the next three decades.

The rate of population growth between 1861 and 1871 was extremely high,² but it did not reflect the rate of economic growth, since the increase in population was accounted for by the large number of births to the young migrants of the 1850's and the immigration of women.³ The male working population during these years, experienced virtually no growth. The economic implications of this were that the types of investment linked with population growth, housing, the most important of them, faced negative demand conditions, and the lack of this investment opportunity made absorption of ex-miners into employment, more difficult than it would have been otherwise.

That surface alluvial gold-mining had had its heyday in the 50's accounted partly for the influx of Australian migrants to Fiji at the prospect of

1. Sutherland, A., Victoria and its Metropolis, 1888, Vol. I, p. 411.

2. 540,000 - 732,000. Ibid

3. Hall, A. R., op. cit., pp. 51-2.

cession in 1860-62, and further immigration to New Zealand, when news of Otago's gold reached Victoria in 1861.¹ The lack of incentive to attach oneself to a payroll while the delusive hope of easy wealth lingered, and the retention of an hysterical acquisitive spirit, a conviction that fortune could be wrested from the ground with little effort and little delay, exercised a powerful pull to wherever the hopes might be realized. But even in the 1860's, Victoria was not economically depressed; the gold-fields could have, all through the 60's, supported a far larger population than they were called on to support.

With the change from alluvial to quartz mining came a variety of employment opportunities, ranging from candle-making, to the manufacture and servicing of mining machinery and the felling and transportation of timber. But it was not lack of opportunity, but lack of inclination which forced thousands of miners to seek alternative employment. Some, originally labourers in England, were content to accept this kind of work again with mining companies, at Ballarat, Castlemaine, Sandhurst, Beechworth and Maldon, at wages double what they had received in the old world. But others considered the work dreary: by 1865 the wages were low, £2 or 35/- a week,² and although with mining companies, they produced more gold per head than ever before, the gold was not theirs to keep.

Many mechanics fell back on their trades, and the number of miners decreased from 125,000 in 1859 to 82,000 in 1865,³ although most could still

1. Young, J. M. R., Australia's Pacific Frontier, Cassell, 1967, p. 61.

2. Sutherland, op. cit., p. 411.

3. ibid., p. 411.

have been profitably employed. Masons, plasterers, blacksmiths, carpenters, painters, bricklayers, all classes of workmen increased and wages rapidly lowered. In terms of broad industrial groups, the greatest absolute increase in employment was in rural industries,¹ particularly in the agricultural areas opened up along new railway lines near the goldfields. Farming, however, often proved a mistake for the London-bred tailor, toiling feverishly with little remuneration.

These were the men at the other end of the continuum, apprehensive and restless about the future. Their position was not one of discomfort, the matter of rent being the only item in excess, but they had travelled miles from friends and family to better their fortunes, and disappointment was great at the prospect of receiving the same emolument in Australia as in England.

In the mid 60's, mining companies faced a no less speculative, but a more critical public. Dividends paid by public gold-mining companies were worth £500,000, two thirds of which came from Ballarat companies.² Dividend income was the most important single source of funds for re-investment in mining companies, consequently the Ballarat companies dominated the Victorian mining share market, one upon which general economic influence had relatively little impact.

Short of a detailed study of the anatomy of gambling, it is difficult to convey the peculiar logic of the market's operation. Because leads

1. Hall, A.R., op. cit., p. 55.

2. ibid., p. 66.

changed course, or ran into some-one else's lease, or the "make" of gold in an ore-body disappeared and then reappeared later, further below, Victorian investors had learned that only a few mines were continuously profitable producers. When a number of mines "struck rich" simultaneously, speculative activity was a consequence. But rarely was the speculation confined to the mines that were actually producing gold. Periodic bursts of speculation were overpowering incentives to owners of mines near the successful ones to further test their claims, at the expense of willing investors who paid the calls further testing required. Beviess of promoters rallied round to put their wares on the market. Share prices fell, and the extravagant hopes of speculators were shattered when the returns of even the most profitable companies failed to match them. The sequel to the frenzied^{speculation} was cautious disillusion. Mines continued^{to} demand calls, but the flow of money into them decreased, either because investors held tight to their capital or because the companies were finding enough gold to pay their own exploration costs. At this point however, memories of past losses grew dim, and the expectation of favourable finds, born of emotional rather than cerebral activity, increased the likelihood that any funds beginning to accrue would be reinvested and the cycle began again.¹

Dividends continued to increase, by 1867 totalling over £820,000² but the harvest was a failure, bread prices high, and the expenditure on other goods and services decreased. Commercial circles regard this and the

1. A. R. Hall describes the process, op. cit., pp. 61-2.

2. ibid., p. 66.

beginning of 1868 as depression years. Unemployment in commercial trades in the first half of 1868 was intensified by labourers thrown out of work by the cessation of public works, a by-product of the dispute between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council over the payment of M.Ps. Woolgrowing was also unprofitable. Excess of livestock reduced the price of sheep, banks were reluctant to invest in pastoral pursuits and the value of pastoral land decreased sharply. But for the first time in six years, gold output was markedly increased, and building society shares began to rise.¹ By the end of 1868, unemployment evident earlier in the year had disappeared. Resumption of colonial government public works, considerable local government building and an increase in private and commercial building were partly responsible. The expansion of Tasmanian public works associated with the Launceston and Western Railway also relieved the Victorian labour market.² 1868 also saw a burst of gold-mining activity in Ballarat: this was Ballarat's greatest, but its last gold year, and money was available for all kinds of investment.

The Polynesia Company somersaulted into the midst of an assortment of people who needed it for one reason or another, most of them willing to gamble to a degree. Many were professional speculators, mesmerized by ascending, descending and colliding shares and capable, almost inadvertently, of dropping capital into any new speculation; some were "little" men with little business acumen, who had landed in eager confusion in the 50's, had

1. A. R. Hall, op. cit., pp. 66-7.

2. ibid., p. 68.

gambled on striking gold with each swing of the pick and were now, in 1868, only a little better off than they had been in Europe. A man of this experience was unwilling to invest his little all without careful, cautious contemplation. Coin would not easily be extricated from his fist. Perhaps more than any other, the disillusioned ex-digger, not materially, but psychologically, a drooping ruin, his fortune unmade and his pride injured, restlessly settling for less than he had hoped, was both a challenge and a likely victim for astute swindlers, since any gamble he would take would be a consequence of the failure of his first and only gamble. Other men had been relatively successful, had not worked hard, and looked for a chance not to do so again, with similar results, and curiously, a few were Victoria's most prominent businessmen, hailed in their own time, and in ours as financial wizards.

As a preliminary to the barrage of Polynesia Company literature about to hit the Victorian public, an article appeared in the Argus, February 1868, recording that the U.S.S. Tuscarora had arrived in Fiji to enforce payment of Americans' claims, and that the first instalment fell due on 1 May of that year, in lieu of which America would annex. The author outlined Fiji's commercial and agricultural potentialities and stated that since "so many Australians"¹ were settled there,

1. about 500. Stokes, E., "The Fiji Cotton Boom in the 1860's",
N.Z.J.H., No. 2, 1968, p. 167.

what is needed is an establishment strong enough to assist the settler... and to arrange for the settlement of the national debt, and with good management, a Fiji Company... might obtain the same position in Polynesia as the East India Company did in India.

The article also excused Britain's refusal to annex in 1861, giving assurance to Australians that "the subject bears a different aspect" when looked at from their point of view, and, in perfect sympathy with the suspicion nurtured by the Stock Exchange, that

we certainly cannot suppose that the Americans would take the trouble of founding a colony a few thousand miles distant from their own shores were they guided by no weightier consideration, than the enforcement of a paltry debt of \$80,000 (sic).¹

Just as it was in a tiny matter, like the price of pepper that the seeds of Britain's great Indian Empire were sown, so too in the price of cotton, a number of Australians saw their own and Britain's fortune mirrored. The Polynesia Company heightened, and rode on the crest of a wave of popular imperialist sentiment, which rolled for six years and finally reached the shore in 1874 when Britain annexed, and Fiji began a ninety-six year process of kissing with meek gratitude, the rod that scourged it.

The Company planned to carry on banking and establish agencies throughout the islands, and to plant cane and cotton, erect sugar mills and later, to supply coolie labour. John Cairns, Karl Van Damme, and William Brewer had projected the venture. Both Cairns and Van Damme had spent some

1. Argus Supplement, 4 Feb. 1868.

time in Fiji, the former as a trader, "chiefly remarkable for his commercial failure and intemperate habits",¹ and the latter as clerk in the British Consulate office, representing himself in Australia as "former British vice-consul".² Brewer was an enthusiastic non-entity, hailing originally from Bungawarah near Albury,³ but then living in Melbourne.

In July 1867, at the exhortation of Van Damme, Brewer had gone to Fiji, as the agent of the projected company. He spent most of his brief stay in conversation with the Rev. William Moore, Chairman of the Wesleyan mission, one of those "fearless pioneers of religion and civilisation", who had a thorough knowledge of the Fijian language, and had earned the disapproval of his superiors on account of his greed for land and numerous specious business deals. Brewer also paid a visit to the office of the acting British consul in Fiji, J. B. Thurston, to request information about the value of Fiji's imports and exports⁴ and then returned to Melbourne where he obtained the support of a Melbourne merchant, John Lavington Evans.⁵

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1. Thurston to Lambert, 1 June, 1868, Gour's Records, Bundle 11, No. 12, Victorian Archives.
 2. Australasian, 20 Oct. 1866. Van Damme had been known to readers of the Australasian since 1866, when he began writing a series of articles on Fiji which were published in that journal. As far as the Polynesia Company was concerned, he had magnanimously thrown out an idea with which other people could do as they liked. He wrote that he was "perfectly disinterested in the affair" (Argus, 7 Feb. 1868) and henceforward neither he nor Cairns had much to do with it.
 3. Argus, 7 Feb. 1868.
 4. Thurston to Lambert, 1 June, 1868.
 5. Young, J.M.R., "Frontier Society in Fiji" (thesis) 1968. At the same time Evans had, with land leased from the Crown on the islands of Dudosu, Palmerston and Suwarros, formed the Pacific Islands Trading Co. Ltd., to purchase the natural products of these islands from the inhabitants, work mineral deposits and so on, exporting produce to Australia. Although the number of shareholders was always small, the Company prospered until the late 1880's. (Title's Office Co's Registration Branch No. 115, Victorian Archives).

The Australian public first heard of the projectors' intentions on 7 Feb. 1868, when it was treated to a number of column inches reporting the events of a meeting which had been held to discuss the project, at which Cairns and Brewer presented papers on Fiji, and letters from Van Damme and Rev. Moore were read: all urged the compelling need for immediate action if Victoria was to seize this unique opportunity. Brewer possessed, either innately or for the occasion, a winning ingenuousness, and had developed during his stay in Fiji, a jaundiced eye which enabled him to misread figures relating to the value of Fiji's cotton, coconut oil and beche-de-mer exports, and after a monocular squint at the native situation, to arrive at the conclusion that they were, aside from the few in the interior of Viti Levu who had recently eaten Rev. Baker, "of a quiet inoffensive sort, giving no trouble, unless they were interfered with".¹ His gullibility and his inspiring sunniness concerning the limitless possibilities of such a company, made him the most likely of the three projectors to be sent to Fiji to negotiate a Charter, drawn up in Melbourne complete with blanks, with Cakobau.

The Company's first Charter offered to liquidate Cakobau's debt and help him defend his domain, promising an annuity, the value of which was left blank, in return for 200,000 acres of land, whereabouts unspecified, mineral rights, the right to impose and levy customs, wharfage and harbour dues, the right to "establish courts and appoint judges and magistrates

1. ARGUS, 7 Feb. 1868.

and also such laws as the intended company may think necessary to regulate the commerce and trade of my said Kingdom". In addition the Company demanded a twenty-one year monopoly of the issue of banknotes and a monopoly on the establishment of banks in Fiji, preferential selection of any land Cakobau wished to sell, full power to make laws and govern those settled on the Company's land and protection from Cakobau for their settlers.¹

Armed with this document, a presumptuous slice of imperialism, the Albion with eighty passengers, forty of them interested in examining Fiji's potential, sailed from Melbourne, 21 April, 1868.² In company with Brewer was John Evans, through whom the Albion had been chartered, hugging an anomalous reference from Victoria's Governor, Manners-Sutton, addressed to Thurston. It read:

This letter will be presented to you by Mr. J. L. Evans who is proceeding to the Fiji islands. He is a merchant of high respectability resident in Melbourne and I therefore recommend him to your Government offices. But I request you to understand that, although I am cognizant of the general character of the business which calls Mr. Evans to Fiji, I do not request your intervention to promote its success, nor do I, in any way express a wish or opinion on the subject.³

This alone, had it been published, might have aroused apprehension.

The Albion landed at Levuka on 22 May.⁴ Thurston was not in Levuka at this time, but on his plantation at Bureta Rev. Moore sent him a note

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1. Copies of the original Charter of the Polynesia Co. included in Gour's Records, Bundle 11, No. 12, Victorian Archives.
 2. Argus, 21 May 1868.
 3. Manners-Sutton to Thurston, 6 May 1868.
 4. Brower, American consul in Fiji, had arranged a stay on payment of the debt.

informing him of the steamer's arrival, and that Brewer and Evans requested his presence "in the morning on business with Thakombau...They have come prepared to settle the debt".¹ Thurston wrote back asking Moore to delay the business until he arrived, since "For reasons that are known to you, I am very disinclined to leave home at the present moment".²

When Thurston arrived at Levuka the following day, his clerk, Edwin Turpin, informed him that Cakobau and four missionaries had gone on board the Albion, half an hour earlier. Thurston had expected to meet Brewer, Evans and Moore in accordance with his letter. He hoisted the flag over the consulate office to acquaint them with his presence and "remained disengaged until 2 p.m." ³

By 3 p.m., Brewer and Evans, with the help of a few bottles of champagne, had induced Cakobau to sign the Charter, with blanks, except that his annuity had been fixed at £1000. Moore acted as interpreter. Cakobau arrived at Thurston's office, "remained seated in silence for five minutes and then left. In my opinion the chief was unfit for business of any description".⁴ Cakobau had also signed a schedule, granting the Company lands at Suva including Suva harbour. The whereabouts of the remainder of the 200,000 acres was to be arranged. Thurston later boarded

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1. Moore to Thurston, 22 May, 1868.
 2. Thurston to Moore, 22 May 1868. Dr. J. M. Young suggests that Thurston was occupied reorganizing affairs at his plantation after a hurricane. Dr. D. Scarr has noted that Thurston's wife, who was in her early 40's, was expecting a child, and that Thurston was probably apprehensive of leaving her unattended. (Personal Communication).
 3. Thurston was rarely at a loss for words, but on the subject of the Rev. Moore he was particularly loquacious. He considered Moore an unprincipled, mercenary scoundrel. (Letters to Hope: Thurston to Hope, 22 Nov. 1869). In view of this, it is surprising that Thurston did not go immediately to the Albion to supervise the negotiations.
 4. Thurston to Lambert, 1 June, 1868.

the Albion, examined a copy of the Charter, and assured Brewer and Evans that Cakobau would not have understood any of the conditions it contained. A few days later, Thurston registered a protest pointing out that the Company was assuming the rights and privileges of a "sovereign state rather than a trading institution", and that Cakobau "could not delegate such powers over British and other European settlers, since he has never possessed them".¹ Commodore Lambert, on board H.M.S. Challenger which arrived at Levuka in July, concurred fully with Thurston's view of the Charter, considering it an "illegal and unwarrantable proceeding throughout".²

A revised and considerably subdued Charter arrived at Thurston's office later in July: all judicial and political privileges had been omitted, and any obligation on the Company's part to help Cakobau defend his kingdom had been revoked. This last clause had, in the first draft of the Charter, been associated with either a verbal or a pencilled in promise on the part of the Company to provide Cakobau with a boat which would assist him in his struggle with Ma'afu. This had never appeared in print,³ and was anyway contrary to British law, since it implied that British subjects were willing to help defend a foreign nation.

Brewer and Evans excused themselves to Thurston for the presumption of the first Charter "through want of the necessary legal knowledge"⁴ for which

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1. Thurston to Bau (copy) 25 May 1868.
 2. Lambert to Manners-Sutton, 14 July, 1868.
 3. Neither the first nor the second Charter contain any mention of a boat, but this clause later loomed large in the Polynesia Co's affairs.
 4. Brewer and Evans to Thurston, 18 July 1868. Reproduced in The Claims and Remonstrance of the Polynesia Company of Melbourne, examined and refuted, Levuka 1877.

they appealed to him, unsuccessfully, for he accurately assessed his duty as consul in Fiji

to advise and assist resident British subjects, and not to give legal opinions to gentlemen from the neighbouring Colonies, whose province it was to have sought advice from competent legal authorities in those Colonies.¹

He refused to withdraw his protest and issued a warning to Brewer and Evans

not to pay a large sum of money to, or on account of the Chief Thakombau, for which he has not the power or authority to give an equivalent or security.²

In spite of Thurston's warning, Brewer and Evans induced Cakobau to sign the second Charter. He did so as "King of Fiji", and the Charter was ratified by five of his relatives, whose signatures were intended to represent the concordance of Fijians in general, in the agreement. The schedule of land was specified: 80,000 acres at Viti Levu Bay, 10,000 acres at Natewa Bay, Vanua Levu, 10,000 acres on the island of Beqa and 23,000 acres at Suva, the grant to be completed in the future. Appended was an agreement signed by Brewer and Evans, that the Company would not alienate any of the land until the debt was paid, and that if it was not paid in the time allowed "the land reverts to King Cakobau". The first instalment was due twenty days after the delegates returned to Melbourne; twelve months later, the whole.³

1. Thurston to Brewer and Evans, 18 July 1868. Reprod. in ibid., p. 9.

2. ibid.

3. Second Charter of the Polynesia Co. Ltd. Copies included in Gour's Records, Bundle 11, no. 12, Victorian Archives.

What Cakobau understood by the second Charter is unknown, but the Rev. J. Horsley, present at the signing of the first, wrote to Thurston that he was sure the chief had understood only the following:

1. They, the Company would pay off the American debt.
2. They would give him an annuity of £1000...
3. They would help him maintain his authority over the kingdom (and it was parenthetically said "keep out the Tongans and bring Lau under his sway") and have a small gun-boat which should be at his service when he wanted.

In short, Cakobau's end of the bargain had conveniently escaped him.

Brewer and Evans, foreseeing the suspicion which the illegality of the first Charter was likely to cast over the venture, should it ever become public knowledge, wrote a letter to the editor of the Argus implying that the conditions contained in the Charter had actually been made, not by themselves, but by Cakobau:

A Charter was signed by the King on 23 May conferring on us judicial and fiscal powers we should have had difficulty in carrying through, and invoking responsibility we had no desire to undertake. 2

They also claimed that Thurston and Lambert had enthusiastically supported them, and added that they had had the full co-operation of the Wesleyan missionaries. The public were not made cognizant of the clause in the

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1. J. F. Horsley to Thurston, 28 May 1868.
 2. Argus, 10 Sept. 1868.

Charter preventing alienation of any of the land until the debt had been paid in full, were assured of rising cotton prices, security of life and tenure, and the reasonable costs of reliable labour.

The Polynesia Company was registered 7 Dec. 1868, with a nominal capital of £100,000,¹ and five days later paid the first instalment of £2,250 to Brower, American consul in Fiji.² Frederick Cook, a man with twenty years banking experience in Australia, was the Company's first manager. The list of directors was an inspiring one: General Latham, American consul in Melbourne; Samuel Amess, a successful building contractor; Henry Cuthbert, prosperous lawyer and politician from Ballarat; W. C. Smith, "always a great speculator in mining ventures... His foresight and great knowledge of mining have secured his recognition as a shrewd investor";³ Andrew Lyell, originally a wholesaler, later a professional accountant and trade assignee;⁴ Thomas Davey, Mayor of Ballarat; William Crooke, a respectable surgeon with a large and remunerative practice at Collingwood; Henry Mott, a journalist and editor of the Albury Morning Border Post;

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1. Articles of Association of the Polynesia Co. Included in Titles Office, Co's. Registration branch, No. 140.
 2. Australasian, 12 Dec. 1868.
 3. Leavitt, T. W. H.. Jubilee History of Victoria and Melbourne, n.d., p. 203.
 4. Few men were better known in Melbourne business circles than Lyell. He was deft, versatile and almost infallible in his investments, aptly described as a "myriad-minded man". Table Talk, 28 Oct. 1892.

and James Stewart Butters, the "originator of gold-mining companies", ex-mayor of Melbourne, partner in one of Victoria's first stock and share firms and partly responsible for founding the Melbourne Stock Exchange, member of the Legislative Assembly representing Portland, charged with bribery, dismissed and re-elected, a great giver to charities, a controversial, but trusted and well-liked personality. In 1868 he was prospering. Later, he was often insolvent, but never by any stretch of the imagination, "bankrupt" as Thurston contended,¹ for though he may not have had money in his pockets, it jingled incessantly in his head.

1. Thurston to Hope, 23 Nov. 1870.

CHAPTER THREE

" 'Well, now that we have seen each other'
said the Unicorn to Alice, 'if you'll
believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is
that a bargain? ' " Lewis Carroll.

The publicity that accompanied the Company's formation and the undertones of success inherent in the list of its directors stimulated investment. £28,000 was contributed immediately, and 27,000 acres of land at Suva quickly disposed of, mainly in Victoria. The Company had adopted a system of free grant land warrants, whereby land could be selected in certain districts and purchased by shareholders at the rate of 7/6 an acre in the proportion of one acre of agricultural land to every £1 of capital invested.¹ To transport settlers to Fiji, the Company chartered vessels in the name of the "Polynesia Line of Packets", and in 1869 and 1870 three ships completed four round trips between Melbourne and Fiji.² The passenger service proved a remunerative sideline.

The Company divided its organization between Melbourne and Fiji: Cook was general manager and Joseph Glenny, who built his life around the maxim that "a nigger shouldn't have a soul to call his own",³ appointed manager for Fiji, had sailed from Melbourne on the Alfred, 11 February 1869. Glenny began supervising the survey of the Suva block in June, and by September, Cook and William Marshall Moore⁴, sub-manager of the Fiji branch, had arrived to take possession and arrange the survey of the Viti Levu Bay block and pay the second instalment of £2,748⁵ towards the

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1. Macpherson, R. C., "Fiji's South Sea Bubble", in Tudor, J. and Robson, R. (eds.) Where the Trade Winds Blow, Sydney, 1968, p. 73.
 2. The ships were the Alfred, the Springbok (twice) and the Allhambra. Passenger Ship Register, 1869-70, Victorian Archives.
 3. F.T., 20 July 1872.
 4. W. M. Moore was the son of the Rev. William Moore. He had acquired a great deal of land from his father and was a wealthy trader and planter.
 5. Macpherson, R. C., "Fiji's South Sea Bubble", p. 73.

liquidation of the American debt. Banking operations were to begin in 1870, and Cook had managed to gain twelve months' extension for the final payment of the debt. Cook claimed that Cakobau had requested extra time: "the Vunivalu did not wish the American Government to be entirely paid off at once for fear they should withdraw their protection from him".¹ All things considered, the Polynesia Company seemed to be implementing its proposals splendidly.

But circumstances in Fiji were not as idyllic as Australians had been led to believe. Owing to the folly of settlers who had bought land and traded in return for guns and ammunition, Fijians were relatively well-armed. In January 1869, natives of Navua² had assaulted a few British settlers, and two American planters, Burt and Underwood, living on the Sigatoka, had watched their plantation and their cattle destroyed, and a workman assaulted. Two of Underwood's children were allegedly burnt and eaten. Cakobau was quite unable either to aid the injured parties, punish the offenders, over whom he had no real jurisdiction, or to prevent further disorder. However, he had issued a notice inviting white settlers to act as Military settlers under his authority. The response to this call might have been overwhelming since white settlers, particularly newcomers, considered the maintenance of white supremacy a binding duty. But to have accepted the invitation was to breach the Foreign Enlistment Act.³ Energy re-channelled itself.

1. Argus, 11 Sept. 1869.

2. Navua is on the south coast of Viti Levu.

3. Belview to Manners-Sutton, 19 March 1869.

The pressing need for protection of life and property, and the related need for investment precipitated attempts to establish an organized white government in Fiji. A number of abortive efforts preceded the successful establishment of the Cakobau Government, with Cakobau as constitutional head in 1871. But agitation for stability and security had the immediate effect of inspiring the Polynesia Company to orchestrate its destiny. This took the form of a bogus offer of Fiji to America in November 1869: the prime movers were Joseph Glennay, Frederick Cook and Joshua Finner.¹ Signatures were gathered from a petition requesting America to annex "as well for the purpose of maintaining our position with the native authorities as for outward security in our trade and commerce".² Subscribers to the petition consisted both of white settlers in Fiji and investors in the colonies

Who earnestly pray that you will at an early date, announce to the world your resolve to extend the protection of your flag to these islands and waters permanently.³

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1. Finner had formerly been affiliated with the Algerian Cotton Company; in November 1869 he was Secretary of the Polynesia Company and later became its manager. Settlers thought Britain too much under humanitarian influence to effectively provide them with the kind of authority they demanded. America was throughout the Pacific Islands, considered a safer bet.
 2. Argus, 12 Nov. 1869.
 3. ibid.

Brower acknowledged the petition.

The belief that America had any inclination to annex Fiji was, for the most part, unfounded. What America wanted was payment of a debt, and annexation was the threat designed to extract payment. In addition, British settlers were numerically superior to American settlers in Fiji by 1869.¹ General Latham, American consul in Melbourne, a director and large shareholder in the Polynesia Company, assured Cook that Congress "were much interested in the matter". But in 1870 Congress politely refused the invitation,² and the desire to "raise the stars and stripes over the islands" evaporated once the American debt had been paid.

The petition to America was the first manifestation of the Company's edacious imperialistic appetite, which was almost satiated in 1873 when the Company pressured the Victorian Government to annex, a proposal which was well-supported by the Victorian public.

Involvement in the offer to America was also an example of the Company's division of attention, which hampered its progress as a public company throughout its life. Hints of disreputable business practices by the Company had first been dropped early in 1869, when a letter appeared in the Argus over the pen-name "Medamos". It unveiled the clause agreeing not to alienate any land until the American debt had been fully discharged. The clause had been suppressed in the public version of the Company's Charter. "Medamos" explained that the clause spelled delay for settlers in obtaining

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1. McIntyre, W. D., "Anglo-American Rivalry in the Pacific: the British Annexation of the Fiji Islands in 1874". Fac. Hist. Rev., Vol. 29, 1960, p. 366.
 2. Sydney Morning Herald, 16 May, 1870.

possession of their land and openly stated that buying land through the agency of the Polynesia Company involved "a risk even greater than that which is run by a planter who buys his land direct from a Fijian chief".¹ The Company's activities later in 1869, temporarily dissipated the discomfort injected into shareholders' minds by "Medamos". But in 1870, shareholders were once again alarmed.

By May 1870, the Company had the deeds for 140,000 acres of land in its possession. Approximately 100,000 acres had been either contracted for, or sold, 58,000 acres of it to shareholders, and the remainder was in the Company's possession.² The American debt had not yet been fully paid and, since calls on shares had been unsuccessful, the Company had sold, in addition to the acreage mentioned above, 100,000 acres of land for £10,000, less than half the original purchase price, to some of its directors and to their friends. Without a convenient legal designation of its own, the Association which had purchased this land, came to be known by the ominous appellation of "The Forty Thieves".³

The Company defended its action on the grounds that selling the land was the only method of raising the finance to pay the debt. But within

1. Argus, 12 Jan. 1869.

2. Argus, 16 May 1870.

3. The land sold to the Forty Thieves comprised the Viti Levu Bay block, Beqa, and 10,000 acres in the Suva district. The Polynesia Company had also purchased from W. E. Moore, four small islands which had never been put to practical use in Suva Harbour. (Macpherson, R.C., "Fiji's South Sea Bubble", p. 73). Had the Charter been valid, the sale of land to the Forty Thieves would have been a perfectly legitimate transaction. It meant, however, that the Forty Thieves and not the Polynesia Company paid the remainder of the £9,000 demanded by America and added complexity to the examination of the Polynesia Company's claims after annexation.

its own bailiwick, the manner in which the land had been disposed raised the ire of shareholders. The Directors alleged that a circular had been sent to every shareholder notifying them of the sale. Charles D. Cuthbert, a shareholder, protested that thirty out of the forty land warrants had been sold by and to the directors, before the circulars were posted. This left only ten warrants for shareholders. Cuthbert also alleged that the directors had allowed themselves twelve months to pay the bills attached to the warrants, but had insisted that shareholders who purchased warrants should produce immediate cash.¹ James Butlers asserted that such a sacrifice of land would never have been necessary had those shareholders who had given promissory notes for shares paid them on maturity.² But delegating the blame was not effective in restoring the confidence the Company had lost through the sale of land to the Forty Thieves.

Cakobau's annuity of £1000 provided for in the Charter, represented another thorn in the Company's side. Had the Charter been valid, the Company would merely have been guaranteeing the transfer of the remainder of its land by withholding payment of the annuity: the directors sometimes insisted that this consideration for shareholders' security, motivated non-payment. Paradoxically, at other times, the directors represented the annuity as a pressing liability which must be discharged immediately. As an instance, in May 1870, the directors were prepared to consider an offer made to the Company for its banking privileges, but only on the condition that it was accompanied by an undertaking to relieve the Company of the

1. Argus, 14 May 1870.

2. Argus, 16 May, 1870.

payment of Cakobau's annuity.¹ Scanning the situation from Cakobau's view, it was eminently pragmatic and perfectly reasonable to withhold the balance of the land due to the Company under the Charter, until he received the annuity. In addition, the Company had not yet begun either trading or banking operations, for which Levuka merchants yodelled,² but neither had Cakobau provided protection promised to settlers, nor had he attempted to punish those Fijians who hindered the Polynesia Company's surveyors. As far as the Company's obligations to its settlers were concerned, nothing, aside from an advertisement placed in the Fiji Times by Cook to the effect that he had "opened up negotiations with an influential Chinese firm in Melbourne for the supply of Chinese labour",³ had eventuated.

In need of capital, the Company sent John Evans to Bristol in October 1870, in the hope that he could encourage Bristol merchants to invest.⁴ November saw the Polynesia Company's maiden voyage to Victoria's Supreme Court. An action was brought against the Company by Augustus Keith, a shareholder, who had been allotted 220 shares and had taken up a further 100 for which he gave a promissory note of £200. Land warrants enabling him to select before survey were to be attached to the bill and given to

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1. Argus, 16 May, 1870.
 2. Levuka merchants were forced to trade in "worthless paper currency... or debased Bolivian half-dollars, which had percolated into Fiji from Somoa". Cyclopaedia of Fiji...., 1907, p. 117.
 3. F.T., 23 April, 1870.
 4. F.T., 8 Oct. 1870.

him on its being paid. During the currency of the bill, regulations concerning land warrants had been altered, limiting selections to surveyed land. Keith refused to accept the warrants and refused payment of the bill conditionally on his obtaining the warrants he required. He sued for breach of contract.¹ This was the first of a string of similar suits, for all of which the Company was culpable due to failure to make public amendments to its Articles.

In the same year, Cook resigned his position as manager and was elected director, E. F. Yenchen was appointed secretary, and James Butters was sent out to Fiji to investigate a host of claims pressed by the Company's creditors in Levuka, to relieve Glenny of his managership, to pay the final instalment of the American debt and to take possession of the balance of the Company's lands.²

In Fiji, even the Fiji Times which had delivered a number of eulogies on the Polynesia Company in 1869 and 1870, had become critical:

The Polynesia Company commenced operations with great pretensions... they were to monopolize the trade of Fiji and other groups. Suva city was to be the "Great central entrepot of Polynesia"... They were not only to establish banks, but they were to have the exclusive right of doing so. Trading, coffee, cotton and sugar planting, with the importation of Chinese coolies were to be gone into on a large scale. All the shareholders were to become rich and happy in the enjoyment of a planters' millenium... Is it all to end in a "fizz"? ³

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1. S. C. A. 3943.
 2. Before leaving Melbourne, Butters was astute enough to part with his interest in the Company, an action which sent shareholders' hopes of recovery for the Polynesia Company plummeting. F.T., 23 July, 1870.
 3. F.T., 23 July, 1870.

The editor claimed that had the Company been well managed and "had there been candour and unadorned statements of facts" from its inception, it could have been a great success.

Over the 1869 to 1870 period the Company's money had astonishingly and rapidly disappeared. Glenn, the manager in Fiji was partly responsible for the lack of finance. At the end of 1869, the Company had provided him with a schooner, the Alice, intended for use as transportation to and from survey sites and for Company business generally. But Glenn had taken to using the Alice for transporting labourers to and from Fiji, a duty associated with his responsibilities to the Planters' Co. Ltd., an organization set up in Fiji, partly under his auspices.¹ Glenn had also sent bills drawn upon the Company to the value of about £500, to Melbourne, without vouchers of expenditure attached.²

Butters liked Glenn: they were men of the same stamp, the former a good-natured swindler, the latter, a racist and a thief. Butters' mission to Fiji involved examining the correctness of Glenn's accounts and dismissing him from the Company's employ. He carried through the latter duty, but fully exonerated Glenn, intimating that Glenn had "acted in every way honourable to the Company".³ To the long list of the Company's creditors in Levuka, Butters gave bland assurance that forwarding accounts to Melbourne would result in payment. Short of this, he offered to pay the debts, or

1. F.T., 11 Dec. 1869.

2. F.T., 23 July, 1870.

3. ibid.

some of them himself. In return, it was revealed later, he received from the Polynesia Company five per cent of the land he induced Cakobau to hand over.¹

During Butters' stay in Fiji, disgruntled shareholders in Melbourne, perturbed at the Company's evasion and ever expecting "a full report of the state of the Company's affairs instead of ... a high-flown panegyric on the virtues of Mr. Butters"² had urged the directors to appoint a local committee in Fiji; Dr. G. Macartney, William Brewer, Captain E. R. Henry were elected. Henceforward, the Polynesia Company split into factions: the committee had the support of one section of the shareholders, Butters, of another, and "the remainder had no confidence in either".³

When Butters had first arrived in Fiji, he had delivered a colourful speech on Cook's vacuity and incompetence, and in 1871, he devoted himself to squabbles with the local committee, on those rare and capriciously selected occasions when he engaged in Company business. The remainder of his time was spent ostensibly on the Company's survey sites, or "on matters in which the Company had no interest".⁴

Aside from "looking sharply after Mr. Butters",⁵ the local committee had difficulty discerning the exact nature of its duties in Fiji. The directors,

1. F.T., 17 June, 1871.

2. F.T., 21 Jan. 1871.

3. ibid.

4. F.T., 8 April, 1871.

5. F.T., 21 Jan., 1871.

learning of the confusion and of the antipathy between Butters and the committee, assured the latter, with a limpidity that was to become characteristic, that it should "consult the books of the Company concerning its responsibilities" in Fiji, and that the committee and Butters should "let bygones be bygones".¹

Throughout the Company's domestic troubles, its creditors in Levuka pressed for settlement. Finally, in July 1871, the Creditors' Committee requested that Butters begin auctioning the Company's property as the only means of securing payment. The property consisted of a five-roomed weather-board house, situated on Viti Levu Bay, with "corrugated-iron roof, French doors and verandah all round" and other elaborate furnishings, "erected at great cost but never occupied"; the Company's schooner Alice, "with the consent of the mortgagee, Daniel O'Neill",² and agricultural and household furniture, still in their virginal state.³

Chaotic though the Company's affairs were in Fiji, the Melbourne muddle more than matched them. The Melbourne correspondent for the Fiji Times understated the shareholders' bewilderment when he wrote that "the Polynesia Company's affairs do not grow any clearer in this city".⁴ The Company's meetings had begun to be likened to bar-room brawls involving contests about whether or not reports should be read, whether the proceedings were constitutional, who should take the Chair and so on. At the half-yearly meeting

1. F.T., 8 April, 1871.

2. O'Neill was Butters' father-in-law.

3. F.T., 5 July, 1871.

4. F.T., 22 April, 1871.

in February 1871, disorder and dissatisfaction culminated and "the whole affair, instead of being a grave deliberation in the interests of the shareholders, who seem to be little thought of by the directors, was a screaming farce".¹

In March shareholders pressed for the appointment of a new board of directors, an appointment which Butters did not survive. All power in Fiji was vested in the local committee. The new Board of Directors, representing the anti-Butters faction, operated for two months without a manager. Then Yenchen was appointed manager "pro tem". For the time being it was thought expedient not to make public either the 1871 balance sheet or the document appended giving particulars of the money the Company owed its shareholders.²

No amount of reshuffling could remedy the Company's financial position, but an attempt to secure, at least, stable management resulted in the appointment of Charles Rossiter Forwood to Fiji, and Joshua Finner as General Manager.³ From January to November 1872, the Polynesia Company endeavoured to grasp at solvency, and between June and November, it did not operate at all. During this time, the Commercial Bank sued the Company for overdraft, William Detmold, a shareholder and book-binder claimed payment for "goods sold and delivered", Bernard Levinger sued for breach of contract, the Bank of New South Wales for overdraft, Yenchen for unpaid wages, and

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1. F.T., 22 April, 1871.
 2. F.T., 21 Nov. 1871.
 3. F.T., 21 Oct. 1871.

that the Company was made liable for these debts can possibly be attributed to the lack of enthusiasm of its lawyers, to whom it owed almost £1,000.¹

The Company was also at logger-heads with the Cakobau Government over the remainder of the land due to it, a steamship, three hundred tons of cocconut oil and the Company's banking rights.

In 1872, pressure from settlers for confirmation of their titles to land had been effective in inducing the Cakobau Government to hold a commission into the "quieting of titles". Among the first notices to be served upon the Government was that of the Polynesia Company demanding Crown Grants for land in its possession and for 110,000, still to be selected. The Government had also been exhorted to establish a National Bank in Fiji, and in July 1872, a Bill was presented to empower the Cabinet to grant a bank charter. The preamble to the Bill set forth that the Polynesia Company had failed to carry out its banking duties and was anyway, insolvent; on these grounds the Government justified the Bill's introduction.² C. R. Forwood, who held the ambiguous position of legal representative for the Polynesia Company, and Chief Justice of the Cakobau Government, protested, pointing out that whatever contracts Cakobau had made prior to the establishment of constitutional government, were still binding, and Cakobau had given the Company a monopoly on banking in Fiji. He excused the Company's tardiness in this matter, in a post hoc fashion, with the argument that

1. S. C. A. 3425; 3321; 4390; 3195; 3321 respectively.

2. F.T., 20 July 1872.

until recently, no protection for life or property has been established in this kingdom, and therefore it could not reasonably be expected that any Bank could have been established by [the Polynesia Company] or under their auspices.

Forwood dismissed the Bill as a "gross violation of good faith",¹ and the Assembly dismissed Forwood's protest on the grounds that the Company had refused to pay Cakobau the promised annuity and had failed to provide him with "a topsail schooner of 70-80 tons with five small guns on either side".²

It was not the demand for the annuity, nor the controversy over banking which unnerved the Polynesia Company; the "schooner" however, took the Company completely by surprise. The clause relating to the schooner had been dredged up from the first Charter, which had been rejected.³

In the substituted Charter, printed in the Company's Articles and accepted by the Registrar in Victoria, no mention was made of a schooner. The second Charter was in fact no less illegal than the first since Cakobau had pledged land, to which he had no title, to the Company, signing the document as "King of Fiji", but it had been recognised as "legal" by Victorian solicitors. The promise of a schooner however had etched itself ineradicably in Cakobau's mind.

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1. Cakobau Government Records Set 8. Petition to Legislative Assembly by Chairman of Directors of the Polynesia Company, 15 July, 1872.
 2. Darrick, R.A., History of Fiji, 1946, p. 217. On the same grounds the Cakobau Government Land Claims Commission, although it gave Crown Grants for the land which the Polynesia Company had already received, refused to make up the balance, irrespective of the fact that the Company had paid £9,000 to America.
 3. See Chapter 2, p. 29.

The Company was first made cognizant of the Cakobau Government's revival of the clause through Benjamin Cowderoy, consul for Fiji in Melbourne, who forwarded a letter from G. A. Woods, minister for Lands and Works in the Cakobau Government, then in Sydney to negotiate a loan for the Government, to the Company's Directors. Woods requested that the value of the Victorian Government steamer Victoria be assessed and on receipt of the assessment

... you would inform the Polynesia Company that the Government of Fiji are prepared to pay £5000 towards the purchase of the vessel, the Polynesia Company to pay the balance of the amount required to purchase it, which will be accepted in lieu of the vessel promised by the Company on account of the Charter... Should [the Company] be prepared to accept this proposal, then the Government undertakes to place them in possession of every rood of the 200,000 acres promised. ¹

Finner rightly asserted that the Company was under no legal obligation to provide Cakobau with a schooner, or a "steamer". The Board of Directors arranged a meeting with John Evans, who had been responsible for securing Cakobau's signature to the Charters. Evans explained that he and Brewer had promised to supply a vessel, but the promise had been "quite outside the Charter and not as any inducement for the King to sign the same - the vessel was to be specially paid for by 300 tons of coccaonut oil..." ² It was alleged that twelve months after the Charter had been signed, Cakobau had broached Cook on the subject; Cook stated that he had not ratified any

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1. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 2, Woods to Cowderoy, 5 Sept., 1872.
 2. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 2, Finner to Cowderoy, 13 Sept., 1872.

promise "as he had never heard of it".¹

On the subject of the vessel, Woods' authorities were the Reverends Tait and Nettleton, present at the signing of the first Charter, not at the second. Nettleton wrote to Woods explaining that his authority in this matter was "the original Fijian Charter," which contained the clause, "After a little while [the Company] promise one steamer to assist the Vunivalu". But no mention was made of coconut oil. Nettleton added that in 1870, he had discussed the schooner with Cook, and the latter had "led me to suppose" that the vessel had been promised:

When Mr. Butters arrived with a silver-mounted rifle as a present from the Company to King Cakobau, I was requested to inform the Vunivalu of the intended presentation. His first reply was - "What about the vessel?"²

Rev. Tait reinforced Nettleton's arguments, pointing out that "the promise of a steamer was a very great inducement for the King to sign..."³

In October Woods informed the Company that,

... this will be the last opportunity... accorded to you for a settlement of this matter; the Government are now prepared to hand over every acre of land due, and should this negotiation fall to the ground, they will not again entertain this question under any circumstances whatever.⁴

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1. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 1, Finner to Woods, 14 Oct. 1872.
 2. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 1, Nettleton to Woods, 26 Sept. 1872.
 3. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 1, Tait to Woods, 2 Oct. 1872.
 4. C. G. R. Set 34, Woods to Finner, 3 Oct. 1872.

Finner seized the opportunity to re-assert the Company's rights, making it clear that the Company could not be prevented from implementing its monopoly on banking in Fiji, on the grounds that it had not supplied Cakobau with a "steamer", which it had never, as a public company, promised, nor on the grounds that it had not paid Cakobau an annuity, since he had not provided protection for the Company's settlers, nor had he signed over the Company's land, and Finner protested against the Cakobau Government alienating 3,000,000 acres of Crown lands until the Company had selected the balance of the land due to it, in return for full payment of the American debt.¹

The Royal Land Claims Commission had meanwhile, examined the claims for land, submitted by the Forty Thieves. During the investigation it was found that the Viti Levu Bay block, conveyed to the association by the Polynesia Company, and estimated by the Company's surveyors to contain 80,000 acres, on survey, covered an area of only 50,000 acres.² Crown grants were issued for this land, but grants for the remaining 30,000 acres could not be issued until

... the Polynesia Company had completed its engagements with the King of Fiji, when they will be in a position to keep faith with you.³

Forwood had been busy ascertaining the acreage and whereabouts of the balance of the Company's land; he suggested that a further 50,000 acres at Viti

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1. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 1, Finner to Woods, 14 Oct. 1872.
 2. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 3, Martin, Amess and Croker to Woods, 23 Aug., 1872.
 3. C. G. R. Set 35, No. 3, Woods to Martin, Croker & Amess, 30 Oct. 1872.

Levu Bay, 30,000 at Suva, 8,000 at Beqa and 10,000 at Natewa Bay, would nicely complete Cakobau's agreement. However he objected to appearing before the Royal Land Claims Commission, and wrote a memo to Woods to this effect:

I may as well in courtesy say I won't go before any Royal Commission as such, but will be quite willing to go before a select committee composed of the very same Gents. The jurisdiction of the one is objectionable, the other is not. ¹

Aware, both of the Cakobau Government's "de facto" nature, and its anxiety to ingratiate itself with the Colonial public, Forwood issued a threat, that if the Government did not grant the Company's lands, he would take steps

to inform the public both in this country and the Colonies, why I am unable to report that the Company is not in a position to turn over to its subscribers, the property which their money has duly paid for. ²

In Melbourne, the Polynesia Company took advantage of the Woods' correspondence to discredit the Cakobau Government and to

... caution all parties who in financial matters, are asked to rely upon good faith being kept with them by the present existing Government of Fiji. ³

Victorians were gulled into believing that the Company had been made a scape-goat. The Company, egged on by popular sympathy, poured its energy

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1. C. G. R. Set 31. Memo to Woods.
 2. C. G. R. Set 31. Forwood to Woods, Dec., 1872.
 3. F.T., 30 Nov., 1872.

into a full-scale campaign to induce Victoria to annex Fiji, or assume a protectorate over it.¹ Dr. Macartney, who, with Finner, figured prominently in deputations sent on the Company's behalf to the Victorian Chief Secretary, assured the latter that

no man living knew more about the Fijian native element than he did, and he felt convinced that the feeling in favour of annexation to Victoria was strong amongst them.²

However British annexation was imminent by the end of 1873: the Company redirected its activity in this direction.³

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In March 1873, a notice had appeared in the Victorian Government Gazette, stating that a petition for winding up the Company had been presented to the Supreme Court by William Detmold, a shareholder. A hearing was to be held in April.⁴ There was no hearing, and the Polynesia Company made no mention of the notice.

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1. Finner to Chief Secretary of Victoria, 21 Nov., 1872; 6 Jan., 1873; 12 Feb., 1873, Victorian Archives.
 2. F.T., 12 Feb. 1873. Macartney had spent less than a year in Fiji. He was an unsuccessful planter at Suva.
 3. Polynesia Company to Chief Secretary of Victoria, 17 Oct. 1873.
 4. Victorian Government Gazette, 28 March, 1873.

CHAPTER FOUR

" 'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said
in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just
what I choose it to mean - neither more
nor less'. " Lewis Carroll.

At least as often as it is true, it is profoundly erroneous to contend, as eminent people do when they are making speeches, that increase in communication has the effect of giving agreement, since it can also be used to increase conflict and competitiveness: because sharing a language with other people provides the most subtle and most powerful of all tools for controlling the behaviour of these people to one's own advantage. For the information they conveyed, the writers of pamphlets and articles on cotton cultivation in Fiji might as accurately have barked. Reports that flooded the Colonial press from 1868 to 1870, not only instilled an almost hallucinatory vision of the ease of cotton planting in Fiji, but an equally misguided confidence in the superiority and stability of the Colonial mind, the endurance and efficiency of the Colonial body, and the elasticity of the contents of the Colonial purse. Propaganda like the following had the desired effect:

The Young Victorian... is ready to colonize the "back blocks" of the Darling and Lachlan, or to take up a "42nd section" in the wilds of Gippsland or the Wimmera. Queensland is not too hot, nor Dunedin too cold. He is not, therefore, likely to be deterred by the antagonism of the Chiefs of Rewa, or to scrutinize too narrowly the power or jurisdiction of Thakombau. Our colonist is content to run any ordinary risk, if only he has a reasonable prospect of eventually being able to sit down under his own fig tree, and to pluck grapes from his own vine.

Men, some of whom knew little of the back blocks of the Darling, and less of the "wilds of Gippsland", were lured to the coasts of Viti Levu, and guaranteed

1. Melbourne Herald, 28 Sept., 1868.

success, by virtue of the solitary fact that they were "young Victorians".

Berthold Seemann, in 1861, assessed Fiji as a "first-rate cotton-growing country... the encouragement held out to cultivators will be very great".¹ It was. Fiji's early European cotton planters, had, for the most part, settled after Pritchard's offer of cession in 1859. They were usually men with some capital, who took up land on Ovalau, Taveuni and Lau, who were prepared to make the best of any economic opportunity that arose, and had accustomed themselves to the idea that personal and psychological security issued from harmonious race relations. They were settled men and permanent residents in Fiji. Their success as planters was partly a consequence of security of tenure and political stability, products of Ma'afu's supremacy in Lau, and partly a natural result of large initial outlay, good management and hard work.

If rainfall was regular and predictable, if good land, and reliable labour for planting and picking were available, if precautions were taken against strangulation by weeds, if planted a reasonable distance apart, if a planter could afford the costs of ginning, and the costs of feeding and housing his labour, if he had a standby should blight or fungus ravage his crop, and if there was a market for his produce, cotton-planting was a sound occupation.

With the American civil war, and consequent cessation of cotton supply from Southern plantations, British cotton manufacturers offered high prices for cotton. From 1864 to 1870, cotton prices rose steadily, and by 1869,

1. Seemann, B., Viti: An Account of a Government Mission to the Vitian or Fijian Islands in the years 1860-61, London, 1862, p. 49.

95% of land in Fiji cultivated by Europeans, was under cotton.¹ In 1869 and 1870, the "Fiji Rush" was at its height. Fiji's European population rose from 492 in 1867 to 2,000 in 1870.² It had all been done with words.

Correspondents for newspapers, and self-appointed authorities on cotton-cultivation in Fiji, invariably underestimated the costs of running a plantation:

Very little capital is required to start a plantation in these islands. The price of land is low, 4/- or 5/- an acre, and it can be cleared at a moderate cost. The machinery requisite for cleaning the cotton is simple and inexpensive, and the whole work of the plantation requires only care, and but little skill or experience.³

Fijian labour was recommended since, "if properly superintended, they will get through a good deal of work",⁴ and the cost and problem of obtaining Pacific Islands labour was rarely acknowledged as one: labourers could be "easily imported from the adjacent islands... under three year contracts".⁵ Protection from molestation was either assured, along with the means of obtaining redress,

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1. Stokes, E., "The Fiji Cotton Boom in the 1860's", W.Z.J.H., Nov. 2, 1968, p. 167.
 2. ibid., p. 167.
 3. Hope, C. W., "Sketches of Polynesia - the Fijis", Blackwood's Magazine, July 1869, p. 51.
 4. Pechey, W. C., Fijian Cotton Culture and Planters' Guide to the Islands, London, 1870, p. 46.
 5. Quoted in Stokes, E., "The Fiji Cotton Boom...", p. 170.

If a native steals from, or otherwise injures a white man, the latter has only to make a formal complaint to the judge to secure some payment of the offender.¹

or its necessity simply ignored. Land was "plentiful and cheap".² No distinction was made between different localities in Fiji and their different cotton-growing capacities. The soil was the "most fertile, the richest, the best in the world".³ Irrespective of locality and degree of experience of culture contact, the Fijian was "a docile and valuable servant, whose labour can be relied on for many years to come."⁴ This was the situation that hundreds of Victorians and New Zealanders anticipated, as they sailed in blissful ignorance across the Pacific, basing their calculations "on luxurious ease and uninterrupted success".⁵ In Forbes' words, "Nothing in truth, could look on paper a more captivating and secure speculation".⁶

They met different conditions; the road "to wealth in Fiji seemed to be like the approach to heaven, strait and narrow, and few there were that found it".⁷ The settler of the "Fiji Rush" was young, in his mid-twenties to early-thirties, often with his wife and family, and more often with very little capital. Before he could select land for his plantation,

1. Pechey, W. G., op. cit., p. 17.

2. ibid., p. 63.

3. New Zealand Weekly News, 18 April 1868. Quoted in the "Prospectus of the Polynesia Company Ltd."

4. ibid.

5. Moss, F. J., A Planter's Experience in Fiji, 1870, p. 5.

6. Forbes, L., Two Years in Fiji, 1875, p. 108.

7. Cumming, C. F. Gordon, At Home in Fiji, London, 1882, p. 59.

he had usually to spend some time in Levuka hotels, where daily accommodation cost \$1. per head.¹ He had then to charter a boat and crew to search for land around the coasts, since by 1869, good land in, for example, Tavuni was £1 an acre,² relatively expensive, and most of the land in Lau was already occupied. Cheap land could be bought for guns and ammunition in the insecure river valleys of the Rewa, Navua and Sigatoka, or on stretches of the Viti Levu coast, hitherto uninhabited by white men. The purchase of coastal land around Ba and Nadi often proved a fatal error, since Europeans then cut off access for inland tribes to the sea. Coastal tribes which had alienated sections of land resented Europeans' refusal to continue to trade in firearms, which they were anxious to obtain to protect themselves from attacks by other Fijians in the interior. Europeans in these areas, consequently lost the support of coastal chiefs and hence their protection. The Fijian acre being indeterminate, the extent of one's land was a matter of guesswork, and the cost of survey beyond the means of many. The imprecision of boundaries and Europeans' rigid adherence to and righteous defence of the concepts of trespass, and individual ownership, provided further sparks for racial strife. Defence of property, by both Fijians and Europeans, led to raids and reprisals.

Once land was secured, dwellings had to be built for the planter himself and for his labour: the cost of building a Fijian bure ranged from £2 to £8 according to size.³ Fijian labour had early proved itself

1. Argus, 14 April, 1868.

2. Young, J. M. R., "Frontier Society in Fiji", 1968, p. 206.

3. Pechey, W. C., op. cit., p. 70.

unreliable: as Philp observed, "the Fijian can live without slaving for you - why should he do it?"¹ Labour had to be imported from the New Hebrides, Solomons, Line Islands or Tokelaus, to be fed, housed, paid, managed and transported to and from home islands. In 1869, costs were relatively low, about £6 per man per year; by 1870, the price had risen to £16.² Seed and tools had to be purchased, and once in the ground, plants had to be kept free of weeds. When picked, there was the cost of transporting cotton to Levuka for ginning, and then freight charges to Sydney for its shipment to England, which amounted to about £9 a ton.³ An indefinite waiting period followed before a planter could fondle his profits. Meanwhile, he lived on credit, or sold his cotton in Levuka, for an immediate, although smaller, monetary return. The planter had also to contend with the unexpected problem of the weather. Averaged out annually, Fiji's rainfall was admirably suited to cotton growing. In reality, rainfall was irregular; cotton often rotted in the pod as a result. The occasional hurricane could destroy a plantation in a matter of minutes. In addition, the planter faced boredom, loneliness, fear of encroachment, dysentery, mosquitoes, little or no land communication, and as one planter wrote to his Victorian friends,

1. Philp, R., "My Diary".

2. Stokes, E., "The Fiji Cotton Boom...", p. 171.

3. ibid., p. 174.

... a diet of yams and salt meat, in a climate that when not sultry is raining, in a country swamy and unhealthy... If I were not fixed and had to see it out, I would have left long since... Give my regards to all enquiring friends, and tell them to know when they are well off, and keep in Victoria, as I wish to my soul, I had done. ¹

Those planters who were not engaged in punitive expeditions, avenging acts of Fijians which they interpreted as attacks on their natural superiority, were recoiling emotionally from the endangering of group position, irrigating their lives with a genial flow of gin, on the porches of Levuka hotels, and in its billiard halls, leaving plantations under the lethargic supervision of foremen. The Fijian became "a 'nigger', of no appreciable value except to put his mark upon a title deed to land", ² and racial conviviality, as well as cotton, rotted in backyards.

In August 1870, the Franco-Prussian War and closing of French textile factories, relieved Britain of a rival. American cotton was again appearing on the market and prices fell. By mid 1871, the Fiji cotton boom was over; the price of cotton had descended from 5/- to 6d. per pound, ³ and many of the men who had arrived in Fiji after 1869 had toppled,

... utterly ruined and overwhelmed with debt, with health shattered by privation... literally without the means to get away, helpless and wellnigh hopeless, living just like the natives... and unable from sheer poverty to obtain the commonest comforts of civilised life. ⁴

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1. Argus, 14 April, 1868.
 2. Confidential Dispatch from Robinson, Governor of New South Wales to Earl Kimberley, 27 January, 1873.
 3. Gaggin, J., Among the Maneaters, 1900, p. 41.
 4. Cumming, C. F. Gordon, At Home in Fiji, p. 56.

All this was often combined with an awareness of personal failure, although the failure of cotton had been a consequence of economic and political factors, beyond a planter's control.

Over 1500 human beings had been washed off to Fiji in a flood of words, for many of which the Polynesia Company was either directly, or indirectly responsible, since publicity to Fiji had attended and followed in the wake of its conception and its operations. The "Polynesia Line of Packets" had arranged transport to Fiji for about 230 Australians in 1869 and 1870,¹ but as a land company, the Polynesia Company contributed only about 50 settlers to the "Fiji Rush". These, it had planned to settle on its lands at Beqa, Viti Levu Bay, Natewa Bay and Suva. Of the Company's settlements, only Suva survived beyond survey, and any merit attaching to its progress could not be apportioned to the Polynesia Company.

Beqa, a large and fertile island, about thirty miles south of Suva, had never been under the sway of Bau. It was

... by tradition, subservient to no earthly power, being the only place left untouched by the great flood that destroyed the rest of the world.

In 1839, the island had been conquered by Rewa, and was subject to Roko Tui Dreketi, high chief of Rewa. In 1859, Beqa chiefs had placed themselves under Ma'afu's protection. When Beqa chiefs heard of the sale of their land to the Polynesia Company, they solicited Ma'afu's advice, and he

1. Passenger Ship Register, 1869-70, Victorian Archives.

2. France, P., The Charter of the Land, M.U.P., 1969, p. 82.

refused to alienate any of the land. European leaseholders of Beqa land and Bequan natives took a belligerent stand when Cakobau, and the Polynesia Company agents arrived to survey in 1870. Josuah Lorola, Buli of Beqa in 1877, and witness to Cakobau's attempts to extort Beqa from its inhabitants, stated that the Fijians owned the island

... not the Melbourne people. I am the owner of Beqa absolutely white man's fashion. It is ours together - my tribe and myself. We are under the impression the Vunivalu stole Beqa if he sold it. ¹

Continual resistance to survey dissipated the Company's hopes of settlement at Beqa.

Viti Levu Bay was occupied by the kai Saivou, ² subject to Viwa, and thus subject to Bau. The Polynesia Company's Charter had been signed by Sitivazi Tukana, a chief of Viwa: his signature went a small way towards legitimizing Cakobau's alienation of this land. Both Beqa and the Viti Levu Bay block had been sold by the Company to the Forty Thieves in 1870. As a result of the sale, the Company itself was not legally permitted to sell any of this land.

That the Company had been forced to part with Viti Levu Bay, had been a great disappointment. A deal of ceremony had attended the conveyance of the block in September 1869, in the presence of Cakobau, Roko Tui Viwa, and thirteen other puzzled Fijian chiefs. The name of the Company's projected town at Viti Levu Bay was fixed at "Cooktown", after Frederick Cook, the

1. L. C. C., R.367.

2. France, P., op. cit., p. 83.

Company's first manager; its site,

... a very gentle rise, having a good beach and anchorage in front... backed by slopes and high hills and well supplied with water... and behind, a large tract of country consisting of a series of hills and dales - the latter very extensive and fit for the plough. ¹

The Company's propagandist added that a favourable feature of the district was "the scarcity of timber and other hindrances to immediate cultivation". ²

Although the Bay itself was capacious and well-sheltered, the land was either swamp, or covered with rocks. The three native towns in the vicinity were actually positioned on the summits of immense rocky rises. Over this land, Mrs. Fitzgibbon ³ talked of driving her buggy. She was largely responsible for the high hopes which the Polynesia Company settlers invested in Viti Levu Bay:

She actually went up to Melbourne, attended meetings, praised the Company, and its prospects, told everyone there were beautiful roads in Viti Levu Bay, and sent down a buggy!! as a blind. Shares went up like smoke on a clear day... ⁴

Mrs. Fitzgibbon was intending to sell out her shares and the buggy provided suitable bait, for "dame Fitz.- sold out absolutely". ⁵ Where Viti Levu Bay was concerned, however, she ultimately demonstrated her honesty by

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1. F.T., 11 September 1869.
 2. ibid.
 3. She was a shareholder in the Company, and later married Joseph Glennay.
 4. Thurston to Hope, 23 Nov., 1870.
 5. ibid.

placing a notice in Colonial newspapers when it became clear that the land was not all it seemed:

As I find that the survey of the Viti Levu Bay land will not be finished for some time, and even then the land will not be equal to the expectations raised, and as I want no man's money without full value being given, I ask you to decide whether you will wait for the survey of Viti Levu or take land in Suva, or else receive back the money paid. ¹

The survey of Viti Levu Bay was not completed until October 1871, the delay, a result of repeated opposition from Drobutu, Chief of Na Bulla.²

A notice inviting holders of warrants to select the land was followed almost immediately by another two notices, one placed by J. B. Leefe warning settlers holding Polynesia Company warrants off his land, which the surveyor, Antonio Martelli, had wrongfully included in the survey,³ and the other, by Leveny and Strang, who complained of the same injustice perpetrated by Martelli, "in spite of our repeated warnings".⁴ Aside from the large wooden bungalow built there by Glennay, no Polynesia Company settlers ever occupied or cultivated land there.⁵

Natewa Bay, Vanua Levu, another of the Company's holdings was under the absolute control of Tui Cakau: the man himself had not agreed to the sale of

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1. F.T., 10 May 1871.
 2. L.C.C., R. 130.
 3. F.T., 30 Aug. 1871.
 4. F.T., 25 Oct. 1871.
 5. L.C.C. R471.

10,000 acres of land to the Polynesia Company, but he was married to Cakobau's sister.¹ Mrs. Fitzgibbon had again attempted to persuade shareholders into taking up land at Natewa Bay, which, she stated, "some persons were very greedy to get".² The land itself was admirably situated, well-watered and timbered, and the soil was excellent, "well adapted for the cultivation of cotton and coffee".³ In 1870, James Butters had made a superficial survey of the land, and reported himself "pleased with the location".⁴ Natewa Bay would probably have been the most productive of all the Company's land, had it been colonized. Nine-tenths of the block, however, were occupied by Fijians who were unaware that their ownership was disputed.⁵ As late as 1876, only a few had become Christian, and these had "renounced the lotu and taken to their old heathenish practices".⁶ Both these circumstances possibly explain the Company's inability to interest its supporters. Only one warrant-holder, William Brache, attempted to occupy the land (200 acres) he had purchased from the Company. His attempt was not successful.⁷

Suva was the only section of the Company's land upon which it managed to successfully place settlers. It became a centre of government and the

1. France, P., op. cit., p. 83.

2. Argus, 16 May, 1870.

3. F.T., 24 Dec., 1870.

4. Argus, 16 May, 1870.

5. The Claims and Remonstrance of the Polynesia Company of Melbourne, examined and refuted, Levuka, 1878, p. 54.

6. F.T., 20 May 1876.

7. L. C. C. R915.

focus for the Colonial Sugar Refinery after annexation, and was always sharply divorced, physically, socially and politically from the Fijian people.

The Polynesia Company intended Suva to become^a bustling Colonial town, early Melbourne reflected in Fiji, with streets running at right-angles, and named after its prominents, shrubs on the sides of macadamized streets, a town hall and some churches, with residential suburbs full of neat white Colonial cottages, spreading inland. With a view to the vision, Suva had been planned and surveyed. The actual town settlement, consisting of half acre allotments, was ensconced on the Western bank of the Lami River;

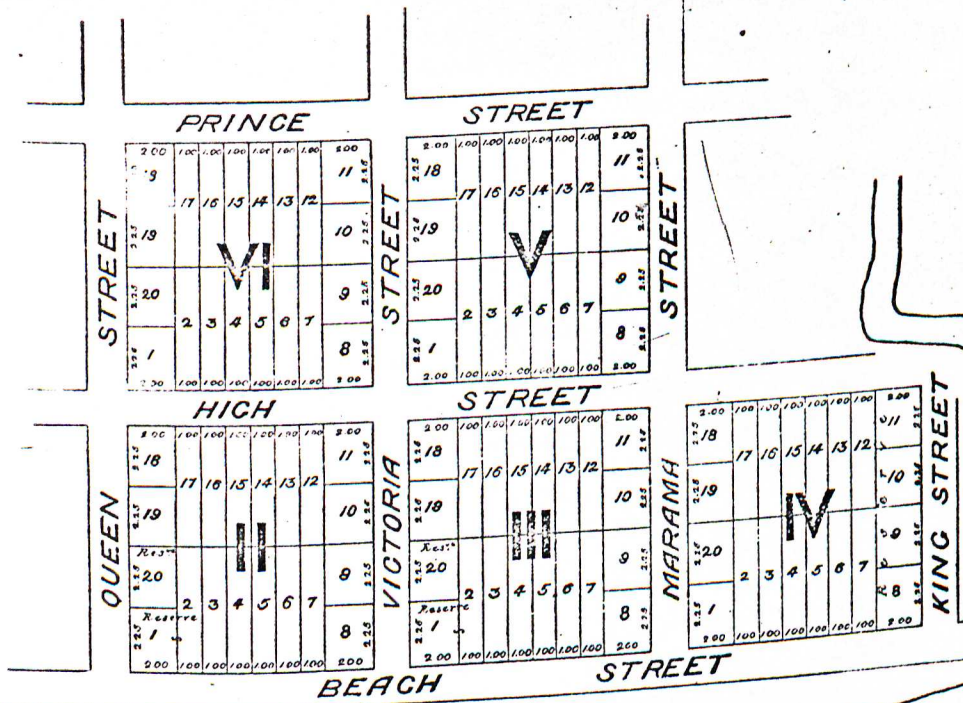
Its wide streets give one the idea of civilisation, and of a town well arranged, being light and airy and healthy. ¹

Running parallel with the sea frontage were Beach Street, Fitzgibbon Street, and Cook Street, and at right angles with these, and parallel with each other, Queen Street, Victoria Street, Marama Street and Alice Street. Surrounding the town was a belt of half a mile divided into suburban sections of five acres each. ² This land, a hilly swamp, was regarded as a desirable residential area, and consequently called "Toorak", after Melbourne's elite suburb. What were called "country" allotments were

1. F.T., 15 Jan., 1870.

2. Cyclopaedia of Fiji...., p. 213.

PLAN
 OF A PORTION OF THE
 POLYNESIA COMPANY'S
 PROPOSED TOWN
 OF
 SUVA



Scale 100 Chains

Surveyed by
 D.B. Sellars
 Jan^y 1870.

The Common Seal of the
 Polynesian Company
 Limited was herewith
 applied by the authority of
 a Board by Johna Finer
 Manager in the presence of
 G. R. [Signature] Directors
 [Signature]

Johna Finer Manager
 Melbourne. 4th Feby. 1873.

S U V A H A R B O U R

situated at Grove Point, south-west of the town, and at Suva Point, the tip of Suva promontory between Suva Bay and Laucala Bay. The hinterland stretched north to the Waimanu River and reached east to the Rewa. At the heads of both the Lami and Tamavua Rivers there were extensive flats of rich land, suitable for sugar-growing: this had been suggested as early as 1868.¹ Suva harbour was secure, convenient and well-sheltered, the nearest in Fiji to Australia, and anticipated port of call for San Francisco mail steamers en route to New Zealand.

Although land at Suva was at the disposal of Roko Tui Dreketi, Ambrose, Roko Tui Suva, was the son of Cakobau's sister,² and had married Adi Kelena of Rewa.³ With a little inducement, Ambrose had begrudgingly consented to alienation of land at Suva. Roko Tui Dreketi had not.

The survey of the Suva concession had commenced in 1869, but it was not, according to Glennay's report, carried out unopposed:

I have great difficulty in obtaining labour. It is quite impossible to get Fijians to work longer than a week or a fortnight at the furthest... A great deal of time is lost reconciling the petty jealousies of the various tribes around Suva harbour; the Suva men will not allow the Lami men to work on the Suva Point side of the harbour, and the Lami men will not allow the Suva men to come to Lami, so that every two or three miles of survey, I have to negotiate with a different tribe.⁴

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1. Prospectus of the Polynesia Co. Ltd., 1868.
 2. France, P., op. cit., p. 83.
 3. Wall, C. C., "Sketches in Fijian History", Fijian Society Transactions, 1919, p. 40.
 4. Argus, 16 May, 1870.

The survey was completed a few months prior to the arrival of the S.S. Allhambra, at Suva Bay¹ in September 1870, with its giddy cargo of

... inefficient, happy-go-lucky, men with inadequate capital, who had not sat down and counted properly the cost of the venture, but had been caught up with the glamour of the Islands and... always trusted that something² would turn up which would lead us to fortune.

Its arrival at Suva was "a veritable surprise... Not a single representative of the Polynesia Company was there to greet us". Approximately 40 of the 170 passengers were Polynesia Company settlers,³ among them, William Brewer, Dr. G. Macartney and Captain B. R. Henry,⁴ William Baillie, Charles Cuthbert and the Joske family.

Brewer was one of the Company's promoters; Macartney, a dedicated imbiber, was formerly an Anglican minister in Canada. He had come to Victoria with his wife in 1865 to take charge of the church at Rosedale. In 1870 he abandoned it, and became a barrister.⁵ Captain Henry had been in

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1. The ship then went straight on to Levuka, omitting Viti Levu Bay, which some Polynesia Company settlers had hoped to sight, with a view to purchase.
 2. Brewster, A. B., King of the Cannibal Isles, 1937, p. 74. The author was one of the passengers on the Allhambra.
 3. ibid., p. 90.
 4. These constituted the local committee in Fiji.
 5. In April 1873, Macartney was in the Victorian Insolvent Court, and in 1876, he was "shedding the lustre of his genius on the people of Gippsland". He had also, in the same year, bamboozled the Grand Lodge of Good Templars into appointing to lecture on teetotalism. F.T., 9 April 1876.

100.

Fiji in 1860 and 1861 in partnership with John Cairns. William Baillie¹ was the partner of James Butters; together they had begun one of the first stock and share broking firms in Victoria. In the late 50's and early 60's, the firm had been one of the most influential, but by early 1870, had failed, and Baillie was hoping to repair his fortunes in Fiji.² Charles Cuthbert was an architect from Ballarat. His early design, half-built, for the Ballarat Town Hall was superseded in 1868:³ this may have helped him to Fiji, but he was actually travelling as the representative of the Fiji Planting and Trading Company, which owned land at Suva.⁴ The most successful of the Allhambra's Polynesia Company passengers were the Joske family. Paul and Adolphe Joske owned and operated one of the earliest wine and spirit firms in Victoria; their business began in 1853 and was carried on by Alex Joske, after Paul and Adolphe went to Fiji.⁵

These were a few of the men, with their "wives and children, goods and chattels", the Allhambra deposited at Suva, before sailing to Levuka. Prior to the ship's arrival, only the Armstrong Brothers had taken up Polynesia

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1. Baillie's murder in January 1871 was Suva's first. His planting partner, Henry Scott was initially charged. But in 1877, Macartney, in a state of delirium, by his wife's account, confessed to Baillie's murder. When he recovered, he asserted that his wife had started this rumour to deter him from divorce proceedings. Her lover, F. L. Smith, another barrister, undertook to uphold Mrs. Macartney's statement, claiming that Macartney had been "guilty of dreadful ill-treatment to his wife, ingratitude, drunkenness and other offences". Before legal proceedings could be initiated against Macartney for Baillie's murder, he died, 6 June 1878. (F.T., 1 March 1876; 19 Dec. 1877).
 2. Hall, A. R., The Stock Exchange of Melbourne..., pp. 108-9.
 3. Weston Bate (personal communication).
 4. Percy Oakden, another architect, had purchased Polynesia Company warrants for 1002 acres of land at Suva. He sold this to the Fiji Planting and Trading Company for £800 in July 1870. (Titles' Office, Co's. Registration Branch, No. 115, Victorian Archives.
 5. Sutherland, A., Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present, Vol. II, Melbourne 1888, p. 566.

Company land at Suva; they had begun cotton-planting. Although it was only a matter of months before Macartney had set up his general store, and Johnston and Armstrong had begun to advertise the facilities of the "Suva Hotel", and Brewer and Joske had formed a partnership, opened a ginning establishment and a store "to supply planters and others with general merchandise",¹ the actual township of Suva never really got off the ground.

Most settlers had landed without a thought of having to protect themselves. They considered that, since they had "Australian experience, they knew how to make themselves at home in the Bush".² Their first aggressors were mosquitoes, then "hordes of fierce land crabs, and rain, when the fine weather broke up and our camps were swept with equinoctical gales".³ Later, they had to contend with Suva natives, who had as little experience of Europeans, as the settlers had of Fijians. Suva settlers were beset with raids, justice for which they demanded in countless petitions to the newly formed Cakobau Government. Brewer and Joske's store became, as it grew, an irresistible temptation to local Fijians. In November 1871, after three unsuccessful attempts, it was finally plundered.⁴ At the proprietors' request, Ambrose held an enquiry. Six Suva men were convicted and sentenced to work on Brewer and Joske's plantation. Ambrose then left for Bau. After his departure the men "refused to work and were very insolent", so Brewer and Joske appealed to Roko Tui Dreketi of Rewa.

1. F.T., 17 May, 1871.

2. Brewster, A. B., op. cit., p. 129.

3. ibid.

4. F.T., 20 Nov., 1871.

He asked for liquor and other things to the amount of some 30 shillings, and then punished five of the men, and afterwards demanded £2 payment for so doing, which, as we did not understand that justice was to be a matter of barter in Fiji, we refused.

Appeals like this, seemed to Suva settlers to fall on deaf ears, and as a result, they banded together to form the "Suva Planters' Association" with Cuthbert as secretary. The association bore little resemblance to those existing at Ba and Nadi, or to the earlier "Protection" societies of Levuka. It was both in reality, and by its own account, a group of

... respectable and would-be law abiding citizens
 ...very reluctant to seek redress by arming themselves for defense, and whenever practicable making summary reprisals... thus commencing what in the end would prove to be nothing less than the invitation of a prolonged and internecine war between the two races.²

The Company might have been disappointed in its settlers for their apparent reluctance to physically assert their rights against inferior men, but the premise on which the Suva Planters' Association acted, was in fact, as emphatic an assertion of those rights as a punitive expedition would have been. They appealed to what they considered a "white man's" government "to convince the natives that punishment would immediately follow crime".³ But the Cakobau Government was unable either to anticipate or repress, the "evils" committed by natives, and it was only imperceptibly that its influence

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1. C. G. R. Set 31. Brewer and Joske to Minister of Native Affairs, 7 Dec., 1871.
 2. F.T., 2 March, 1872.
 3. F.T., 27 Jan., 1872.

was felt among the Fijians it was supposed to have, in the eyes of many a planter, subjugated.

Men who had read Glenny's report, published in the Argus, might have anticipated that they too, would experience some difficulty in obtaining plantation labour. This was a pressing problem at Suva. Although "some adventurous souls" set off in small craft for the labour markets of Levuka, or to petition chiefs of neighbouring islands others,¹ with little capital were forced to endure the capriciousness of local men. Brewer and Joske, who could afford to travel to Levuka for labour, often complained of the trouble this involved. In one trip alone, they estimated that they had lost £100 and twelve days

... in the going to and detention at Levuka...
and other losses through having to subdue our
Captain, through drunkenness, caused by the
many temptations at Levuka.²

Suva natives, when not directly attacking planters, made themselves obnoxious by persecuting natives from other towns working on plantations,

... thereby raising the now too high rate of
pay, and preventing the plantation being
supplied with a sufficient number of hands.³

That the bar of the Suva Hotel was "supplied with wine and spirits of the best quality", and that "good accommodation and civility"⁴ could be

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1. For example, Charles Eggestrom, "a dissatisfied man and a stern philosopher at the age of thirty-one". Australasian, 3 Nov., 1866.
 2. C. G. R. Set 10. Brewer and Joske to Chief Secretary, 4 June, 1873.
 3. C. G. R. Set 10. Cuthbert to Chief Secretary, 1 Nov. 1872.
 4. F.T., 26 July, 1871.

enjoyed there, provided but small inducement to the travelling public to visit Suva, particularly when pitted against the wider variety of attractions at Levuka. From the beginning of 1872 to 1874, Suva offered four of what might be called "social occasions", all held in the Suva Hotel, which stood on eighty acres of land, "a substantial building of wood and iron, and all the necessary outbuildings".¹ On the first Saturday of every month, the Planters' Association met; church service was held every Sunday, "in addition to the monthly service conducted by the missionary from Rewa";² later the Suva Rifle Association held its meetings in the Hotel, and occasionally Brewer and Joske organized a dance. Suva settlers felt their isolation:

We often went weeks without hearing any news from the outside world. Now and then small cutters and native canoes would flit across the mouth of the harbour, on their way to and from Levuka, but they did not call to see us...

Its atmosphere bore a remarkable similarity to that of industry and enterprise which characterized the early communities of Scottish "mechanics and sawyers" in New Zealand. By the end of 1871, Suva district supported 60 white settlers "comprising planters, store and hotel keepers, engineers, builders, carpenters and other tradesmen".⁴ In January 1873, the population had risen to eighty and the value of imports and exports for the preceding year amounted to £20,000.⁵ Exports included mainly cotton,

1. F.T., 16 Sept., 1871.

2. F.T., 16 Sep., 1871.

3. Brewster, A. B., op. cit., p. 85.

4. F.T., 20 Dec., 1871.

5. C. G. R. Set 11. Suva citizens to Chief Secretary, 17 Jan., 1873.

copra and native fruits and manufactures. Most of Suva's cotton was grown from seed produced by the Ryder Brothers,¹ who had averaged a price of about £800 per ton of cotton,² and although the hurricane of March 1871, had disrupted operations and forced some to begin anew, cotton was keeping those who sowed it, alive in 1871. All produce was shipped through Brewer and Joske.

The observation of a correspondent for the Fiji Times that "Suva is Brewer and Joske" was astute. By 1873, the firm, as well as owning a store, had erected a steam-powered saw mill, "the saw bench fitted with circular saws, the sizes of which range up to 42 ins",³ with which they kept themselves and Suva citizens well supplied with boards and quartering; they owned the cutter Loelia, the largest of a tiny fleet of vessels belonging to Suva residents, which bobbed in Suva harbour; and as early as 1872, Brewer and Joske had begun experimenting in sugar cultivation.

Their sugar plantation was situated on Suva Point, adjoining a native reserve in the south, and was made up of a block of land purchased from Swanston and Hennings containing about 375 acres, which fronted onto Suva Harbour.⁴ Under Polynesia Company warrants, Brewer and Joske had purchased about 600 acres adjoining, and extending east to Laucala Bay. Settlers in and around Suva purchased cane from Fijians, and with these, nurseries were started. Brewer and Joske commenced operations under the supervision of

1. F.T., 20 Dec., 1871.

2. Ryder, G. L., "Pioneering in the South Seas", p. 40.

3. F.T., 20 Dec., 1871.

4. C. G. R. Set 10, Brewer and Joske to Chief Secretary, April 1873.

W. L. Smith, a sugar planter from the Barbadoes.¹ In April 1873, they introduced a large sugar crushing machine, and distilling apparatus for rum manufacture, together valued at £3,000. Two hundred and five acres of their land was under cultivation, 175 acres planted in cane, and thirty in food for 165 labourers, "and a more contented and laughing crowd is not to be found in any part of the world".² Labour was imported from Sento and transported in another of the firm's vessels, the Nil Desperandum. Labourers were required to cut cane, and then dissect it into several pieces. These long strips were then passed through the crushing machine; the juice was boiled, with the help of "two large Cornish boilers of 25 H.P. each", and the molasses allowed to drain as far as possible. Brewer and Joske's first product was "a black sugar of the consistency of thick tar".³ Nevertheless, confident of eventually perfecting it, Brewer and Joske omitted to send to Victoria for the following three months' supply of sugar:

Residents had... to put up for that length of time with the local article, which had to be served in a can or a basin, being in a semi-liquid state.⁴

By mid 1873, the mill was turning out about seven tons of "sugar" a week. A thrilling shipment from Suva, in the form of a 25 pound bag of sugar arrived at Levuka in July, where it sold at 5d. to 5½d. a pound.⁵

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1. Derrick, R.A., op. cit., p. 220.
 2. C. G. R. Set 10, Brewer and Joske to Chief Secretary, 13 April, 1873.
 3. Cyclopaedia of Fiji..., p. 168.
 4. ibid.
 5. F.T., 12 July, 1873.

A larger mill was in the process of erection, capable of producing twelve tons of sugar every twenty-four hours, and to be supplied with cane from surrounding sugar producing districts, to which Brewer and Joske ran a small steamer to convey the cane to the mills in return for half the produce, the same terms on which mill owners in Queensland used to crush cane. Their own plantation yielded about two and a half tons of sugar to the acre. Sugar bags were made by Rewa natives and purchased.¹

Attached to the works was a blacksmith's shop, fitted with lathe and forge, and "capable to supply all the requirements for the most extensive repairs or alterations".² In all, Brewer and Joske's concerns, their timber yard, ginning house and sugar plantation, employed a quarter of Suva's white population, including three engineers, four carpenters, and two bricklayers.³ Under their auspices, Suva's first church was projected in 1873. In addition to contributing "any piece of land the committee liked to choose", Brewer and Joske offered timber, £40 and "a bell and stained window". They suggested that

the church be open to all Protestant denominations, and that at the end of five years, it be handed over to the Wesleyan body, who will give their services in administering the gospel.⁴

The building itself was to be forty by twenty-four feet, with ten foot walls, "of wood, with a shingle roof".⁵ Brewer and Joske had also financed the

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1. F.T., 12 July, 1873.
 2. C. G. R. Set 10, Brewer and Joske to Chief Secretary, April, 1873.
 3. ibid.
 4. F.T., 5 April, 1873.
 5. ibid.

building of a jetty into Suva harbour, offered land for the erection of a "court-house and lock-up", and owned the land upon which A. K. Davies planned to build his new two-storied Hotel, late in 1873. A passenger on board the New Zealand steamer Star of the South¹ remarked that he was

at once struck with the energy and activity displayed everywhere, giving an idea of some busy colonial town: one policeman² is kept idle keeping the people in order.

By April 1874, seven vessels traded regularly between Suva, and Melbourne and Auckland, and trade amounted to 3,000 tons imported, 3500 locally produced exported, including sugar, which was well-received in New Zealand.³ The highest price it fetched was £38.10.0 per ton, and the lowest, for dark sugars, £35.10.0.⁴

As late as 1875, Joske⁵ was still shipping good quality sugar, "a truly splendid sample, and one that could not be excelled in the Colonies".⁶ He had also taken up rum manufacture, putting several casks on sale in Suva, for 12/6 a gallon.⁷ By 1877 he had erected a distillery on the Rewa,

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1. This ship visited Suva three times in the nine months June 1873-April 1874.
 2. F.T., 23 July, 1873.
 3. F.T., 11 April, 1874.
 4. F.T., 23 Oct., 1874.
 5. Brewer poisoned himself in 1873, when his 14 year old daughter revealed his incestuous relationship with her; it extended over about seven years.
 6. F.T., 23 Jan., 1875.
 7. F.T., 28 April, 1875.

and hoped to be able to export about one hundred quarter casks of rum to New Zealand and Victoria that year.¹

Little was done in sugar production between 1876 and 1881. The soil upon which a number of Polynesia Company settlers had commenced planting cane, was only a few inches deep. Sugar in the Suva area was doomed, once the light layer of soil covering "soapstone" was exposed to the action of the sun and tropical rains.² It crumbled up and washed away leaving only bare stretches of soapstone rock. The Joske family and Charles Cuthbert, who had returned to his former occupation as an architect, were all who remained of the Allhambra's passengers at Suva in 1880.

Rumours that Suva was to be the capital of the new colony of Fiji began spreading in 1876. The Fiji Times dropped its patronisation of Suva, "that glorious land of experiments and disaster",³ like a hot coal. Thomson and Renwick, merchants at Suva, by 1876 owned the greater part of Suva's land, bought from unsuccessful Polynesia Company settlers.⁴ In consideration of Suva being proclaimed the capital, and a town laid out, Thomson and Renwick offered the British Government every alternate allotment of their property, and a site for Government offices. In 1880, the first land auction took place. It was boycotted by Levuka's patrons, and only about six allotments were sold.⁵ Levukans remained incredulous long after Government buildings had been erected at Suva. James McEwan and

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1. F.T., 9 June, 1877. The Joske family remained in Fiji. In 1919, Brown and Joske owned a copra store in Suva.
 2. Wall, C. C., "Sketches in Fijian History", p. 17.
 3. F.T., 6 Sept., 1876.
 4. L. C. C. R1483, R438 and R442.
 5. Cyclopaedia of Fiji...., p. 213.

Company, proprietors of the "Melbourne Store", which began a branch in Suva in 1878, were largely responsible for populating the new administrative centre. ¹

The new Suva was one mile square, running from the old Suva village north along the foreshore and then inland. It included Toorak, now all that remains of the Polynesia Company in Fiji, the antithesis of its namesake:

An area of steep streets, tight-packed with Indian and Chinese shops, with kava saloons and tenement buildings, in which whole families, and sometimes extended families, live in one-roomed squalor. Plenty of Fijians share in its shabbiness, but it could be something roughly gouged from Asia, and transplanted in receptive soil. ²

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1. Cyclopaedia of Fiji..., p. 213.
 2. Tudor, Judy. Many a Green Isle, Pacific Publication, Sydney, 1966, p. 23.

CHAPTER FIVE

" 'Well, it's no use your talking... You know very well you're not real'. 'I am real!' said Alice, and began to cry. 'You won't make yourself a bit realler by crying...! " Lewis Carroll.

Annexation in 1874 begot a sob, an answer to a prayer and an outburst of thanksgiving all in one: "Great Britain" was no mere name.

Once annexed, however, Fiji presented a welter of problems to Her Majesty's Government, no negligible one among them, the claims of the Polynesian Company. In mid 1874, the Company was inflated with new optimism, engendered by the prospect of annexation, and, confident of Britain's patronage, it nestled securely in the knowledge that it had been responsible for "adding another gem to Britain's Crown."¹ Shareholders breathed relieved sighs as they watched the curtain unfold on an illusory portrait of increased dividends and escalating land values.

The new hope, and a new directorate, enabled the Company to state, without shame, to the public that "most disreputable things had been done by the previous Board of Directors... irregular and probably censurable".² Among them, a clandestine grant of 3,000 acres of land to Cook, "in consideration of his giving money which was urgently required to save the interests of the shareholders";³ Mathews, Cook and Macartney had alienated, with the consent of the Directors, a further 3,000 acres at Suva Bay, without first throwing it open to selection. The Board of Directors had also made a gift to Macartney of forty shares, and the following week arranged for him to be appointed a director.⁴ New men would without doubt elevate the Company from the mire

1. F.T., 30 Oct., 1875.

2. F.T., 30 May, 1874.

3. ibid.

4. The requirements for directorship were the possession of 50 shares held for at least one month. Articles of Association of the Polynesian Company Section 12.

in which the previous Board of Directors had submerged it.

Forwood, the Company's representative in Fiji, constituted the ink-blot on the new white page. When Goodenough and Layard had arrived in Fiji in January 1874, to investigate the offer of cession, Forwood had had the foresight to offer to surrender the Company's privileges once annexation was accomplished. The Board of Directors wrote to Goodenough, asserting that they refused to endorse Forwood's action, but were "prepared to give up" the rights they retained under the Charter for "a consideration" should annexation take place: it was only fair that

considering the great loss and expense sustained by the Company in consequence of the Fijian Government delaying the granting of lands to the Company... an additional area of land, say not less than 100,000 acres, be taken in compensation, in addition to the 200,000 under the charter.¹

Forwood refused to keep up the farce. When relieved of his appointment with the Company, he commented that "I, at least, have contributed more to the funds of the Company than it ever did to mine".² G. A. Woods, former Premier of Fiji, and the man who had most impeded the Company's operations from 1871-73, was installed in the novel and unexpected character of "Fiji manager and attorney for the Polynesian Company". In this capacity he brought before the new British Government, the Company's claims. There were substantially three: a claim to compensation, estimated at £25,000,

1. F.T., 30 May, 1874.

2. F.T., 27 Oct., 1875.

for Cakobau's non-fulfilment of his promise to confer upon the Company exclusive privileges of banking and freedom from taxation; a claim to the fulfilment of the promise made by Cakobau to convey to the Company 110,000 acres of land in, as yet, unspecified areas; and a claim for Crown Grants of the lands which the Company already held.¹

The Company contended that, of the 200,000 acres of land granted under the Charter, about 160,000 had been sold so that "holders of land warrants to the extent of 60,000 acres have not yet been able to obtain their lands."² Thurston first noticed the remarkable nature of the Company's statement; it merits attention. The assertion that 160,000 acres had been sold by the Company, and that holders of the land warrants to the extent of 60,000 acres had been unable to obtain their lands, implies that the remaining 100,000 had been placed in the hands of their purchasers - a manifest untruth. The Company itself claimed to have been in possession of only 90,000 acres. "Where", wrote Thurston "are the 10,000 acres situated of which it has given possession to others without having itself ever enjoyed it?". The Company had, in fact, sold 70,000 acres more than it obtained.³

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1. The Claims and Remonstrance of the Polynesia Company of Melbourne. Examined and Refuted, Levuka 1878, p. 39. This pamphlet was published anonymously. Dr. D. Scarr, at present writing a biography of Thurston at A.N.U. believes Thurston to be the author of the pamphlet. (Personal communication).
 2. G. A. Woods to Sir A. Gordon, Sept. 1875. Reproduced in toto in The Claims and Remonstrance.... p. 38.
 3. The Claims and Remonstrance.... p. 38.

Britain had never intended to assume the responsibility of discharging obligations to which Cakobau had committed himself prior to annexation. It was "merely a matter of policy whether or to what extent such promises should be made good".¹ As the "policy" evolved, it became evident that the Imperial Government considered that Cakobau had not possessed the power to justify his making such grants, and, since no "equitable claim has been shown to compensation for the loss of exclusive privileges which the Company has never undertaken to put into operation",² there was no reason for Britain to commit herself financially by compensating the Company in this respect.

The Polynesia Company's land claims were held over until the Land Titles' Commission commenced its sittings in December 1875. Woods represented the Company. He based his case solely upon the Charter of 1868; this was the original title to all lands and all sub-claims must stand or fall by it. Woods' action resulted in delay. The Land Claims Commission wrote to Havelock, stating that since all the Company's claims to land rested on the validity of the Charter "we do not consider ourselves justified in dealing with them until we have learnt whether their validity is recognised by the Imperial Government".³ The Colonial Secretary replied that the validity of the Charter in question was not admitted by the Imperial Government "being in some obvious respects contrary to those principles of policy which prevail in a British Colony".⁴ This communication stripped

1. The Claims and Remonstrance...., p. 40.

2. Parliamentary Paper, C1337, pp. 7-8.

3. Land Titles Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 21 Feb., 1875. Reproduced in Claims and Remonstrance...., p. 41.

4. Parliamentary Paper C1337, p. 8.

the Polynesia Company of its land. All claims deriving their title from Polynesia Company warrants were automatically disallowed, though individuals who had purchased defined tracts of land from the Company, or cultivated lands claimed by the Company or bonafide, expended money on lands claimed by the Company, were heard, each in support of his respective claim.¹

The Polynesia Company gasped; it had been both ravaged and betrayed. As far as its lands were concerned, however, the Company had, in fact, invoked the course of action pursued by the Land Claims Commission, by its refusal to base claims on any other title than the Charter. Had Woods pressed for the land on the grounds that 90,000 acres had actually been signed over, he might have been heard at length. The Company had, for example, a perfectly legitimate claim to the islets in Suva Bay, which had been purchased from William M. Moore. Woods' insistence that the Charter was the source of all the Company's claims to land, obviated the necessity of further investigation by the Land Claims Commission.

Thurston suggested² that Woods believed, had he rested the Company's claims on anything but the Charter shareholders who expected to receive monetary compensation, or commercial privileges, would have lost all faith in the Company. The refusal of the Land Claims Commission to acknowledge the Polynesia Company's claims ensured that many speculators who had never occupied or improved the lands they purchased, lost all title to them.

1. Land Titles Commissioner to His Ex. Governor, 6 March 1876.
Reproduced in The Claims and Remonstrance...., p. 42.

2. The Claims and Remonstrance...., p. 43.

In addition to hollowing out the Polynesia Company, Land Claims Commission investigations unveiled numerous instances of its deceptions; in the exposition, it introduced the Polynesia Company to the public, without even a hat.

Once a block of land had been surveyed, it was the practice for warrant holders to select the amount of land claimed. But the limited amount of land open for selection meant that in many cases, the holder of a warrant could only select a small portion of the land to which the warrant entitled him. Such men still claimed the balance of their land. The Land Claims Commission reported that "warrants were an object of traffic - often passing from hand to hand, either wholly or for portions of the area included in the warrant".¹ Once selected under warrant, the latter had to be forwarded to Melbourne where the Company cancelled it and issued a conveyance for the land selected. Evidently the Company had often refused to issue conveyances to some warrant holders who had selected as much land as possible from the area open to selection, on the grounds that they had selected too much land in the one place. Land was often selected under warrants in both Melbourne and Fiji, but the warrants were never exchanged for conveyances.

On the basis of the Company's first survey of land, plans had been drawn up and land selected. Later, however, a new set of plans were made, and the numbers on the blocks altered. Alterations to the old plan consisted of cutting off portions of blocks which had already been selected

1. L. C. C. R44.

under warrants. Conveyances were issued on the basis of the new plans, for land which had not been selected under warrants since no warrants had been issued. These conveyances for cut-off portions assigned new numbers, were issued to either directors or their friends. The land had almost invariably been previously selected and conveyed under warrants to other people in accordance with the old plans. The result was that one plot of land, or a portion of it was selected by two people, one in Melbourne, one in Fiji, and it often meant that what was in reality a 300 acre block of land had been conveyed to the extent of 600 acres. Many men had simply been cheated. Of the 90,000 acres transferred to the Polynesia Company, only 450 had been cultivated or occupied by its settlers.¹

But Britain's outalized conscience would not allow for a suggestion of injustice. £9000 had been paid to the American consul under the Polynesia Company's auspices. Britain intended to refund it. Although it had not been the Company but the Forty Thieves who paid the debt, the Polynesia Company had arranged for the payment and was considered entitled to a portion of the refund. The Board of Directors, when notified of Britain's intention, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, reasserting all the Company's rights under the Charter, and "with all respect" declining the Governor's offer

to pay the Company, as a matter of grace and favor a moiety of the sum of £9,000. The Company is advised by Woods, that it is both legally and equitably entitled to have the full area of land originally alienated, or its equivalent value.²

1. L. C. C. R44.

2. Directors of Polynesia Company to Colonial Secretary, Fiji, 21 Aug. 1876. Reproduced in The Claims and Remonstrance..., pp. 47-48.

The offer of a portion of the refund remained open until 30 June 1877, but was steadfastly refused by the Company, which remained in existence until at least 1883,¹ six years after its claims had been rejected, and in 1906 some men in Fiji still held Polynesia Company scrip and warrants, patiently waiting for their recognition.²

Aside from a protest from the Polynesia Company in 1877 against the foundation of a capital at Suva, an action which rendered it "obligatory... to respectfully remind Your Excellency that the Polynesia Company (Ltd.) does not in any way or degree withdraw from its position as owner of the land in question..."³ no further correspondence was entered into.

The Polynesia Company had taken a "stand", which Britain would have to either take or leave. Britain spat it out.

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1. Titles Office, Co's. Registration Branch, No. 140, Victorian Archives.
 2. Cyclopaedia of Fiji.... p. 213.
 3. Woods to Gordon Levuka, 21 Aug. 1877. Reproduced in The Claims and Remonstrance.... p. 53.

CHAPTER SIX

" I I can't believe that! ' said Alice.
'Can't you? - Try again: draw a
long breath and shut your eyes'."
Lewis Carroll.

To many, a satisfying group experience involves reaching a desired level of personal participation.¹ Personal satisfaction is not contingent on group goal attainment, but on individual goal attainment, and group goals are adopted only in so far as they do not conflict with personal goals. Once the attainment of personal goals becomes dependent on membership in the group, the individual is caught in a crossfire of competing claims, an obnoxious problem to be solved as quickly as possible. Deception is a vital element in the solution.

Joseph Glenny and James Butters constitute a sample of the directors of the Polynesia Company, who were confronted with a conflict between personal goals and the Company's task-directed activities, to obtain sovereign privileges and land. Glenny owed an allegiance, not only to the Polynesia Company, but also to the Planters' Company Ltd., an organization for the founding of which he was partly responsible, and one through which his own interests could best be served. He could retain some personal satisfaction with the Polynesia Company while he had the use of its vessel, the Alice, since the vessel represented, the means by which he could attain his own aim, to keep himself supplied with plantation labour, within the Planters' Company. The Polynesia Company's organizational structure, divided between Melbourne and Fiji, provided the circumstances necessary for the practice of Glenny's particular brand of deception, one that was entirely self-oriented, and would have been recognised as such by others if they found out about it.

1. Heslin, R and Dunphy, D., "Three dimensions of member satisfaction in small groups". in Backman, C. W. and Secord, P. F. (eds.) Problems in Social Psychology, 1966, p. 293.

Butters used his association with the Company first, to separate himself geographically from financial commitments he could not meet in Victoria.¹ While in Fiji as the Company's representative, he took advantage of the fact that he was not simultaneously in contact with both the Board of Directors, and the Creditors' Committee in Levuka, playing the approved role with each group, and ignoring its expectations when in contact with the other. This provided him with an opportunity to cast an impression of himself as fair, honest and impartial among the Directors in Melbourne, but more importantly, among many of the citizens of Levuka. The impression he left in minds got him elected as Speaker of the House in the Cakobau Government, a position he desired, and for which he knew he was admirably suited.

Just as regularly, the existence of what was perceived as a close identity between personal goals and the Company's goals necessitated deception. Joshua Finner was possibly the Company's most dedicated executive. As Secretary, in 1869, he had been prominent in organizing the offer of Fiji to America, and in 1873 and 1874, he poured his energy into pressuring Victoria to annex. His personal preoccupation with what he perceived as the Company's goal was responsible for his neglect of the Company's domestic business. The Company accumulated extensive debts, and was forced to deceive shareholders, to retain their confidence and prevent itself from wilting.

At least subconsciously, William Brewer must have acknowledged the Charter's invalidity and recognized that the Charter was founded upon the lie that Cakobau was king of Fiji. But Brewer had committed himself: the

1. Hall, A. R., op. cit., p. 108.

choice presented was one of yielding, or maintaining his stand when confronted with disagreement from others. Where Brewer could be personally identified with his own judgements, he was responding, not only to the apparent discrepancy in information, provided on the one hand by Thurston, Lambert and a number of planters in Fiji who presented the Colonial press with daily accounts of their hardship, and on the other hand, what he himself had seen through kaleidoscopic eyes, but also to what he believed were the expectations of the Victorian public as to what his judgements should be. In Festinger's words, Brewer might reasonably be assumed to have been experiencing "cognitive dissonance" after his first attempt to negotiate the Charter with Cakobau. He held two sets of cognitions which were not consistent with each other. In such a predicament, dissonance will arise to the extent that one of these sets will become resistant to change.¹ Brewer's commitment to the behaviour of negotiating the Charter served to fix the cognitions associated with it. Subsequent dissonance reduction resulted in a weakening of the cognitions associated with, for example, Thurston's opposition, cognitions for which there was no strong commitment. This further affirmed and supported the cognitions to which Brewer had initially committed himself. He publicly avowed his stand that the Charter was both legal, and legitimately and fairly negotiated, thus providing an indicator to the public of his stalwartness. Publicity itself served to increase his commitment to the Company, fixing his stand, since only negative consequences attended the changing of it. In short;

1. Festinger, L. A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, 1957, passim.

attempts to reduce cognitive dissonance can develop into self-deception.

An individual does not usually have good control over his social and business environment, and one way in which this manifests itself is in his partial inability to predict the nature of the groups to which he exposes himself. Many of the Company's shareholders found their association with the Polynesia Company increasingly less pleasant and less remunerative than they had anticipated. Although the Company's failure would have induced dissonance, for some, like Peter Clark, Latter, Henry Knox, grocer, and Smith, a governess,¹ little effort was required to reduce it: they had simply to undervalue the amount of their investment, tell themselves that their effort and expense was really, negligible. This form of deception was easy, for these people represent a sample of those who had invested little money, and less time in the Company. But for others, like Caroline Fitzgibbon, Brewer, Finner and Jacob Brache', it would have been absurd to attempt to reduce dissonance consequent upon the Company's failure to augment its aims, by undervaluing their investment, since they knew, and knew that others knew, that they had expended a great deal of money and time in exposing themselves to the Company. The alternative means of reducing dissonance was to overvalue the Company, by emphasizing its positive aspects and blinding themselves to its negative ones.

To further reduce dissonance, they could use their interaction with other people,² either by obtaining the support of those who already believed

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1. Titles' Office, Co's. Registration Branch, No. 140. List of Shareholders.
 2. Sampson, E. E., "Status Congruence and Cognitive Consistency", Sociometry, 1963, 26, p. 153.

what they wanted to persuade themselves about, or by persuading others that they too, should believe what they wanted to persuade themselves about. So Mrs. Fitzgibbon bought a buggy to drive over the rocks and mountains of Viti Levu Bay. Persons who agreed with them would very likely, have helped to reduce dissonance by providing new information and new arguments consonant with what they had made themselves believe, and by discrediting arguments dissonant with their opinions. Consequently, although the Company in 1877 had, like Gulliver in Brobdingrag, gained notoriety as a creature who could "speak several words and perform a hundred diverting tricks", and although Britain had repudiated its claims, it achieved a greater degree of internal cohesion than ever before; disruptive antagonisms were reduced to a minimum. The Company hung together until 1883, and as late as 1906, twenty-nine years after its confrontation with Britain, some men in Fiji were still convinced of their right to land under Polynesian Company warrants.

Progress towards group goals is usually a crucial factor in member satisfaction. Significantly, it is the members' perception of this progress, rather than the actual progress, that is important. The Polynesian Company both guided and controlled the perceptions of its shareholders, employing a variety of forms of legitimate non-compliance, like its claim that failure to fulfill its obligation to provide Fiji with a bank, was involuntary. This is a claim of "accident", a cousin of the "excuse". No higher claims were invoked; the Company escaped sanction by

demonstrating that circumstances beyond its control prevented it from carrying out its good intentions. Similarly, it was the previous Board of Directors who had almost ruined the Company; its actions had been futile and avoidable, while those of the present directorate, necessary and inevitable: the Company was failing not because of the actions of the Directors, but because of the shareholders' apathy, or vice versa: it was not Glenn's fault that the Company was submerged in debt in Fiji, and so on.

It is significant to note that the Polynesia Company was never the perpetrator of an ordinary lie: this would have been unreservedly disapproved, simply a selfish attempt to manipulate others by controlling their access to information. Yet the Company deserves notoriety, if for no other reason than that it practised almost every form of "institutionalized" deception known to man: it was unconsciously selective, it exaggerated, distorted, oversimplified, understated, magnified good qualities, minimized bad, tried to make isolated instances seem typical, pulled things out of context, generalised, beguiled, juggled, bluffed, misled, misinformed, conjured and pretended, in addition to deceiving itself into believing that it was not deceiving anybody.

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As an attempt to found a colony, as a public company and as a speculation, the Polynesia Company was a failure. It saw itself as an improved, relocated reconstruction of the East India Company, a vision which

partly explained the taint of imperialism which it from the first instance, so remarkably, if unjustifiably possessed. The outcome of the East India Company's activities had demonstrated a lesson: that if one is solely in pursuit of profit, one should not allow oneself to be forced into assuming the responsibilities of government. The Polynesia Company misread the lesson, believing that, if organized along the same lines as the East India Company, it might as well incorporate into its Charter, demands for sovereign privileges, since, as the experience of the East India Company had shown, it was in the long run, destined to possess them.

The fact that within its own ethical and legal system, the Company had no authority to demand such privileges, was suffocated in a conscious attempt to extend Britain's boundaries, obtuse prattle of adding gems to crowns, the myth of membership in a race deemed superior. White supremacy was taken for granted. But a white man had only to gaze around him to rationalize out the myth: the technological superiority of his race validated his claim to racial superiority, since it was assumed to be the result of intellectual superiority. Entrenched in the myth, the Company had never for a moment entertained the fanciful notion that Britain might refuse to support its quest. Life-long emotional props were shaken when Britain repudiated the Company's claims. Its only refuge was defiant incredulity. What remained of its attempts to colonize Fiji was Toorak, a multi-racial slum suburb, the antithesis of a spanking bright Colonial town.

The situation which the Company originally sought to exploit - Cakobau's debt to America - was in reality an amorphous one: Cakobau was no more responsible for £9000 worth of damage to the property of American citizens in Fiji, than was the Company itself. The situation, however, was seen as an "opportunity", and the result of the attempt to exploit it, a company erected on sand. The Polynesia Company's Charter with Cakobau was baseless since Cakobau was not "King of Fiji", but Chief of Bau, and he could not, therefore, either apportion land, or convey privileges outside the Bau dominions. The Company deceived itself into believing that the Charter was legal, an assertion it became necessary to support with partial and doctored quotations from the letters of Thurston, Rev. Waterhouse, Colonel Smythe and others.¹ It had simply taken up an offer which Britain had rejected in 1860 and finally acquiesced in, in 1874. Its charter, the Company claimed, like the offers of cession, "derived from exactly the same source... viz. from King Thakombau and his chiefs".² This was perhaps its most audacious misstatement, requiring only a comparison of the documents to show its blatant falsity. Unlike the Deed of Cession which had been signed by Cakobau and the principle chiefs of Fiji, the Company's Charter bore the marks of Cakobau and a few of his relatives: Ratu Epuli, his eldest son; Savenca, his half-brother; Ratu Dranibaka, a landless half-brother; Ratu Elijia Toroce, a landless magistrate at Bau; Sitivani Tukana, a chief of Viwa, and Marika Toroce, Cakobau's landless nephew.³

1. Copy of a Despatch to the Right Honourable Earl of Carnarvon being a Remonstrance against unlawful withholding of the Company's lands at Fiji by His Excellency, Sir A. Gordon, Melbourne, 1877, pp. 8 - 12.
2. ibid., p. 38.
3. The Claims and Remonstrance... Examined and Refuted, 1878, p. 56.

Within his own cultural framework, Cakobau could not "legally" hand out sovereign privileges of islands over which he did not wield sovereign power, without the assent of, at least; ^{after chiefs} Tui Cakau, Chief of the province of Cakaudrove, and Tui Dreketi of Rewa, not to mention the numerous less important chiefs who inhabited the 200,000 acres of land Cakobau signed away. But Cakobau could have, without comment from Fijians or protest from Thurston, alienated any part of Bau, over which he exercised undoubted control, or land in the islands of Lomawiti, which he claimed as his personal property. It is obvious that the lands he chose to alienate were not impetuously granted. The time lag between the rejection of the first Charter, and the signing of the second, had been ample for him to select lands which could not be immediately challenged by Thurston, and lands that were either under disputed control, or the control of his rivals.¹ Setting Europeans on these lands, ostensibly under his control, ensured that he would have settler support against his rivals. Cakobau had additional security in the fact that once the American debt was paid, he was no longer obliged to convey land to the Company; the art of stalling, placating and promising until pressure subsided, could then be brought into play. In September 1870, the American debt was paid, and Cakobau, "into his brown paws chuckles and screams - "Sa Oti, Sa Oti", its all over, all over",² and as far as he was concerned, it was.

Both Cakobau and the Company could have exploited the situation to their mutual advantage, with a simple alteration of perspective. But neither were able to see that what constituted "legality" in Victoria, or in Fiji,

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1. For example, Beqa, Suva and Viti Levu Bay.
 2. Thurston to Hope, 23 Nov., 1870,

could not be assumed to be shared by the whole of humanity, but was the result of the particular civilisations of which they were the progeny.

Economically, both Cakobau and the Company were dilettantes. The Company took advantage of an indefinite legal situation upon which to found itself, and it was this that finally smothered it. Cakobau, motivated by a policy of enlightened self-interest, and as much a speculator as many of the Company's shareholders, had claimed sovereignty over Fiji to block Tongan imperialism, and it was his claim that finally lost him any power he actually possessed with British annexation, as well as his own birthright, and that of those whose lands he pawned. Each, in the long run, was hoist on his own petard.

As a public company, it is unlikely that the Polynesia Company could have had much success. Its organizational structure, a creature of man's fallibility, as well as his creative genius, was conducive to inadequate communication. Had the Company not been divided structurally, and had the Charter been valid, its organization in Melbourne, a manager, Board of Directors, and numerous shareholders, might have proved cohesive and efficient. But a semi-hierarchical structure in Melbourne, and an unstructured, competitive branch in Fiji, combined with a delay of at least twelve days in the reception of messages between the two places, left little hope of either adequate or accurate intercommunication. Schisms and aggression evident in the association of Butters and the local committee, both representing the Company in Fiji, are indicators of dissatisfaction, and both cause and consequence of disorganization. The Company's decay

was then, partly internal, but also derived simply from a lack of conditions appropriate to its effective operation. For example, a warrant-holder in Fiji who selected a particular plot of land at Suva, would never have had to fear that while his warrant was in transit between Fiji and Melbourne, to be exchanged for a conveyance, a Victorian speculator might select from a plan in Melbourne, the same plot of earth, had the committee in Fiji been empowered to issue a fixed number of conveyances of land, for randomly selected plots which had previously been erased from plans in Melbourne, for the selection of warrant-holders in Fiji.

Structural division invited deception and ensured that it would go temporarily unnoticed. A procedure whereby all reports on the Company's activities in both Melbourne and Fiji, were communicated to the shareholders through the manager, automatically introduced restraints against free communication, as it was dependent on the manager's personal evaluation of the extent to which lack of agreement and dissension within the Board of Directors and the committee in Fiji, could be passed on to shareholders without instigating panic. Any public company is heavily dependent on retaining the confidence of its shareholders. Consequently, pleasant matters are more likely to be communicated than unpleasant ones, as are achievements rather than errors or information about difficulties encountered.¹ In the case of the Polynesia Company, the strength of the conviction that, no matter what, the public faith must be held, was negatively related to the accuracy of its downward communications.

1. Festinger, L., "Informal Social Communication", Psych. Review, 1950, 57, p. 278.

As for the white men the Company allegedly ruined, they were, in reality, few. Pathological Victorian speculators had they not invested in the Company would have invested in something else; the adventurers got an adventure: and the depressed little men, the ex-miners, hatters and grocers, whose night the advent of the Polynesia Company had illuminated, in darkness, light is often seen as shadow: one should be careful of the shape light takes in darkness.

Fijians, on the other hand, suffered far more extensively at the Company's hands; it was partly responsible for condemning thousands of these men to ninety-six years of preservation in British formalin.

Fiji's Independence however, may give a posthumous justification to the Polynesia Company's contributions of publicity, promotion and a passenger service, to the audacity of European expansion, if Independence achieves those social and national aims which, in the past, have seemed doomed to perpetual frustration.

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- (2) Published.
 - (a) Articles
 - (b) Books

A. Primary Sources

- (a) Records of the Cakobau Government, the ad-Interim Government, and the Provisional Government. 1871-75 (C. G. R.)

The Cakobau Government was the first successful attempt at responsible constitutional government in Fiji, begun formally 5 June 1871, with Cakobau, Chief of Bau, as constitutional head. The records contain all the correspondence, inwards and outwards, of the Government in Fiji before British annexation in October 1874, and the correspondence of the ad-Interim and Provisional Governments, prior to the establishment and consolidation of Colonial Government. Altogether, the material fills approximately eighty-five reels of microfilm. Each set of correspondence has been prefaced by a description and index to the set, provided by the Archivist, Central Archives, Suva, but as yet, no index is available outside those contained on the film. The Mitchell Library began to index the records in 1968 and completed the first twenty-one reels of film, but the task has not been continued. Limitations of time prevented a thorough search of the material, but the following items were of particular value:

- Set 6 (FM4/2135) - Legislative Assembly votes and proceedings, 24 May 1872 - 12 June 1873.
- Set 8 (FM4/2133) - Legislative Assembly - Working papers of the Clerk of the House, 1871-2.
- Set 10 (FM4/2134-
FM4/2143) - Chief Secretary to Colonial Secretary. Inwards Correspondence, general. 31 May 1871 - 31 August 1875.
- Set 11 (FM4/2143)- Chief Secretary's Office and naval and consular correspondence, inwards, 1 February 1872- 29 September, 1874.
- Set 17 (FM4/2145-
FM4/2146) - Chief Secretary's Office. Correspondence received from the Attorney General, April - December 1873.
- Set 31 (FM4/2147-
FM4/2151) - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Lands and Works and Naval and Military Affairs. Inwards correspondence. June 1871 - December 1873.

Set 35 (FM4/2155) -

- (i) Copies and originals of correspondence between the Manager of the Polynesia Company and officials of the Cakobau Government relating to a dispute over the question whether or not the Company has rendered an obligation to supply the Government with a steamship. 13 September 1872 - 25 October 1872.
- (ii) Copies of correspondence exchanged between the Premier Woods and Messrs. Martin, Croaker and Amess re issue of a Crown Grant for certain lands in Fiji bought by them from the Polynesia Company. 23 August 1872 - 30 October 1872.
- (iii) Inwards letters and telegrams of the Premier G. A. Woods received during his visit to Australia, relating to the purchase of a steamship for the Government, the Polynesia Company, the establishment of a bank in Fiji. September 1872 - November 1872.
- (b) Land Claims Commission and Executive Council Sitting for the rehearing of Claims to land, 1875-1887, papers relating to claims. (L.C.C.) The Records are in two sections, the reports on claims and the petitions for appeal. Some of the papers relating to original claims became the subject of subsequent appeals. These are not in their original numerical order, but are filed under Appeals. L.C.C.R - is a reference to original reports. L.C.C.A - is a reference to appeals. For the purposes of this study, the most valuable reports were R420 - R 551 concerning the claims of Polynesia Company settlers at Suva, and the reports of claims on the Rakiraki coast, Beqa and Natewa Bay, which are scattered through the records. R44 is the most lucrative report relating to Polynesia Company lands since it includes several maps of Company settlements, and other maps showing alterations made by the Company to allotments.
- (c) Material in Victorian State Archives
- (1) Selected Correspondence, Governor's Records, Bundle 11, No. 12. This contains the correspondence of Thurston, Lambert, Brewer and Evans, Manners-Sutton and others, relating to the activities of the Polynesia Company in 1868.

- (ii) Chief Secretary's Office, Inwards Correspondence, Executive Council Records. This contains about 13 files relating to the Polynesia Company and its involvement in annexation projects, Australian settlers in Fiji, and related material.
- (iii) Titles Office, Company Registration Branch.
- No. 140. The Polynesia Company, contains Memorandum and Articles of Association, copies of Charters, plans of the Polynesia Company's settlements at Suva, Grove Point and Suva Point, and the 10th list of shareholders.
- No. 115. The Pacific Islands Trading Co. Ltd.
- No. 191. The Fiji Planting and Trading Co. Ltd.
- (iv) Passenger ship Register, 1869-73
- (v) Supreme Court Actions (S.C.A.) 1870-1880. About 37 actions involving the Polynesia Company and individual Polynesia Company executives and shareholders.

2. Official Printed

(a) British Parliamentary Papers.

- C 1011 Report of Commodore Goodenough and Mr. Consul Layard on the offer of the Fiji Islands to the British Crown, July 1874.
- C 1114 Correspondence respecting the Cession of Fiji and the provisional arrangements made for administering the Government. February 1875.
- C 1337 Correspondence respecting the Colony of Fiji. February 1876.
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