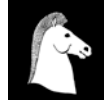




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‘The grievous mistakes of the Vanikoro concession’:<sup>1</sup>  
The Vanikoro Kauri Timber Company,  
Solomon Islands, 1926–1964

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ABSTRACT

The British Solomon Islands Protectorate government, in the 1910s, encouraged logging operations on Vanikolo in order to diversify the economy and extend government control in the easternmost islands. The Vanikoro Timber Company began operations in 1926 without any reforestation clause included in its licence. Problems with the assessment of royalties on trees felled in the 1930s drew the attention of the Colonial Office to this. Little could be done to change the original agreement, but the British administration halted any major extension of logging until a Forestry Department could oversee a sustainable extraction regime, including reforestation, in the 1960s. The logging company, working under difficult conditions in an isolated area, was never a financial success and finally closed in 1964 when cheaper timbers became readily available on the Australian market. The Vanikolo people remained ambivalent towards the company, valuing its presence as a pathway to the wider world, but often resisting extension of its demands on the island's resources.

KEYWORDS

Colonial history, forest policy, logging, resistance, Solomon Islands, sustainability, Vanikolo

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1980s the independent state of Solomons Islands has been the site of rapid, unsustainable logging, predominantly by South Asian companies, on land held under customary title. These companies are backed by networks of

affiliated firms linking into the great combines of Japan, the largest buyer of tropical logs; networks so powerful that they push up production often by illegal means and keep prices to growers down.<sup>2</sup> The Solomons is on the Pacific periphery of the forests of Malesia and its fate has been little different to Southeast Asia's. With one exception, systematic reforestation is nonexistent, even on remaining state land. Despite the respite to the forest provided by the collapse of the Asian market in 1997, there is little likelihood of improved conservation of the resource in the near future because of the institutional weakness of an impoverished government and a continuing clamour from the resource holders for the immediate, but short-term economic fillip logging can bring.

It was not always thus. By 1978, the year of independence from Britain, a forestry department had been operating for over twenty years, had acquired by purchase government land for the forest estate in the 1960s, and had established a legal and silvicultural basis for economically sustainable logging and reforestation on this land.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the development of forest policy in the Solomon Islands had been a hundred years behind that of British India. Without railways, underground mines or any industry other than copra production, there was little commercial demand for timber within the islands, while export markets were extremely limited by exigencies of distance and alternative cheaper supplies. Moreover, in the sparsely populated archipelago, the Melanesian subsistence horticulturalists with their shifting cultivation offered little threat to water catchments so there was no call for a systematic forest policy.

Forestry issues did not arise until 1912. An Australian planter in the Shortland Islands who had been exporting logs cut while clearing his land for coconut plantations wanted to extend to adjacent native land, so the administration devised a simple regulation to permit this agreement with the landholders in return for a rental and royalty on each tree paid directly to them and a 10% royalty to the government. Though the High Commissioner in Fiji believed some kind of replanting was needed, he and the Colonial Office were satisfied with the Resident Commissioner's reassurance that natural regeneration, already visible on the planter's own land, would be adequate. Moreover, only mature trees were to be felled, and the enterprise was very small and easily policed.<sup>4</sup> This forest regulation was the only one in place until negotiations with a major logging concern began a few years later.

As the Vanikoro Kauri Timber company, operating from 1926 until 1964, was the first logging company to work in the Solomon Islands, this paper seeks to examine its history because it reveals the challenges to early loggers of the forest composition typical of Solomon Islands, of logging under tropical conditions, and a fluctuating market. Though few in number and almost silent in the written record, the Vanikolo landholders had concerns about this 'development' on their island. Of wider moment, however, is the company's pivotal role in the extension and evolution of the colonial state and in the articulation of a

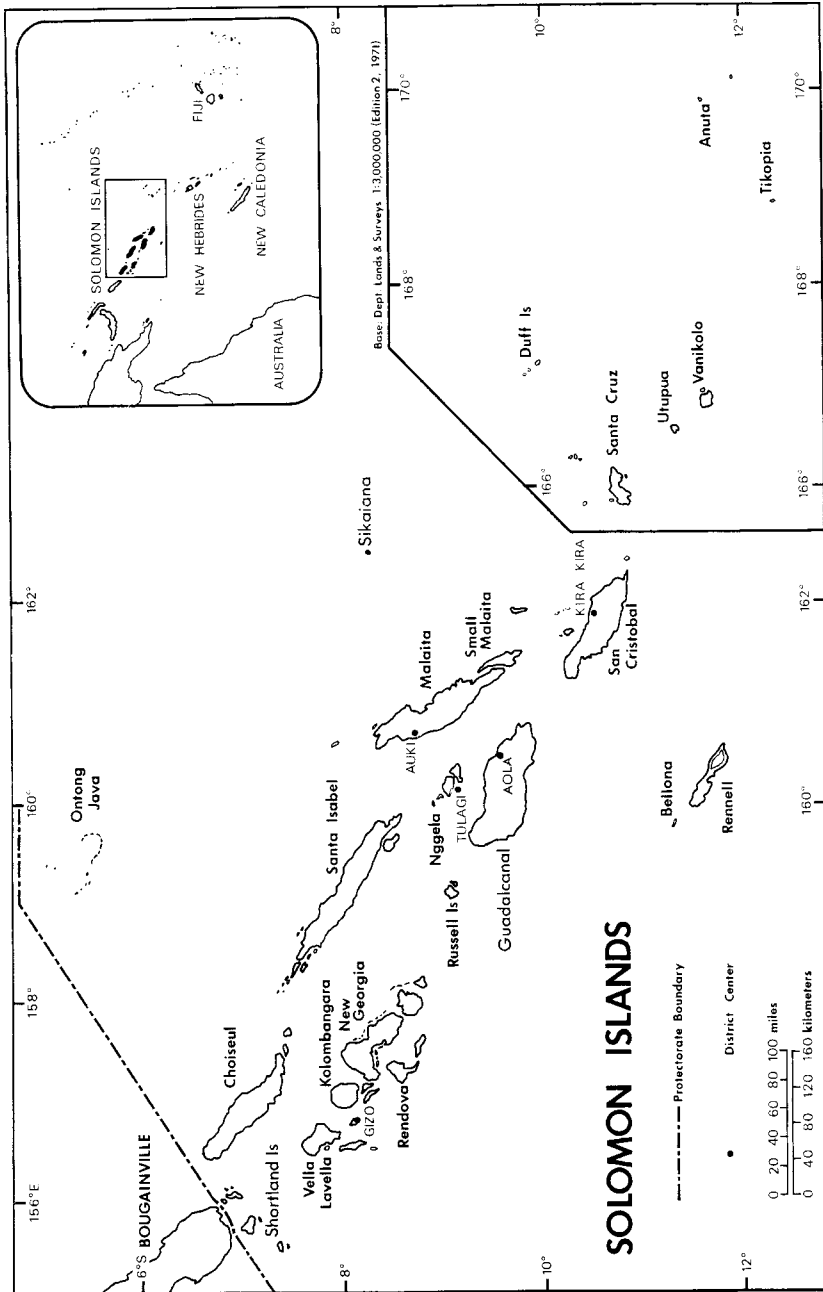


FIGURE 1. The British Solomon Islands Protectorate, c. 1925

forest policy by the Colonial Office for the Protectorate. By examining the relationship of the Protectorate's administration with the Colonial Office, on the one hand, and with the landholding people, the timber resource and the loggers, on the other, some understanding can be gained of how the administration learnt from its mistakes on Vanikolo and adjusted its thinking to the broader aims of both British colonial forest policy and post-war decolonisation to preserve much of the remaining Solomons forest resource with the intention that it should become an sustainable economic asset for the nascent state.

### COLONIAL CONTROL, COMPANY, AND LANDHOLDERS

In 1893, the British assumed administration over the scattered and diverse, small scale societies of the Solomons archipelago under the control of the Western Pacific High Commission based in Fiji. The first Resident Commissioner of the Protectorate, Charles Woodford, arrived in 1896 with a whaleboat and a few Fijian policemen to set about encouraging a plantation-based economy to finance the administration, as Britain had no intention of allowing the Protectorate to be a drain on the Treasury. Within fifteen years a small administration controlled much of the coastal regions of the western and central islands with their population of about 100,000 Melanesians and 500 Europeans. As Woodford drew near to retirement in 1913, he realised that the unskilled indigenous labour supply was insufficient for continued expansion of coastal land under plantations and for crop diversification, creating vulnerability to market fluctuations for the main export, copra.<sup>5</sup> Another concern was the lack of administrative control in distant Santa Cruz district (now Temotu) where French and Japanese vessels were active (Figure 1). The French were recruiting labour and claimed they had purchased much of Vanikolo and Tevai in the 1880s. They knew of the valuable kauri (*Agathis macrophylla*) there as well as trochus shell and bêche-de-mer on the reefs, maritime resources which Japanese and even British traders from the New Hebrides also exploited – and all without paying any duties to the Protectorate.<sup>6</sup>

Finding the Vanikolo people 'perfectly quiet and rapidly dying out', Woodford hoped to interest investors in the district's resources, to diversify the Protectorate's economy and establish a government presence.<sup>7</sup> In 1913, he encouraged a planting company on Makira (San Cristobal) to apply for a licence 'to cut, fell and remove kauri timber'.<sup>8</sup> World War One and resurgence of the French claim delayed matters until 1922 when Lands Commissioner Judge F. B. Phillips headed an inquiry on Vanikolo. The claimants failed to respond and so the government signed a preliminary logging agreement with three chiefs – Tua, Fazano and Tomu, on behalf of their people, a remnant 83 souls on about 64 square miles (165 square kilometres), where there had been, a hundred years earlier, at least 1200-1500.<sup>9</sup> Horrified at learning of the French claims to their

## ‘THE GRIEVOUS MISTAKES ...’

‘Woods, Mines, Waters and Forests ... and also the villages’,<sup>10</sup> the chiefs appeared to welcome the proposed logging venture providing French persons not be given the license and the land not be alienated.<sup>11</sup>

Woodford’s successor, R. Kane was even more convinced that the ‘degenerate’ Vanikolo population was ‘rapidly dying out’. Since extinction seemed their fate, the existing King’s Regulation No. 9 of 1913 which would have given the landholders both royalties and rental for their timber rights was rejected because, in Kane’s view,

To hand over the proceeds of the proposed [logging] license to these people would... be absurd and I suggest the Government acquiring the timber right and granting the natives an annuity.

Under the new King’s Regulation No. 12 of 1922, the Resident Commissioner had the power to acquire the timber rights over land from the owner or holder and then grant these to a third party under set conditions. In return, the three Vanikolo chiefs were each to receive an annuity of £10 for their clans.<sup>12</sup>

The Colonial Office showed no concern about conservation of the Vanikolo forest, being preoccupied with the French claim and revenue matters in the draft logging license. The Secretary of State thought the proposed royalty of six shillings per tree ‘a ridiculous sum for valuable timber,’ but settled for periodic review.<sup>13</sup> The High Commissioner had recommended royalty per tree, instead of superficial measurement because the latter needed an inspector to measure each shipment rather than periodic counts.<sup>14</sup> Like Kane, the Colonial Office queried the wording of the draft which had the government receiving royalties ‘for and on behalf of the native owners’, as it believed that the royalties should go to the government, not ‘to a few score of backward natives’, so the clause was deleted.<sup>15</sup>

Projected Protectorate earnings from royalties and import duties could justify a district office on Vanikolo for timber control and customs inspection as well as supervision of agreements between the company and its indentured labour. In return, the company also had to assist the government – mainly by providing free transport for the District Officer and by its doctor providing medical care for government workers, such as the native police, and any prisoners at district office.<sup>16</sup> Thus the sale of the timber resource brought not only economic diversification, but also considerable funding for the extension of colonial control.

## THE LOGGERS

The San Cristoval Estates did not formally obtain the timber lease until January 1924, and this delay, lack of logging expertise, and earnings on its Makira plantations saw the company struggling to raise capital.<sup>17</sup> A new company, the Vanikoro Kauri Timber Company was formed in 1925 as a partnership with the

Kauri Timber Company of Melbourne. This company had been logging kauri (*Agathis australis*) in New Zealand for the Australian market, but because that supply was all but cut out by the 1910s, it saw promise in Vanikolo, particularly since the island held other valuable trees, including the *ba'ula* (*koila*), *u'ula*, and *liki*, or *Calophyllum* spp., *Intsia bijuga*, *Pterocarpus indicus*, respectively as well as *karamati* or *ketekete*, *Camptosperma brevipetiolata*. These were in mixed forest, common in the Solomons, as was most of the kauri. Unlike its New Zealand congener, the Solomons kauri was not in great stands, but scattered mainly on rough ridges and spurs inland.<sup>18</sup> The company was interested primarily in the kauri and koila, estimating in 1925 that there were 10,000 acres of kauri and 40,000 of koila which would give 150 million and 60 million superfeet respectively.<sup>19</sup>

In 1788, Vanikolo had proved inhospitable to the survivors of La Perouse's two ships wrecked on its reefs.<sup>20</sup> Little had changed when both company and the district office settled at Saboe Bay (Sapolombe Bay).<sup>21</sup> It was a most insalubrious place for the first group of loggers, hired in temperate New Zealand. They encountered a trying, humid environment. The daily temperature is about 32 degrees Centigrade, falling to 22 degrees at night. Vanikolo is the wettest place in the Solomons, and in fact the island Pacific, receiving 250 inches (6350 mm) a year on the coast, and probably far more in the inland peaks and ranges, with rainfall daily for two-thirds of the year, so logging was not easy in the rough terrain.<sup>22</sup> Sickness soon forced the district office and the company to relocate to the west at Paeu,<sup>23</sup> 'a good site with streams of good water'.<sup>24</sup>

Malaria and malnutrition were recurrent scourges of this isolated community. The Solomon Islanders, mainly Malaitans and Santa Cruz men, often suspected one another of sorcery and saw any deaths in these terms. This led to strikes in 1934 and 1936, though the company doctor diagnosed dysentery and beri-beri. Despite strikes being illegal under the indenture system, the penal clauses were rarely invoked fully, as the District Officer, pivotal in dispute resolution, preferred more pragmatic cancellation of contract. Recurrent malaria meant few European workers fulfilled their two year contracts; most went home sick after eight or nine months. Nonetheless, the European loggers and the Melanesians, usually numbering around 15 and 100 respectively, got on well, in what was a unique situation of shared heavy manual work (Figure 2). After World War Two, the indenture system gave way to contracts which allowed the Melanesians greater freedom to negotiate. With better diet and the advent of antibiotics and effective anti-malarial drugs, the strikes of the Melanesians were for better wages, which they largely achieved as they then had a wider choice of employment opportunities in and beyond the district.<sup>25</sup>



FIGURE 2. Solomon Islanders and European working together to move kauri section by means of timber-jacks and levers, Vanikolo, c. 1928. Reproduced by permission of Business and Labour Archives, University of Melbourne



FIGURE 3. Shay locomotive hauling logs to Paeu, c. 1932. Note wet conditions and sleepers made from local hardwood. Reproduced with permission from Western Pacific High Commission archives, Foreign and Colonial Office, Milton Keynes.



## CHALLENGES TO THE COMPANY

Labour turnover cost the company, but so too did learning about the environment. Twice, cyclones destroyed most of the buildings at the 'settlement'. More controllable misadventures happened, particularly with equipment. For, example, in 1926/7, the company shipped two locomotives and 200 tons of tram-rails from Australia. As no wharf had been built, the rails were punted from the steamer and dropped inside the reef. It took nine Melanesians and two Europeans using the steam hauler weeks to drag the rails ashore. The engineer who came to assemble the locomotives considered them 'far too heavy for the soft ground on the flats of Paeu Bay and their coal consumption would make them a failure financially.' He awaited the next ship to Sydney, bringing a man to erect the tramline, which needed ballast in its foundations and as there was no rubble available a stone crusher would need to be imported and so on (Figure 3).<sup>26</sup> The milling venture was another example. Unsuitable equipment for large scale operations meant a conversion loss of 50% in the export timber, so milling was abandoned in favour of log exports.<sup>27</sup> Difficulties with equipment and sheer distance continually caused delays and wastage.

The company had commenced exporting logs in 1926. Production increased from 438,857 superfeet to 1,553,314 superfeet in 1929 in log only. For much of the pre-war period this was about the limit, with a drop in the years 1932 to 1934, to about 900,000 superfeet, because of the depressed market in Australia (Figure 4). An increased Australian tariff on logs from 10% to 30% in mid 1930 decreased any profit margin the company might achieve and caused it to seek economies. The company reduced staff at Vanikolo to three Europeans and 45 Melanesian workers. After the Australian government lowered the tariff to 20% in February 1933,<sup>28</sup> the company in Melbourne 'secured large orders for logs', mainly kauri, koila and rosewood for peeling, so more labour was recruited and output gradually recovered.<sup>29</sup>

In 1930, at a critical time for the struggling company, the District Officer, F. Filose, queried the wording of the agreement between it and the government. Filose claimed the company owed £2323, or more than ten times the royalties paid in any previous year. Filose calculated that 7,744 trees had been cut down between November 1929 and 31 December 1930, and all attracted royalty.<sup>30</sup> This calculation hinged on the definition of the word 'tree' in the licence:

The Licensee shall pay to the Commissioner by way of royalty the sum of six shillings for every tree of not less than six inches in diameter measured at three feet from the ground cut felled or removed by the Licensee as aforesaid.<sup>31</sup>

Although as early as 1921 Resident Commissioner Kane had alerted the High Commissioner to this problem inherent in the clause as well as the absence of a reforestation clause, he had been ignored.<sup>32</sup>

Since 1923, the company had felled or removed thousands of trees besides those exported. It cleared paths for the tramline; cut down mangroves and trees

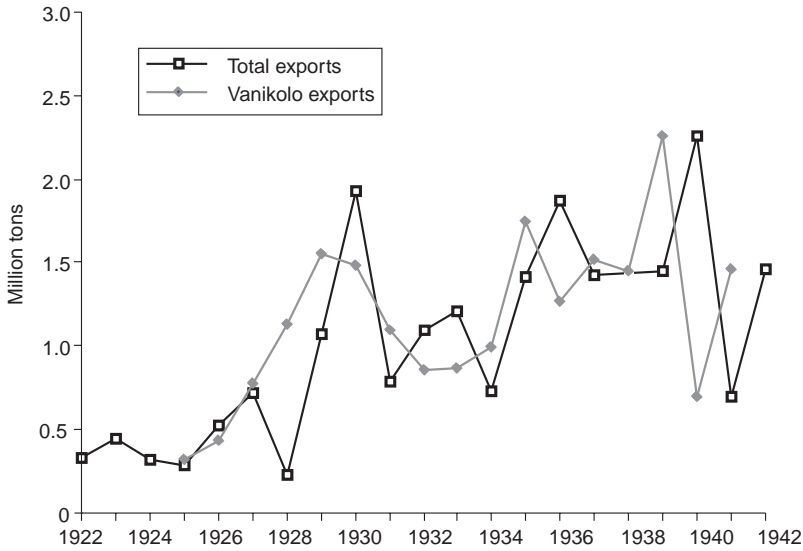


Figure 4. Exports of logs, 1922-1942. (Sources: AR-BSIP 1922-1944, AR-Santa Cruz district, 1923-1940). There was some lag between records kept at Paeu and those in the BSIP annual reports.



FIGURE 5. Accommodation for employees at Paeu, c. 1932, built from local timbers over the sea to escape mosquitoes and sandflies, before cyclone of December 1935 swept all buildings into the sea. Shore has been cleared of mangroves. Reproduced with permission from Western Pacific High Commission archives, Foreign and Colonial Office, Milton Keynes.

all around the settlement to discourage mosquitoes and sandflies; destroyed understorey trees when big trees were felled. It felled trees for its own building and fuel purposes (Figure 5). So complete was its felling that by the 1930s there was a firewood shortage near Paeu and the company had to import diesel and petrol for the larger engines.<sup>33</sup>

The company was aware that it was liable for timber used in construction, '[i]f the Government terms for Royalty are strictly adhered to', but was not going to pay unless the government enforced the agreement.<sup>34</sup> It had sought official clarification on several occasions and had requested royalty be calculated on superfeet exported rather than on the felling of trees of a particular size, a change also recommended by two successive District Officers.<sup>35</sup> The High Commission's lawyer considered that the company was liable for any 'construction' trees felled.<sup>36</sup> However, the legal waters were muddied because the company could show evidence of the government's having excluded small timber used in tramline construction and its failure to contradict the company's assumption that the royalty did not apply to trees used on the site. That its representative at Paeu had waited until 1930 to try to enforce the more inclusive interpretation also weakened the government's case.

Filose had precipitated this issue and he further compromised the government's position. Evidence cited by the company's employees, including the respected Dr Lily Holt-MacCrimmon, as well as the Anglican Bishop of Melanesia, indicated Filose was mentally disturbed with a paranoiac hatred of the company's management. He had tried to foment trouble between it and employees, had probably misrepresented the number of trees cut, and his wife had been involved in a questionable relationship with the company's manager. In any legal proceedings, Filose would have been the Crown's primary witness. His testimony would have been regarded as biased and unreliable.<sup>37</sup>

## COLONIAL OFFICE REVIEW OF FOREST POLICY

The royalty issue went as far as the Colonial Office. It had already been alerted to the lack of a reforestation clause and the paucity of regeneration, following a report made to the Resident Commissioner in 1928 by a visiting botanist from Australia, S. Kajewski.<sup>38</sup> By the 1930s, the Colonial Office was regularly seeking advice from R. S. Troup who had been a leading forester in India and Burma, taken up the chair of Forestry at Oxford University in 1920 and, four years later, the directorship of the Imperial Forestry Institute. His predecessor, William Schlich, a German forester also from the Indian service, had started the forestry department at Oxford in 1905. Between them, Schlich and Troup educated many of the twentieth century British colonial foresters, believing that the forestry policies developed mainly in India, so financially successful to government, could be applied to other colonies.<sup>39</sup> Troup suggested sending R. A. Sykes, then

seconded from Nigeria to survey forests in Fiji, across to Vanikolo to investigate. Troup recommended that the basis of any royalty be a flat charge on the volume of timber exported, and Sykes concurred. Sykes saw some regeneration in Vanikolo, but warned that unsupervised logging would cause gradual degeneration in forest quality, particularly of the valuable kauri. The Australian tariffs and the Depression were imposing an economic ban on any new loggers, but possible future demand would necessitate active protection of the forests to prevent erosion and desiccation. Troup and other forest advisers went on to recommend forestry officers for both Solomons and Fiji.

In 1934, during the Depression, the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific and Governor of Fiji, Murchison Fletcher argued against this on financial grounds. Except for a few inaccessible stunted remnants, the valuable sandalwood (*Santalum yasi*) of Vanua Levu and Viti Levu had been sold off by the Fijians to traders a hundred years earlier. Fletcher believed that it was unlikely that any new company would be interested in Fiji because all but one had run at a loss. His narrow focus on production admitted no need for a Forestry Department. Even Fiji's major kauri (*Agathis vitiensis*) logging venture at Nadarivatu, Viti Levu cost the government more than it returned in royalties, as did the Vanikolo operation at this time of lowered production. Nadarivatu was Crown land, but, because of the wording of the agreement, the government could exercise little control, other than a minimum girth requirement. Logging there was blamed for denuding the land, opening it to exotic weeds, and for increasing flooding in the adjacent rivers which, in turn, did damage to cash crops like sugar cane. There was no provision for reforestation in this agreement or in the Vanikolo license and neither logging company would entertain the suggestion.

Fletcher's successor, Arthur Richards, was favourable to Colonial Office thinking and established a Forestry Department in Fiji in 1938. In the Solomons, where the dominant copra was in the doldrums, no finance was available; moreover, the extensive forests and the low population made the issue far less urgent than in Fiji, with its growing numbers of Indians and Fijians. Nonetheless, logging of kauri species at Nadarivatu as well as Vanikolo had highlighted forestry matters and staffing inadequacies. The Colonial Office and its agents were not to forget the lesson.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile on Vanikolo, the issue of payment for all felled trees resurfaced in 1937 as a prelude to a revision of the license. The company sought clarification.<sup>41</sup> Resident Commissioner F. Ashley proposed a royalty of 2 shillings per 100 superfeet plus an export duty, but the High Commissioner in Fiji would not support the additional duty because it was not in the original agreement. The company provided figures to show the royalty of 2 shillings was unsustainable; in light of its losses, this was probably reasonable.<sup>42</sup> The compromise in October 1937 was that the government waived prior claims and would allow the company to cut all small timber needed for its operations free, the company being liable for royalty at 1 shilling per 100 superfeet exported; thus adopting the system

recommended by the Colonial Office.<sup>43</sup> The District Officer could inspect shipments, but relied to some extent on the company for figures. Fortunately for the Protectorate, Australian Customs was willing to send its figures for import duties on Vanikolo logs to compare with the Protectorate's export figures.<sup>44</sup>

The new agreement came into operation in late 1940. It encouraged a minimum output of a million superfeet, since royalty accrued automatically to this amount.<sup>45</sup> Following Colonial Office recommendations, the six inch diameter clause disappeared. The Resident Commissioner now had the power to alter the minimum felling girth of any species. This gave the government some control to prevent over-cutting of seed trees. Unable to enforce reforestation or undertake it without a Forestry Department, the government inserted a provision enabling it to 'Close in the interests of silviculture, areas deemed to be logged over', providing these areas were no greater than 20% of the total area under license. And there was a scale of fines for breaches of the agreement.<sup>46</sup>

#### REFORESTATION BY CHANCE

Yet, paradoxically, because of the pattern of logging over the years, the lack of a reforestation clause was not the kauri forest's death knell. The mixed kauri stands were at least half a mile from the coast, scattered over ridges and hills. The pattern of extraction around the island, broadly was clockwise from Saboe Bay (Figure 6). However, there was some doubling back over time, due to failure to fully exploit more inland areas. Experts in logging in temperate areas, such as Joseph Butler,<sup>47</sup> visited the island periodically and indicated the direction and means of getting the logs out but, once these advisers left, local managers logged the most immediately accessible areas.<sup>48</sup> For example, logging started in the bush east of Saboe Bay in January 1924.<sup>49</sup> Re-location at Paeu focused logging on 'the handiest bits of bush' near the flat, three-quarters of a mile up the Lawrence (Paeu) river from Paeu.<sup>50</sup> Working continued into the Lawrence river area, but in 1929 the company decided that Saboe Bay was a better place for a loading point for the ships than Paeu (Figure 7). Construction of the locomotive line pushed east from the logging site in the Lawrence river area. The bridge 'was almost completed when heavy floodwater ... swept it 150 yards down the river', and the plan went with it.<sup>51</sup> The company revisited the area in mid 1933 and established a bush camp inland on the western side of the bay, the logs being brought in by hauler and tramline.<sup>52</sup> Within a year this had been logged and the operation moved on to the Kombi river area, returning to the westerly locus of working. Yet when another timber surveyor examined the island in 1937 he found there was still about 1.8 million superfeet or a year's work, left in the Saboe bay area, behind the original settlement site.<sup>53</sup> Although the company returned to the south east of the island in 1963 to log the Emua (Emwa) area, the inland western ranges of Saboe area and the upper Lawrence river were apparently never logged.<sup>54</sup> It was clear in 1939 that,

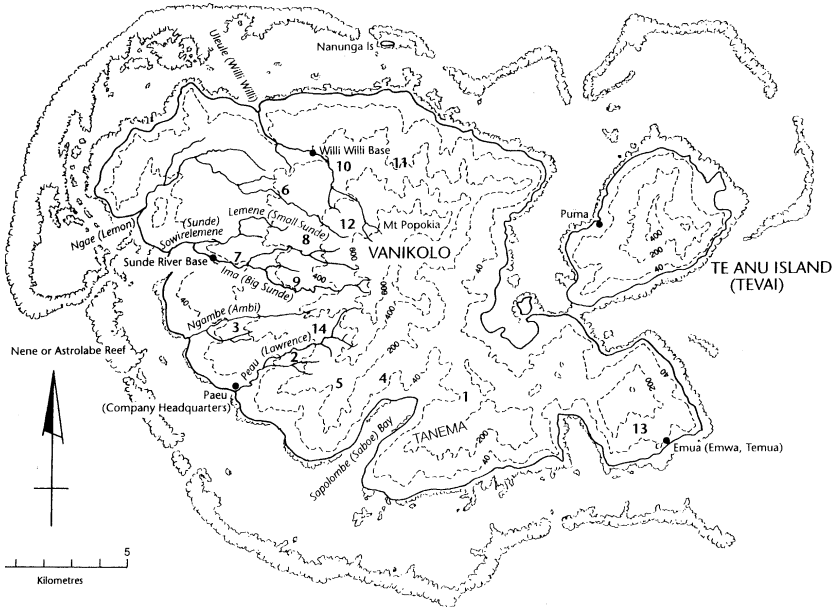


FIGURE 6. The pattern of logging at Vanikolo, 1 being the first logged area.



FIGURE 7. Employees floating logs to 'raft' to await towing to Saboe Bay or direct to steamer depending on seasonal prevailing winds. Reproduced with permission from Western Pacific High Commission archives, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Milton Keynes.

successive managers,... possibly realising that their stay would be a short one, concentrated on getting out the easiest timber to make a good tally, consequently the eyes have been pulled out leaving large quantities of timber behind the old workings which may not now be profitable to obtain.<sup>55</sup>

Such haphazard methods continued into the 1950s and cost the company, but left pockets of natural forest and thus seeds for future regrowth. It is not a little ironic that recent forestry specialists cite Vanikolo as an example of a forest that has recovered from logging.<sup>56</sup> Had the company logged using the methods commonly practised in Solomons from 1985–1998, very little kauri or other valuable timber would have remained except where replanted or regeneration actively fostered.

#### LANDHOLDERS, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE MORATORIUM

When the negotiations for the timber lease on Vanikolo were made in early November 1922, the government officer, J. Barley also obtained a tentative agreement from Tua, the chief of Tevai, for that island. However, the lease was never ratified, despite the company's attempt in 1925 to persuade the government to use its influence with the Tevai people in return for milled timber at cost price.<sup>57</sup>

The Tevai people, led by Tua, had taken to heart what they saw happening on Vanikolo. In 1923, the people had had no idea of what a logging operation meant. The attempted French land grab, the investigations of Judge Phillips in 1922, and tales from men who had worked elsewhere had given Tua an inkling of what land alienation might mean. He made it clear that he and other clan leaders wanted to retain control of the land.<sup>58</sup> They were astonished to see the men, machines, and supplies disgorged from the ships at Saboe and later at Paeu.<sup>59</sup> Both Tua and his son and heir, Ben Ramoli saw how the sale of timber rights and the attendant presence of a District Officer considerably curtailed indigenous control of the land and associated resources, such as the kauri gum used for lighting.<sup>60</sup> By 1928, the government was describing Tevai as a 'government reserve', and the District Officer revived attempts to obtain the Tevai lease.<sup>61</sup> In 1929, he noted that he had tried,

to persuade Ramoli and his people to part with timber rights, but Ramoli [remained] adamant, stating that the 'white men' had gained possession of Vanikoro and that he wished to keep the island of Tevai entirely for his people.<sup>62</sup>

The District Officer did not have many to persuade. The population of 83 in 1922 had fallen to 56 in 1930, 39 on Tevai and a mere 17 on Vanikolo.<sup>63</sup> With never more than about 18 able-bodied adult males from both Vanikolo and Tevai at any one time, the thought of any concerted resistance to either the colonial govern-

ment or the company is risible. The most that could be done was to refuse further timber rights. The company persisted with its attempts to get the Tevai concession because, although the kauri was less dense on Tevai, it was relatively accessible to the sea; however, in 1935 the Resident Commissioner was 'unable to entertain' the request.<sup>64</sup>

The Tevai people and the British administration were agreed, though for different reasons. The Colonial Office in 1934 had decided that the remaining forests of Solomons as well as Fiji were better 'left unexploited until there is a reasonable prospect of working them profitably on a sustained yield basis.'<sup>65</sup> In effect, this was a moratorium on all licences for logging on native customary land. In the Solomons, the moratorium remained and was reiterated after World War Two when there was a flurry of interest in logging by timber men who had fought in the islands.<sup>66</sup> The Colonial Office was adamant that the 'grievous mistakes of the Vanikoro concession ought not to be repeated.' A forest survey including the needs of the people had to precede any future new licences.<sup>67</sup> The Secretary of State's caution was evident in October 1944,

Considerations of any proposals for the commercial exploitation of the Forest Resources ... should be deferred until the report of the reconnaissance survey has been examined and a forest officer can be appointed to ensure that any exploitation is carried out on a systematic basis ... the future forest policy will need to be based on the broadest grounds of the long-term interests of the Protectorate.<sup>68</sup>

The Tevai lease question again arose in June 1945 regarding another company, but all future timber concessions hinged on the outcome of a forest resource survey then being conducted.<sup>69</sup>

The Vanikorans could be adamant on other issues. The District Officer paid out the rents of £10 yearly on the lease to the three clan representatives. The people on western Vanikolo were the least numerous; by 1934, the only representatives of one of the clans were two males. The District Officer suggested a redistribution of rents on a numerical basis rather than the clan, but this was 'not welcomed' by those most concerned.<sup>70</sup>

The original lease between the government and the people was up for review in 1942, in the midst of the war, so it was extended by mutual agreement for ten years.<sup>71</sup> In 1947, as the company begin to reassess Vanikolo after five years of non-production, Ben Ramoli wanted to renegotiate the terms. His understanding of English may have been limited, but he knew what he wanted when he wrote to the District Officer,

Dear Sir master one thing I want to ask you about the list for timber because Company's Promised for 25 years Finish now. and we like to make the Newspaper more again about the list for timber. We like for 20 pound every month by year. That is way we want ask master for help us. Only that Price we like master. (sic)<sup>72</sup>



Ramoli as well as the other clan representatives, Teilo and Opola got their wish in 1952, with an increase to £240 or £80 each. The Resident Commissioner believed,

In view of the fact that the Protectorate's revenue from this source is estimated ... at 2000 pounds per annum to-day,... I do not consider that these demands are either excessive or unjustified; indeed I venture to suggest that morally they should be entitled to a much greater proportion of the revenue accruing from Royalties than the 10% which this represents, although I do not propose to suggest this to them at this juncture.<sup>73</sup>

## WORLD WAR TWO AND FORESTRY

When Japan had invaded the Pacific, the Kauri Timber Company ceased production. After the war, the world was a different place, with the locus of power moved from Britain and Europe to the United States of America. Decolonisation was on the agenda, though the small islands of the Pacific were among the last to become independent. Prefigured in Colonial Office policy in 1940, plans had to be set in place for the future, but post-war reconstruction slowed this. Population generally had stabilised in the 1930s and was steadily increasing. Britain poured money into the Solomons to establish a database of resources as well as basic infrastructure. The botany and the stock of some of the major forests were surveyed in 1946, to be followed by a geological survey and the much-awaited survey of land tenure.<sup>74</sup>

A Forestry Department was set up in 1952, but little could be done until forest reserves had been established, though on Vanikolo regeneration by thinning and weeding around kauri saplings commenced two years later. Keith Trenaman took over in 1956 as chief forestry officer from a seconded officer, John Logie who had done preliminary survey work. Trenaman was to remain in the Protectorate until 1975 and was pivotal in implementing the concept of the forest estate: government ownership of large tracts of land which would be logged and reforested on an economically sustainable basis. He was also anxious to conserve valuable timber, including the kauri of Vanikolo.<sup>75</sup>

Permanent forest reserves had been planned, mainly in the sparsely populated western Solomons, on what the Forestry Department optimistically called 'vacant' lands,<sup>76</sup> but until their tenure status had been ascertained no companies could be allowed to log land that was neither leasehold nor freehold.<sup>77</sup> It was the late 1950s before the Lands Commissioner had finished his work – Solomon Islanders admitted no 'vacant' land.<sup>78</sup> In the face of this, the administration in the 1960s began to buy up freehold and native land and later resorted to long-term rental of timber rights.<sup>79</sup> Purchase and rental of native land met considerable resistance.<sup>80</sup> There had been dozens of companies wanting to log in the Solomons since the war.<sup>81</sup> These would have given a rapid economic boost to a slow

building economy, but still the government backed by the Colonial Office held to its moratorium. In their view, there was only one way to achieve this, to confine logging as well as reforestation to government controlled land.<sup>82</sup> Solomon Islanders were soon to disagree, but that is another story.<sup>83</sup>

## COMPANY PERFORMANCE

As the war had loomed the Vanikoro Timber Company was in a fragile state. In the mid 1930s, in spite of the rise in the company's output, production had remained low relative to the supposed volume of timber available. The scattered, mixed stands, along with poor management, transport difficulties, added to a wet and unhealthy environment, the Australian tariffs and the royalties dispute all hampered production, resulting in losses, as the parent companies poured money into the operation. By 1934, the San Cristoval Estates could not muster any more funds so the Kauri Timber Company (Melbourne) bought out its interests. Losses mounted, and in 1939 the Kauri Timber Company wrote off £43,000 with £50,000 still owed by the Vanikoro Kauri Timber Company to the parent company. In 1941, the Vanikoro Kauri Timber Company was put into liquidation and wound up. Its plant was taken over as a branch of the Kauri Timber Company, with the money still owing to the Melbourne company capitalised as establishment expenses. The amount of £76,000 was then put into a 'Forestry Properties' account to be written off over the estimated remaining 100 million superfeet of timber on Vanikolo.<sup>84</sup>

Export production by the Kauri Timber Company did not resume until 1949 and it was in the hands of contractors, Haling Brothers. The parent company in Melbourne estimated that an annual output of 4 million superfeet from Vanikolo was needed to meet Australian demand and to return a profit. Volume was value.<sup>85</sup> Though higher than pre-war, the contractors' maximum never went beyond 2.6 million superfeet.

Halings attributed their lack of success to strikes and labour problems with both their Melanesian and European employees.<sup>86</sup> Good overseas workers became frustrated with Halings' slipshod methods of plant maintenance.<sup>87</sup>

From the time Halings started at Vanikolo in 1949 and to early 1953, 54 employees from Australia cancelled their contracts before having worked the agreed two years, which made for lack of continuity and supervision.<sup>88</sup>

Thus often basic servicing was left to illiterate Solomon Islanders who had little understanding of the nature of wear and tear on mechanical parts which then jammed, resulting in lost production.<sup>89</sup> The labourers lacked expertise and, without consistent supervision, produced logs which were sometimes defective. Inexperienced fellers cut trees so they fell badly, resulting in 'draws and often bad shakes'.<sup>90</sup> Costs increased when hauler drivers failed to anticipate 'trouble looming up and will wait until a log is hopelessly jammed before signalling stop.' Log quality was diminished by borer or teredo because of poor storage.<sup>91</sup> In

Australia, the kauri plywood cut from this was full of holes and thus either rejected or sold as 'backs and centres ... much in excess of face veneers'.<sup>92</sup>

Although post-war mechanisation had the potential to make logging less labour-intensive and cheaper, the company often selected unsuitable equipment. In 1948, post-war restrictions meant the company could not buy any new tractors for Halings for 12 to 18 months, so they settled for 'rebuilt', war surplus D8 Caterpillar tractors, weighing 22 tons. These proved too heavy for the water-soaked terrain. Known as 'Gutless Wonders' when going uphill, they frequently broke down and delays occurred while parts came from Australia.<sup>93</sup> Although Tenaru Timbers which logged land leased from Levers on Guadalcanal, was using labour-saving chain saws in 1952, it took the Kauri Timber Company over four years to adopt them.<sup>94</sup>

Road construction was poor. Gradients were 'extremely steep being as much as 1:5 in one place and 1:7 and 1:8 are common'.<sup>95</sup> Safety of personnel was an issue, as was the permanence of the roads, particularly as the Forestry Department wanted access for its regeneration experiments on the kauri. Tractor tracks soon became badly eroded and the company admitted no responsibility to maintain disused roads.<sup>96</sup>

Halings logged kauri, karamati and koila. The koila was a hard, tough wood, used for much the same purposes as Australian hardwood. Even when jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), the hardest Australian wood, was brought to Melbourne from Western Australia, it was still 25% cheaper to produce than Vanikolo koila, so the demand for the latter remained confined to ships' timbers and lifting sticks. Improved technology, involving the steaming of the wood, enabled it to be peeled for plywood, but during the 1950s, its colour lacked market appeal. Karamati was particularly susceptible to teredo worm and in 1954 the Melbourne firm was getting only 40% recovery from the Vanikolo logs.<sup>97</sup>

Halings' contract was not renewed in late 1956 and the Kauri Timber Company had to write off £150,000. Reaping the rewards of the post-war Australian building boom and the scarcity of indigenous pine species, the parent company in Melbourne had made profits from 1949 to the end of 1955 from plywood and sawn timber cut from the Vanikolo logs, but that had been at the expense of the branch company.<sup>98</sup>

## THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT, TIMBER REVENUE AND COMPETITION

The Kauri Timber Company welcomed its initial production figures of over 2 million superfeet. However, the company's license was due for renegotiation in 1957 and professional foresters were on hand to advise the administration. The government was willing to extend the license for a further ten years, but, in order to fund regeneration research on Vanikolo, planned to increase the royalty from 1s to 6s 6d per hundred superfeet based on Forestry Department's conservative

calculations.<sup>99</sup> Chief Forestry Officer Trenaman believed that revenue should be 'sufficient not only for the maintenance of the forest, but yielding some profit over and beyond'.<sup>100</sup> The company thought this rate excessive and managed to get a continuance of the old royalty to late 1957 when an interim rate of 5s for kauri came in.<sup>101</sup>

The Department also consulted an independent assessor to recommend royalty based on the company's finances. Much to the company's dismay and the Department's satisfaction, he presented an analysis easily justifying a royalty of 9s per hundred superfeet.<sup>102</sup> Since both Trenaman and the British forestry adviser, C. Swabey identified a form of transfer pricing whereby the Melbourne company purchased logs from the Vanikolo branch at a rate which suited its purposes for Australian taxation and sold the sawn timber at a healthy profit, the Department had no qualms about pressing for the higher rate. Allowing for the company's reorganisation of operations, the administration phased in the new scale, beginning at 6s 6d in 1959, reaching 9s per hundred superfeet kauri in 1961.<sup>103</sup>

Negotiations with the company highlighted the conflict between Trenaman's plans for conservation and the company's for maximum extraction. The Department's regeneration trials at Vanikolo indicated that kauri was a faster grower than first thought. With a coupe of no more than 3 million superfeet yearly the existing mature kauri would last about 20 years from 1957, when a second cut could start in the logged areas as below-girth trees matured. Trenaman wanted to slow extraction so that Forestry's regeneration work could catch up and for reforestation with other pine species. In conjunction with Santa Cruz and Tevai, Trenaman saw Vanikolo as part of a management unit for sustained yield working.<sup>104</sup> The company was aiming to produce 4 to 5 million a year which would mean 'cutting out' Vanikolo in three or four years. Trenaman had made it clear that he wanted the government to 'stand the losses [to revenue] rather than squander an asset which even untended would appreciate rather than decrease in value'.<sup>105</sup> As the company had never achieved it, he settled on the lower 3 million superfeet as an economic quota, any excess incurring a higher rate of royalty of 19s 6d. He insisted on the protection of young trees, unenforced since the war, and scrutinised erosion problems. The company had to log the several less accessible stands bypassed earlier before a new area was opened.

Most of its costs were fixed so the company needed to produce 2.75 million superfeet yearly to get the unit-volume cost to 'break even point'.<sup>106</sup> There was the possibility of logging Tevai and Santa Cruz to increase production, but the company now considered the Tevai forests inadequate and the government would not consider Santa Cruz until the company had finished Vanikolo.<sup>107</sup> And Ben Ramoli's son and government headman, Ben Tua, continued to refuse timber rights to Tevai, no matter the company's or Trenaman's plans.<sup>108</sup> The company was cautious too about estimates of 39 million superfeet said to be on Santa Cruz, particularly as the terrain was broken and the topography unmapped. Getting the kauri out of bypassed pockets on Vanikolo would be costly.<sup>109</sup> It

needed new heavy equipment, such as tractors. Methods of extraction were still inefficient – roading did not keep up with logging, so logs were often hauled long distances. Embedded rock in these frayed both saws and tempers at the Australian mills. Although about 60% of the kauri ended as sawn timber, its value too was considerably reduced if the logs were faulty.<sup>110</sup>

The new royalty scale as well as these inefficiencies reduced the company's profit margin, but exogenous factors were more significant. In 1961, Australian duty increased on 'saw' logs, but not on 'peeler' logs. The company could hide only so long under Customs' supposition that all their logs were peelers. As well, the Australian authorities wanted a hygiene certificate, but as there had been no District Officer on Vanikolo since the war, they had only the manager's certification. When any sign of insect infestation was found in Australia the company had to pay for fumigation, adding 2s per hundred superfeet to costs.<sup>111</sup>

The parent company was in difficulties. The Kauri Timber Company in Australia from about 1944 had taken over many milling and plywood companies. It then diversified into other enterprises. Over-extended, it was caught when the economic recession of 1961 resulted in a down-turn in the building industry, forcing it to sell many of its interests. In the process of restructuring, it wrote down its capital by 62% in 1963.<sup>112</sup> Its plywood sales had already received a blow when in 1960, the Australian government granted Japan and other countries export licences, allowing cheap plywood into Australia.<sup>113</sup> By the mid 1950s cheaper supplies from within Australia were offering and by 1960s from Southeast Asia and New Guinea.<sup>114</sup> It was no wonder that by 1963, the company officials in Melbourne could say of the kauri 'we do not now necessarily want the timber'. A cost-benefit analysis that year revealed production on Vanikolo had not achieved the allowable cut of 3 million superfeet a year and to continue at the current rates would mean an annual loss of £25,000.<sup>115</sup> The company decided to withdraw in early 1964, just as the Japanese market was beginning to show interest in Solomons logs.

### THE PEOPLE OR THE PUBLIC GOOD?

Although the Forestry Department was committed to a model of commercial timber plantations on government land, a unique arrangement existed with the Vanikolo people. The government, conscious of the limited benefit the token rentals conferred, allocated an additional 5% of the royalties from the Vanikolo operation to the newly-formed local council. This, and the £240 annual rental given by the chiefs to the council in the 1950s, was spent on community projects, such as a council house, a school and a teacher, in return for reserving extensive tracts for regeneration, to be renegotiated at ten year intervals. With the population still small at around 70, land reservation was then no hardship, but, though traditional gathering was allowed, settlement, cultivation, or collection for sale were not. Future disputes could arise as to who owned the timber rights,

the Forestry Department or the landholders, but Trenaman envisaged future perpetual reservation would solve this. The combined payments to the people then amounted to around 10% of government revenue from the logs exported; had the first regulation of 1912 prevailed it would have been considerably higher.<sup>116</sup>

The royalties and duties paid from the company's log exports and imports contributed much to the Protectorate's 'public good', but little of this revenue made its way to the landholders. Perhaps the local people benefited from the government presence on their island, protecting them from foreigners and the loggers; but after the war the district office moved to more populous Santa Cruz and the Forestry unit was phased out in the mid 1960s.<sup>117</sup> For decades, Vanikorans certainly welcomed their modicum of development – local employment opportunities, access to a medical help, trade goods at the company store and from a trader attracted by the logging work-force, as well as regular shipping, but they remained somewhat equivocal about the presence of a company that 'spoiled' the land by causing erosion, muddied water supplies and whose employees often helped themselves to various resources.<sup>118</sup> The last colonial governor, Colin Allan, had a less sanguine view of the enterprise: 'What was to show for it? Very little indeed – a scarred landscape and much personal suffering.'<sup>119</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The history of the company on Vanikolo is not a happy one, though it was a catalyst in the formulation of forest policy for the Protectorate. Why did it keep going when losses were so great? Before World War Two, there was always the expectation things would get better and with so much capital committed withdrawal would spell total loss. In the post-war years transfer-pricing and the building boom in Australia brought profits for the Melbourne milling company, though on the account books the branch logging company made little. Cheaper timbers from Australia and Southeast Asia in the late 1950s and early 1960s finally made the Kauri Timber Company's operation on Vanikolo too costly.

What is evident from an analysis of the early relationship between the local administration and the Vanikoro Kauri Timber Company is that by the 1920s, though none were trained foresters, several officials in the Protectorate, such as Kane, were aware that economic sustainability and conservation were desirable in forest utilisation; even Woodford in 1912 understood this.<sup>120</sup> Much of the message of the Indian experience, disseminated at the imperial centre, particularly via Oxford, had gradually found its way to the fringes of empire. Policy in the Western Pacific Commission, however, had been ad hoc and largely dependent on local administrative concerns and initiatives. In regard the Protectorate, the prolonged negotiations to get the company logging at Vanikolo concentrated far more on revenue and the French claim, reflecting local colonial preoccupation with economic diversification and extension of government as

cheaply as possible over an 'empty' area where the people seemed doomed to extinction. If the Colonial Office had an opinion on forest conservation in the Solomons, it did not voice it in the early 1920s.

Forest policy here was reaction and remedy, rather than planning from the outset. It was not until the problems on Vanikolo in the 1930s brought Troup and his colleagues into Colonial Office deliberations that the principles of forest protection and production become more centrally articulated and promulgated for the Solomons as well as Fiji. The 'grievous mistakes of the Vanikoro concession' resulted in a ban on further commercial logging on native land, effectively until the late 1970s. More immediately in the late 1930s, some concept of conservation was salvaged in the renegotiated license, as 20% of the logged concession could be set aside for silviculture purposes. The legal position was problematic, as the government's original agreement with the local people had not envisaged this – hence the need for some understanding in the 1950s whereby they obtained educational and community benefits in return for setting aside the logged-over land. In a sense they paid twice for this – once, through the considerable revenue earned by the state in royalties over the years, and a second time, by taking their land out of alternative use for perhaps generations. From the perspective of the Forest Department, however, the nascent kauri forest was unsecured, and this further intensified Trenaman's quest for the forest estate on government land where both logging and reforestation could be controlled, a policy that was pursued and largely achieved by independence in 1978.

The Forestry Department faced a dilemma in dealing with the company in the late 1950s. The administration wanted increased returns from royalties. Though justifiable on prices at the time, this placed more pressure on a company facing increasing competition, creeping costs and ultimately a building slump in its market, Australia. Trenaman realised its withdrawal would mean loss of revenue, employment, shipping, and infrastructure for the Department's expanding silvicultural work on isolated Vanikolo. Though willing to accommodate a phased introduction of the new royalty, Trenaman did not capitulate to the company's desire to cut out the remaining forest within four years and pressed for more efficient cutting of semi-logged areas. In the event, the company achieved neither, but a considerable stock of valuable forest remained as an asset. Thus forest policy, though flexible, was not compromised by company demands or by the promise of short term economic gains for the government.

Within the wider context of British colonial forest policy there is much in the Solomon Islands case, as exemplified by the logging on Vanikolo, which supports the contention that, at least by the mid 1930s, the twin concerns of forest protection and production went hand-in-hand. It could be argued that between 1934 and the Pacific war there was no real demand for logging outside Vanikolo, so forest policy was never tested. Yet even the intense post-war interest by overseas loggers did not deflect the government from its commitment to maintain the forest for the needs of the expanding Solomons' population and as

an asset for the emerging state. Only in the 1960s did the colonial government begin to lift the 1934 moratorium on new logging licences, but only on government land. There was no grand plan to divert this asset to empire, as has been argued was the case in India.<sup>121</sup> The colonial agenda, however, had changed radically. Though the underlying assumption of government controlled land remained, all acquisition of land for the forest estate in the Protectorate occurred within a context of decolonisation, unlike India in the nineteenth century. The government purchased land, largely not in use, for the forest estate in areas of low population density. However, whether by fiat or fee, the concept of government procurement of vast lands containing a semi-dormant, but increasingly saleable resource had never been warmly embraced by Britain's colonised and the Solomons was no different. The motive of the public good could not vindicate means. From the Colonial Office to the Resident Commissioner, the panoply of the colonial government had taken to heart the lessons of Vanikolo regarding agreements with loggers and conservation; but Vanikolo had failed to teach this more fundamental lesson. Though muted by their pitiable numbers, the people of Tevai and their chiefs demonstrated remarkable tenacity for control of their land and forests. Neither the Colonial Office nor a conscientious Keith Trenaman fully understood the portent of this small voice, and in the 1960s, when the administration began to purchase and later rented land for timber rights elsewhere, it encountered considerable resistance. Between the British and their protected subjects, there was an elemental and enduring conflict in their respective perceptions of forest rights.

Nevertheless, by 1975, the forest estate seemed preserved for sustainable logging, in the colonial hope that it would return royalties for the country's development and the public good before and beyond independence. Events since have even more vociferously demonstrated that most Solomon Islanders shared neither that hope nor the premises on which it was based, but at independence in 1978 they still retained the bulk of their forests on customary land, and their government the partly reforested forest estate, as a means to pursue different aspirations.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Colonial Office files, Public Record Office, Kew, Britain. (hereinafter CO) 225/338/8655/1A: Robertson, 3 Aug. 1944. Except in quotations, the currently accepted spelling of Vanikolo is used in this article.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dauverge, *Shadows in the Forest: Japan and the Politics of Timber in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1997), passim.

<sup>3</sup> Judith A. Bennett, 'Forestry, Public Land and the Colonial Legacy in Solomon Islands', *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1995, pp. 244–75.

<sup>4</sup> Western Pacific High Commission, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Milton Keynes, Britain (hereafter WPHC) 38/13: Copy of Monckton's lease, 3 Dec. 1912; WPHC 1789/12: Sec. of State to Sweet-Escott, 7 Aug. 1912, and encls; WPHC in British Solomon Islands files, National Archives of Solomon Islands, Honiara, (hereafter BSIP) File 5: Ashley to High Commissioner (hereafter HC), Timber Concessions in Solomon Islands, n.d. c.1938.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Report, British Solomon Islands Protectorate, 1912–1913* (hereinafter AR-BSIP), (London: HMSO, 1914).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Dillon, *Narrative of La Perouse's Expedition*, (London: Hurst Chance, 1829), Vol. II, p. 273; J. W. Davidson, *Peter Dillon of Vanikoro: Chevalier of the South Seas*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 29–31, 80, 81, 90–1, 100–1, 102–5; See also P. A. Lesson, 'Vanikoro et ses Habitants', *Revue d'Anthropologie*, Paris, 1876, p. 22; *La Caledonie*, 11 May 1898, reference kindly provided by Dr Dorothy Shineberg; S. G. C. Knibbs, *The Savage Solomons: As They Were and Are. A record of a Head-hunting people Gradually Emerging From a Life of Savage Cruelty and Bloody Customs, with a Description of their Manners and Ways and the Beauties and Potentialities of their Islands* (London: Seeley Service, 1929), pp. 28–9; WPHC 233/98: Woodford to O'Brien, 18 June 1898; WPHC 2024/24: Kidson to HC, 23 July 1924; WPHC 801/14, 698/15: AR Labour Inspector, 1913–1914.

<sup>7</sup> WPHC 1137/13: Woodford to Escott, 3 May 1913. See also WPHC 1150/13: Woodford to Escott, 20 May 1913.

<sup>8</sup> Documents cited in Joint Committee of Public Accounts, *Interim Report on the Transactions of the War Service Homes Commissioner with Mr J. T. Caldwell*, 5 April 1921, Australia Parliamentary Papers, 1920–21. Also enclosed in WPHC 2854/20.

<sup>9</sup> WPHC 184/23: Kane to HC, 28 Dec 1942, Copy of Agreement, 4 Nov. 1922, and encls; Jules S-C Dumont D'Urville, *An Account of Two Voyages to the South Seas*, Trans. Helen Rosenman, Vol. I (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987), p. 236. Introduced disease and warfare are blamed for the depopulation (WPHC 83/32: Garvey, The Depopulation of Vanikoro, Jan. 1932).

<sup>10</sup> Vanikoro Records, Labour and Business Archives, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia (hereafter VR): Land Claim no. 540, Noumea, 28 June 1887, encl., Phillips, Report of the Lands Commissioner, In the Matter of Native Claims Nos 38 and 39, respecting lands at Vanikoro, Santa Cruz, claimed by the Société Française des Nouvelles Hebrides, 10 Dec. 1923.

<sup>11</sup> WPHC 184/23: Kane to HC, 28 Dec. 1922, Copy of Agreement, 4 Nov. 1922, and encls.

<sup>12</sup> WPHC 1244/21: Kane to Rodwell, 22 Aug. 1921, and enclosures; VR Archives: Memo of Agreement, 30 May 1940. The annual take home wage of a plantation worker was £12, beside allowances, such as rations.

## 'THE GRIEVOUS MISTAKES ...'

- <sup>13</sup> CO 225/205/40401: Minutes on file, c. Aug. 1925. See also WPHC 882/25: Amery to HC, 17 Mar. 1925 and minutes, c. July 1925.
- <sup>14</sup> WPHC 1244/21: Rodwell to Sec. of State, 12 May 1921.
- <sup>15</sup> CO 225/205/40401: Minutes on file, c. Aug. 1925. See also WPHC 2677/25: Amery to Hutson, 7 Oct. 1925 and enclosures.
- <sup>16</sup> WPHC 1244/21: Kane to Rodwell, 22 Aug. 1921; WPHC 52/23: Greene to Carrick et al., 8 Feb. 1923.
- <sup>17</sup> WPHC 1244/21: Kane to Rodwell, 22 Aug. 1921; WPHC 882/25: Kane to HC, 22 June 1925 and encls.
- <sup>18</sup> VR: Correspondence 1925–1932: Faithfull, Report of Timber on Vanikoro Island, n.d., c. Aug. 1925; Butler, General Report, Aug. 1926; Correspondence to and from, 1932–1936: Wilson Report, 19 Dec. 1933; Reports General, 139(a): Beckett, Report on Logging Operations at Vanikoro, Dec. 1954; WPHC 245/33: Sykes, Report on Tour of Inspection of the Forests of British Solomon Islands Protectorate, 1932.
- <sup>19</sup> VR: Correspondence 1925–1932: Faithfull, Report of Timber on Vanikoro Island, n.d., ca. Aug. 1925. These estimates were subsequently revised upwards, for example in 1934, to 300,000,000 superfeet. of kauri remaining after nine years of extraction (BSIP 9/111/2: Annual Report Santa Cruz [hereafter ARSC], 1934). Superficial feet in Hoppus measure is calculated as follows: Quarter girth in inches squared, multiplied by the length in feet, divided by 12 = superfeet content. One superfoot of log equals a twelfth of a Hoppus cubic foot or 0.106 of a true cubic foot. To convert from superfeet to cubic metres multiply by .0030019.
- <sup>20</sup> Dillon, *Narrative*, Vol. II, pp. 112–315; Davidson, *Peter Dillon*, pp. 170–89.
- <sup>21</sup> WPHC 1023/22: Middenway to Resident Commissioner (hereafter RC), 24 Feb. 1922. Several names used by the Company and the early government officials have been replaced by names given by the local people.
- <sup>22</sup> WPHC 1422/29: ARSC 1928; WPHC 1290/30: ARSC 1929; Correspondence to and from 1932–1936: Wilson to Sec. 19 Dec. 1933; VR: Reports: Beckett, Report on Logging operations at Vanikoro, Dec. 1954; Colin Allan, *Solomons Safari*, Part II, (Nag's Head Press, Christchurch: 1990), p. 144. Rainfall has reached an annual extreme of 7900 mm (D. R. Stoddart, 'Biogeography of the Tropical Pacific', *Pacific Science*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 276–93).
- <sup>23</sup> Woodford Papers, Division of Pacific and South Asian History, Australian National University, Canberra: Hill to Woodford, 22 June 1925; Ted Ashby, *Blackie: A Story of an Old-time Bushman* (Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1978), pp. 60–88. Ashby's memory fails at times, being a year too early regarding the establishment of the Saboe Bay camp.
- <sup>24</sup> WPHC 228/25: Kane to HC, 24 Dec. 1924. The people sold a small area of land to the government for the site of the government station and the company's base.
- <sup>25</sup> For labour matters, see J. A. Bennett, 'Logging labour on Vanikoro, Solomon Islands: The achievements of "the most feeble in the commercial world," 1923–1964', *Pacific Studies* Vol. 19, No. 2, 1996, pp. 1–36.
- <sup>26</sup> WPHC 1525/27: Middenway to RC, 10 Mar. 1927.
- <sup>27</sup> WPHC 1525/27: Middenway to RC, 10 Mar. 1927; VR: Correspondence 1925–1932: Faithfull, Report of Timber on Vanikoro Island, n.d., c. Aug. 1925, Butler, General Report, Aug. 1926, Smith to Sec. 18 Aug. 1928; Correspondence 1931: Sec. Melb. to Scullin, 12 Aug, 1931; Correspondence to and from, 1932–1936: Dawe to Sec. 27 Dec. 1932; WPHC 1422/29: ARSC, 1928. See also DP: Deland to Everyone, 14 Feb. 1927.

<sup>28</sup> VR: Gov. Depts to and from, 1926–1934: Sec. to Gullett, 4 Feb. 1932; Hall to Sec., 23 Dec. 1932; Synan to Director, 27 Feb. 1933.

<sup>29</sup> VR: Correspondence to and from: Sec. to Wilson, 20 June 1933.

<sup>30</sup> BSIP 9/III/2: ARSC 1930; WPHC 319/31: Kidson to DO, 11 Aug. 1931, enc.

<sup>31</sup> WPHC 882/25: Memorandum of Agreement, 24 June 1926; WPHC 319/31: Ashley to HC, 22 Dec. 1930, encl.

<sup>32</sup> WPHC 1244/21, Kane to HC, 22 Aug. 1921. Another Protectorate officer, A. Middenway, who reported on the terms of the licence as applied to Vanikolo conditions in 1922, also recommended a royalty based on superficial measurement, not trees felled (WPHC 1022/22: Middenway to RC, 24 Feb. 1922).

<sup>33</sup> WPHC 319/31: Court to Sec. to the Gov. 28 Sept. 1931; VR: Correspondence 1927–1931: Smith to Sec. 18 Aug. 1928.

<sup>34</sup> VR: Butler, Report of Vanikoro, Aug 1926.

<sup>35</sup> WPHC 319/31: Court to Sec. to the Gov. 28 Sept. 1931, Kidson to HC, 20 Oct. 1931, encls; VR: Butler, Report of Vanikoro, Aug. 1926; WPHC 1023/22: Middenway to RC, 24 Feb. 1922; BSIP 9/III/2: ARSC, 1930; BSIP 9/III/3: Quarterly Report, Santa Cruz (hereafter QRSC), Sept. 1937.

<sup>36</sup> WPHC 319/31: Hubbard, Memo, 7 Mar. 1933.

<sup>37</sup> WPHC 319/31: Barley to HC, 18 Apr. 1933 and encls; WPHC 1442/31: RC to HC, 1 June 1931. Filose was subsequently charged with procuring and committing assault on Solomon Islanders, relating to events while he was District Officer, Santa Isabel. He was fined in 1932 and resigned soon after (WPHC 2382/31; WPHC 584/33).

<sup>38</sup> WPHC 572/29: Kajewski to ADC, 4 Dec. 1928 and enclosures.

<sup>39</sup> Troup's major publications included *The Silviculture of Indian Trees*, (in three volumes) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), *Silvicultural Systems*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), *Forestry and State Control*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938). See also, *Empire Forest Review*, Vol. 18, 1939, pp. 187–8.

<sup>40</sup> WPHC 245/33: Sykes, Report of a tour of inspection of the forests of the BSIP, 1932; CO 225/259/93589: Troup to Under Sec. of State, 22 Feb. 1932; CO 225/271/18739: Sykes, Comment, 7 Jan. 1933; Troup, Forest Exploitation in the Solomon Islands, 24 Feb. 1933; Peason to Furse, 7 March 1933; CO 225/284/38829: Fletcher to Sec. of State, 16 May 1934; Troup, Comments, 27 Nov. 1934; CO 83/207/10: Troup, Note on a discussion of the question of Forestry in Fiji, 12 Jan. 1935; Legislative Council of Fiji: R. A. Sykes, 'The Forests of Fiji', Council Paper No. 9, 1933; Chief Secretary's Office, National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji, CSO 32/8 Pt 1: Interview between the Governor and Sykes, 11 Nov. 1931; WPHC 1244/21: Kane to AHC, 22 Aug. 1931; WPHC 572/29: Garvey to Sec. to the Gov., 10 Dec 1928, Fletcher to Sec of State, 12 Jan 1932, Ashley to HC, 31 Oct. 1930; Bennett, *Wealth*, p 220. Sykes formulated a forest policy for Fiji. Under Governor Richards, Fiji got its first forestry officer, J. S. Smith in 1937 (W. A. Gordon, *The Law of Forestry* (London: HMSO, 1955), p. 454; CO 83/218/2: Richards to Sec. of State, 6 Jan. 1937, and enclosures).

<sup>41</sup> WPHC 319/31: Court to Sec. to the Gov. 28 Sept. 1931 and encls.; BSIP 9/III/2: ARSC 1932; BSIP 9/III/3: QRSC, 1933–1937; VR: Correspondence 1927–1931: Manager's report, 9.

<sup>42</sup> BSIP F 28/4: Ashley, Memo: Timber Concessions, n.d. c. 1937 and encl.

<sup>43</sup> VR: General Correspondence 1935–1941: Burnell to Chairman, 15 Oct. 1937; Minutes of the Board of the Kauri Timber Co. 18 Mar., 4 Nov. 1937. Superficial feet was to be worked out in Hoppus measure.

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- <sup>44</sup> BSIP 9/V/I: RC, Notes on Tour, May 1940.
- <sup>45</sup> Cf. F. S. Walker, *The Forests of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate*, (London: Crown Agents, 1948), p. 23.
- <sup>46</sup> CO 225/271/18739: Troup, Forest Exploitation in Solomon Islands, 24 Feb. 1933, and encls; VR: Memorandum of Agreement, 30 May 1940.
- <sup>47</sup> Michael Roche, *History of New Zealand Forestry*, (Wellington: New Zealand Forestry Corporation, 1990), pp. 114–15, 129–30, 180, 187.
- <sup>48</sup> VR: Correspondence to and from, 1932–1936: Butler, General Report Leading to Recommendations, Aug. 1926, Correspondence 1925–1932; Wilson, Report on Result of Survey of Ambi Valley, I June 1933, Report of Timber Survey, 21 Dec, 1933 and encl.; BSIP 9/111/2: ARSC, 1937, encl.
- <sup>49</sup> Ashby, *Blackie*, p. 83.
- <sup>50</sup> VR: Correspondence 1925–1932: Butler, General Report Leading to Recommendations, Aug. 1926.
- <sup>51</sup> BSIP 9/111/3: QRSC, Mar 1929, enc. See also, VR: Correspondence to and from, 1932–1936: Wilson, Report of Timber Survey, 21 Dec. 1933 and enc.; Deland papers, National Library of Australia, Canberra: Deland to Everyone, 11 Jan. 1928
- <sup>52</sup> VR: Correspondence to and from, 1932–1936: Wilson, Report of Timber Survey, 21 Dec, 1933 and encl.
- <sup>53</sup> BSIP 9/111/2: ARSC, 1937, encl.
- <sup>54</sup> VR: Correspondence to and from, 1932–1936; Wilson, Report of Timber Survey, 21 Dec, 1933 and enc.
- <sup>55</sup> BSIP 9/111/2: ARSC, 1937, encl. See also VR: Reports General: McEwin, Report on Reconnaissance and Timber Cruise, 5 Oct. 1947.
- <sup>56</sup> *Solomon Islands National Forest Resources Inventory*, Vol. 1, (Canberra and Honiara: AIDAB and Ministry of Natural Resources, 1995), p. 48.
- <sup>57</sup> BSIP F 28/14 Part 1: Officer-in Charge to RC, 21 June 1945; VR: Correspondence Misc. general: Sec. to Ellis, 4 Dec. 1925.
- <sup>58</sup> WPHC 184/23: Kane to HC, 28 Dec. 1942.
- <sup>59</sup> Ben Tua of Buma (Puma), Tevai, interview, 1992.
- <sup>60</sup> WPHC 1023/22: Middenway to RC, 24 Feb. 1922;
- <sup>61</sup> BSIP-Annual Report, 1928, p. 6
- <sup>62</sup> WPHC 2531/29: Garvey, Log of Tulagi, 23 Mar. 1929; Ben Tua of Buma (Puma), Tevai, interview, 1992.
- <sup>63</sup> Seven of the 83 were away on plantation work (WPHC 1023/22: Middenway to RC, 24 Feb. 1922). WPHC 83/32: Garvey, The Depopulation of Vanikoro, Jan. 1932.
- <sup>64</sup> VR: Agreements 1935–1944: Ashley to Sec., 17 Apr. 1935 and enclosures.
- <sup>65</sup> CO 225/284/38829: Troup, notes, 27 Nov. 1934 and encls. See also CO 83/199/5: Furse to Troup and Pearson, 22 July 1933 and encls.
- <sup>66</sup> Judith A. Bennett, *Pacific Forest: A History of Resource Control and Contest in Solomon Islands, c.1800–1997* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, in press), Chapters 6 and 7.
- <sup>67</sup> CO 225/338/ 8655/1, Minute, A: L. Robertson, 3 Aug. 1944.
- <sup>68</sup> BSIP F 28/12 Part 1: Sec of State for Colonies, Memo, 28 Oct. 1944, cited in Walker to RC, 2 Sept. 1945.
- <sup>69</sup> BSIP F 28/14 Part 1: Officer-in Charge to RC, 21 June 1945; BSIP F 28/16: Walker, Interim Report on Forests, 15 Feb. 1945.

- <sup>70</sup> WPHC 1359/34: Diary SC, 7 May 1934; WPHC 1589/35: ARSC 1934.
- <sup>71</sup> BSIP 9/1: Commissioner of Lands to DC, 3 Feb. 1951.
- <sup>72</sup> BSIP 9/1: Ramoli to [DO] n. d. ca. 1947.
- <sup>73</sup> BSIP F 28/17: RC to HC, 3 Jan. 1952.
- <sup>74</sup> Judith A. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons: A history of a Pacific archipelago, 1800–1978* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 301–27. For the forest survey see, Walker, *The Forests of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate*.
- <sup>75</sup> ARFD, 1953–54, 1955, 1956; WPHC F45/5/9: Logie to Sec. to Govt, 31 Dec. 1952; WPHC F 45/5/11: Logie to DC 19 May, 2 Nov. 1953; WPHC F45/5/12: Logie to Chief Sec., 24 Dec. 1953; WPHC F45/23: Logie, Activities of the FD, 1953.
- <sup>76</sup> BSIP F 45/23: Draft Queen’s Regulation, 1953; Old Files, Ministry of Natural Resources, Honiara, Solomon Islands (hereinafter OF), F/8, Vol. I: Trenaman to Dun, 26 Oct. 1959, Forests Regulation 1960, and encls. This was non-alienated land, deemed ‘vacant of interests’ because it had not been occupied or cultivated or leased for 25 years prior to 1958 (Ian Heath, ‘Land policy in Solomon Islands’, Ph.D., La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1979, pp. 311–18.)
- <sup>77</sup> Before 1912, foreigners had purchased freehold land. Thereafter the government was the sole purchaser of land which could then be leased as could small plots of native land. Through the Waste Land regulations of 1900–1904, areas of supposedly unowned land were taken by the government to be leased for 999 years under Certificates of Occupation. A Lands Commission in 1919–1925 returned half of this land, though much of the rest remained in dispute. About 5% of the land was alienated through these means. (Bennett, *Wealth*, pp. 125–49; Ian Heath, ‘Land policy’, pp. 311–12.)
- <sup>78</sup> Heath, *Ibid.*, pp. 312–39, 391–420; Colin H. Allan, *Customary Land tenure in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate* (Honiara: BSIP, 1957), p. 287; OF, F139: Trenaman to Chief Sec. 21 Dec. 1963; Allan, *Solomons Safari*, Vol. II, pp. 172–4; Lands and Titles (Amendment) Ordinance, Solomon Islands, 1964.
- <sup>79</sup> The amount of land for the ‘forest estate’ was about 454 square miles (1176 square kilometres) in 1977, about 5% of the land area, including much former freehold land (Bennett, ‘Forestry’).
- <sup>80</sup> Bennett, ‘Forestry’, pp. 249–56.
- <sup>81</sup> OF, F128: Commissioner of Lands to Chief Secretary, 24 June 1960; Trenaman to Chief Secretary, 5 July 1960; Trenaman to Commissioner of Lands, 23 May 1961; F107: Note of a meeting at government house, 5 Mar. 1963; OF, M 21/1/1 and BSIP F28/12-1: Trenaman, The Forest Estate, Technical Note, 1/62, and enclosure, Aug. 1962; ARFD 1963.
- <sup>82</sup> ARFD 1958–1960; OF, M 21/1/1: Minutes of GH meeting, 30 Mar. 1960, cited in Trenaman, The Forest Estate, Technical Note, 1/62, Aug. 1962.
- <sup>83</sup> Bennett, Pacific Forest.
- <sup>84</sup> VR: Director’s Minute Book, 1929–41; Minutes of the Board of the Kauri Timber Company, 1924–1939; Roger, Vanikoro Branch report, Sept. 1961. This was a considerable over-estimate
- <sup>85</sup> VR: Rogers, Report on Vanikoro Branch, Sept. 1961.
- <sup>86</sup> VR: Guest to Bishop, 22 July 1955, Notes on Filewood’s Report of June 1955; Haling to Sec, 23 Oct. 1955, Filewood to Sec., 30 Sept. 1955, Correspondence to and from 1949–1960. See for labour matters, Bennett, ‘Logging labour on Vanikoro’.
- <sup>87</sup> Chris Hadley, *A Forester in the Solomon Islands* (Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild, 1991), p. 92.

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<sup>88</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Mar. 1953; Allan, *Solomons Safari*, pp. 140–1.

<sup>89</sup> VR: Reports general, Filewood, Report on Logging Operations, Vanikoro, 30 June 1955.

<sup>90</sup> VR: Correspondence to and from, 1949–1960, Mc Ewin, Proposed logging policy for Vanikoro..., 24 June 1953. A draw is a shattered end or part thereof, of the log and is similar to a drag which is a section of the outer tree torn off the side of the log, left on the stump. Shakes are circular cracks, sometimes existing in the living tree, sometimes caused by shocks received in felling. These are also called ring shakes.

<sup>91</sup> VR: Correspondence to and from, 1949–1960, McEwin to Sec., 20 Mar. 1950; Mc Ewin, Proposed logging policy for Vanikoro..., 24 June 1953; WPHC F 45/5/9: Logie to Sec. to Govt, 31 Dec. 1952.

<sup>92</sup> VR: Davidson, Report by Victorian manager on logs from Vanikoro, 21 July 1954.

<sup>93</sup> VR: Correspondence, A to L, Ass. Sec. to Haling, 24 Sept. 1948 and encls; Correspondence to and from, 1949–1960, 1948–1949, Mc Ewin, Proposed logging policy for Vanikoro..., 24 June 1953; Reports general, Beckett, Report on Logging operations at Vanikoro, Dec. 1954, Saxton(?), Report on Vanikoro and Ndeni, Sept. 1963.

<sup>94</sup> VR: Reports general, Filewood, Report on logging operations, Vanikoro, 30 June 1955, Jeffreys, Report on visit to Vanikoro, Jan.–Aug. 1957; Monthly reports, Bennett, 13 Oct. 1960,

<sup>95</sup> WPHC F 45/5/9: Logie to Sec. to Govt, 31 Dec. 1952.

<sup>96</sup> WPHC F 45/5/9: Logie to Sec. to Govt. 31 Dec. 1952; VR: Reports General, Beckett, Report on logging operations at Vanikoro, Dec. 1954.

<sup>97</sup> VR: Davidson, Report by Victorian manager on logs from Vanikoro, 21 July 1954, Notes of a visit to Honiara and Vanikoro, Aug. 1954.

<sup>98</sup> VR: Rogers, Report on Vanikoro Branch, Sept. 1961; Henderson, Notes, n.d; Real profits are difficult to estimate, but cost of 100 superfeet of kauri landed in Australia in the mid 1950s was about 116s to 125s and kauri, top quality, retailed at 250s in 1957, but the landed cost does not allow for losses on defective logs, nor the overheads in running the Australian business, which would have reduced the profit in Australia to less than 30%. (VR: Reports general, Hanson, Royalty appraisal, Vanikoro island, Oct. 1958; WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Chief Sec. to Deputy C'man, 7 Nov. 1957, Act. Chief Sec. to Sec. 19 May 1958 and encls; Correspondence 1952–1960, Newmarket Plywood, Costs, April 1954, Newmarket Plywood Co.; Greentree to Sec., 1 Oct. 1957, Greentree to Ploog, 15 Mar. 1954, Greentree to Sec., 14 May 1954, 8 June 1954.)

<sup>99</sup> VR: WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Adner to Sec., 14 May, 25 Mar. 1957, Chief Sec. to Deputy C'man, 9 Nov. 1957; BSIP Govt., Rogers, Broad Summary of present Honiara Negotiations, 11 Nov. 1958.

<sup>100</sup> WPHC CF 164/2/1 Vol. 1: Trenaman to Chief Sec., 6 Feb. 1957.

<sup>101</sup> WPHC CF 164/2/1 Vol 1: Appendix to No. 30 of 15/3/57. The agreement was extended annually with adjustments until 1964 (ARFD 1957–1964).

<sup>102</sup> ARFD, 1956–1960; WPHC CF 164/2/1 Vol. 2: Note, Trenaman, 12 July 1957; Hall to Gutch, 8 July 1958. The assessor, Hanson, in fact recommended a duty of 12s 1d per 100 superfeet (on 3 million super ft.) or 21s (on 5 million super ft.). He costed kauri at 105s 5d to 101s 4d landed in Melbourne and including profit to the producing Vanikolo branch. The internal correspondence of the company, upon which subsidiary firms made decisions to buy or not buy, reveals the cost as about 116s to 125s. Hanson calculated f.o.b. Vanikolo cost at 54s 4d to 60s 5d, while the company maintained that 78s f.o.b. cost was more accurate. Shipping cost was about 45s to Melbourne which both parties agreed on.

This would explain the government's reduction to a duty of 9s, still not an unreasonable rate (VR: Reports general, Hanson, Royalty appraisal, Vanikoro island, Oct. 1958; WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Chief Sec. to Deputy C'man, 7 Nov. 1957; Act. Chief Sec. to Sec. 19 May 1958 and encls).

<sup>103</sup> This 9s included a duty component as a result of legislation imposing export duty in 1961 (VR: WPHC Corres, 1957–1964, Chapman to manager, 29 Dec. 1961, Trenaman to Sec, VR, 14 May 1963).

<sup>104</sup> WPHC CF 164/2/1/ Vol. 3: Trenaman, The Kauri forest of Vanikoro, Tevai and Santa Cruz, Aug. 1958; ARFD, 1956, 1957. By 1966, of the 13,000 acres logged, 5600 acres had been treated (ARFD 1954–1980).

<sup>105</sup> WPHC CF 164/2/1/ Vol. 2: Trenaman to Chief Sec. 18 July 1957,

<sup>106</sup> WPHC CF 164/2/1/ Vol. 2: Trenaman to Chief Sec., 13 Dec. 1957; Minutes on file, 12 Oct. 1958; VR: Reports general, Saxton (?), Report on Vanikoro and Ndeni, Sept. 1963; WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Beckett to Rogers, 2 June 1961. See also VR: Filewood, Report, June 1955 and attached notes, 22 July 1955.

<sup>107</sup> VR: Reports general, Beckett, Report on logging operations at Vanikoro, Dec. 1954; Saxton (?), Report on Vanikoro and Ndeni, Sept. 1963; WPHC CF 164/2/1 Vol. 1: Ploog to Chief Sec., 27 Apr. 1955. The government was buying land on Santa Cruz and had hopes of purchasing regeneration areas on Vanikolo. (Bennett, *Pacific Forest*, chapters 9 and 10).

<sup>108</sup> Ben Tua, interview 1992.

<sup>109</sup> VR: WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Chapman to VR, 12 Feb., 12 June 1962, Trenaman to Sec., 23 Dec., Trenaman to Rogers, 16 Mar. 1964; Gass to Sec. 27 June 1960, Beckett to Rogers, 2 June 1961. Trenaman was a stickler for correct procedure, so much so that the company hid the fact that they were leaving unlogged a good patch of kauri in the Middle Ridge area. When Trenaman was on leave (November 1961–July 1962), John Chapman as acting Chief Forestry Officer, was more willing to turn a blind eye to unworked timber in old sites and settled for thorough working of existing logging sites only (VR: Letters from manager, 1960–1964, Chapman to VR, 12 Feb. 1962, Chapman to Rogers, 4 June 1962, Chapman to VR, 12 June 1962; Powell to Sec. 27 Apr., 26 Nov. 1962).

<sup>110</sup> VR: Letters from managers, 1960–1964, Greentree to Rogers, 9 Mar. 1962; Saxton (?), Report on Vanikoro and Ndeni, Sept. 1963.

<sup>111</sup> VR: WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Rogers to Trenaman, 16 June, 11, 18 Aug., 13 Sept. 1961.

<sup>112</sup> M. Roche, J. Dargavel and J. Mills, 'Tracking the VR from Kauri to Karri to Chatlee', draft paper, 1992, pp. 8–9; VR: WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Rogers to Trenaman, 11 Aug 1961.

<sup>113</sup> VR: General manager's Reports, Newmarket, Ply Co., Monthly Report, Sept. 1960.

<sup>114</sup> VR: Correspondence in and out, 1952–1954, Greentree to Sec., 15 Mar. 1954; WPHC Correspondence, 1957–1964, Chief Accountant, Costs and production totals, 30 June 1958, enc. Acting Chief Sec. BSIP to VR, 19 May 1958.

<sup>115</sup> VR: Saxton(?), Report on Vanikoro and Ndeni, Sept. 1963.

<sup>116</sup> Hadley, *A Forester*, p. 282; WPHC CF 164/2/1 Vol 1: Appendix to No 30 of 15/3/57; BSIP 9/111/1: AR Eastern District, 1951 and 1952; WPHC CF 164/2/1 Vol 2: Trenaman to Chief Sec., 13 Dec. 1957; ARFD, 1964; WPHC 2014/40: Luke to Parkinson, 14 May 1941. A new forest regulation, modelled on Indian legislation, which included powers to reserve or 'protect' forest had been prepared on advice from the Forestry Department in

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Fiji in 1943, but the Pacific War, followed by post-war plans for the Protectorate's own Department, saw this shelved (WPHC F44/2: Smith to Hyne, 29 Mar. 1943, and encls).

<sup>117</sup> By the mid 1960s the Department's concentration on hardwood reforestation in the Western District saw Vanikolo work practically cease for a decade. (Hadley, *A Forester*, pp. 85–7; ARFD 1954–1980; ARFD 1958–1966; Graham Chaplin, *Silvicultural Manual for the Solomon Islands* (London: Overseas Development Administration, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1993), p. 165).

<sup>118</sup> Ben Tua, Mari Lauili of Buma, Tevai; Reginald Walter Bila, Willy Usau and Benjamin Kase of Lavaka, Vanikolo; Basile Yabwe, Jonah Menape, Caspar of Santa Cruz, interviews, 1992; VR: McEwin to Sec., 30 Mar. 1954, Corres. 1949–1960.

<sup>119</sup> Allan, *Solomons Safari*, Part II, p. 145.

<sup>120</sup> Officers had little formal training in colonial administration until after World War Two. (James A. Boutillier, 'The Government is the District Officer: an historical analysis of District Officers as middlemen in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, 1893–1943,' in W. I. Rodman and D. A. Coutts (eds), *Middlemen and brokers in Oceania*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982), pp. 35–67.

<sup>121</sup> It has been argued that the British in India were interested in conservation of forest resources, not only for the timber itself and related soil conservation, but also to prevent degradation of the environment and consequent social suffering and unrest. Richard Grove is a proponent of this 'environmentalist' view. Others such as Ramachandra Guha argue that Britain wanted India's timber to assist British capitalist enterprise, driving the people out of their forests and often their subsistence to set up timber reserves. Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, 'State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India', *Past and Present*, No. 123, May 1989, p. 145; Michael Adas, 'Colonization, Commercial Agriculture and the Destruction of the Deltaic Rainforest of British Burma in the late Nineteenth Century', in R. P. Tucker and J. F. Richards (eds) *Global Deforestation in the Nineteenth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), pp. 96–7; Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).