The Wesleyan Mission Buys Land, New Britain, 1883

A price of goods paid for land called Vanakivu at Kabakada
To Toharebere for land and trees.
One axe 9/-, 1 Tomahawk 3/-, 4 lbs tobacco 6/-, 1 shirt 5/-,
24 yards print 12/-, two boxes caps 2/-, three knives 2/3,
2 flasks powder 3/-, 2 fantail hatchets 2/-, 3 boxes matches
and 3 lbs white beads 4/-6. Total £2.9.3.
To baining, Tokiupa, Tauramonog, Tohailok, Tolotina, the
following was given for their share in land and trees—they
divided it.
1 fantail hatchet 1/-, 3 doz. pipes 3/-, 7½ lbs tobacco 10/-6,
five knives 3/9, 30 yards print 15/-, 1 flask powder 1/6, 1 box
caps 1/-, 5 boxes matches 10d, 3 lbs beads 4/-6. Total £2.1.1.
Total for purchase of land £4.10.4.

Paid for plantation: on grounds Toharebere for 300 Bananas
2 yards print, 1 knife 9d, 1 flask powder 1/6, 1 box caps 1/-,
1 lb tobacco 1/6, 12 pipes 1/-. Total 6/9.
Talet. 125 bananas. 1 cloth 1/-. 1/3 flask powder 6d, 1 lb
tobacco 1/6, 12 pipes 1/-.
Tangau. 30 bananas. 2 yds print 2/-, 8 pipes 8d, 1 lb tobacco
1/6.
Tohailok. 50 bananas. 2 yds print 1/-, 8 pipes 8d, 1 lb tobacco
1/6. Total cost of plantations £1.17.
Total cost for land and plantations £3.7.5.
Source Methodist Church of Australasia: Department of Overseas
Missions Papers. Letter book, April, 1881 to August,
1884, ML. MS. Meth. Ch. O.M. 41. p. 401

THE FREE COLONY OF NOUVELLE-FRANCE:
DOCUMENTS C95 to C106

In a period of two years between September, 1879
and the end of 1881 some eight hundred people,
French, Belgian, Italian and German, left Europe
to sail to Nouvelle-France. This was a free colony in
Melanesia with its centre at Port Breton, formerly
Port Praslin, on the southern tip of New Ireland.
(Plate 56)

The scheme to create the free colony was the work
of Charles du Breil, entitled the Marquis de Rays, a
French adventurer. He first announced the scheme in
1872, and a company was floated in Marseilles and
subscriptions solicited through advertisement. Port
Praslin, renamed Port Breton, was chosen as the first
site for settlement within an extensive territory of

PLATE 65: The territory included by the Marquis de Rays in the Free Colony of New France, 1880
Drawn by E. Ford
Melanesia to be called Nouvelle-France. (Plate 65)

No preliminary survey of the area was made and the writings of various French navigators who had used Port Praslin as a refreshment point appear to have decided de Rays in his choice. Land around Port Breton was sold to subscribers who could either elect to farm it themselves or derive the income from it. Altogether some twenty thousand people subscribed to the scheme, about eight hundred elected to emigrate and about five million francs were invested.

This response to the Marquis de Rays’ proposals came from the success of an extensive publicity campaign throughout Western Europe. A journal, La Nouvelle-France, gave details of the proposed settlement. A Dr de Groote wrote a book which in word and engraving presented New Ireland as a tropical paradise. Respected institutions, the Belgian monarchy, the Papacy, were asked to give their approbation to the scheme.

Four ships, flying the Liberian flag, were used to transport about eight hundred intending settlers. The Chandernagor sailed to Port Breton via the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius and Torres Strait in December 1879 and January 1880. The first territory ‘claimed’ within Nouvelle-France was the Laughlan Islands and a few men were landed there. (Plate 65)

The remainder landed at Port Breton in January 1880 but judging the place to be unsuitable for settlement removed to Likiliki (Metlik) on the east coast. Discontent amongst the colonists occurred and the colony’s governor, de la Croix, took the ship with his adherents to Sydney. The second-in-command, Captain McLaughlin, attempted to organise the remaining colonists who were about sixty in number. Fever caused much sickness and the site proved unsuitable for settlement. In July, 1880 the sick colonists were taken by the Wesleyan missionaries, Brown and Danks, to Port Hunter where they were nursed back to health at the mission station.
Meanwhile in March 1880 a second ship, *Le Génil* with seventy officials and Catalan police on board sailed from Barcelona to New Ireland under the command of a Captain Rabardy. This detachment attempted to prepare a site at Port Breton for the colonists who had paid for land. In October 1880 a steamship, *L’India*, arrived with 315 Italian settlers and these left for Noumea before the end of the year. In April 1881, the S. S. *Nouvelle-Bretagne* with three hundred colonists on board arrived at Port Breton.

An attempt was made to develop the site, but the difficulties of terrain, climate and leadership were against success. Sickness and death caused havoc and in February 1882 the settlers, after negotiations between Rabardy, Baudouin (the colony’s doctor), Emma Forsayth and Thomas Farrell, were repatriated to Sydney in a Farrell ship.

C95  The Site of the Capital as Seen by Bougainville, Port Praslin, 1768

One of our first cares had been to search, (and certainly it was our interest to do so) whether the country could furnish any refreshments to our sick, and some solid food to the healthy. Our searches were fruitless. The fishery was entirely unsuccessful; and we only found in the woods a few date-palms, and cabbage-trees in very small number; and even these we were obliged to dispute with enormous ants, of which innumerable swarms forced us to abandon several of these trees, already cut down by us. It is true we saw five or six wild boars; and since that time some huntsmen were always out in search of them; but they never killed one. They were the only quadrupeds we saw here ...

...All the country is mountainous; the soil is very light, and the rocks are hardly covered with it. However, the trees are very tall, and there are several species of very fine wood. There we find the Betel, the Areca and the fine Indian-reed which we get from the Malays. It grows here in marshy places ...

...It seems upon the whole, that during this season the rains are uninterrupted here. One tempest comes on before the other is gone off, it thunders continually, and the nights are fit to convey an idea of chaotic darkness ...

...When I left Port Praslin, I corrected my longitude by that which we obtained from the calculation of the solar eclipse, which we observed there; my difference was about 3°, which I was to the eastward. The thermometer during the stay which we made there, was constantly at 22° or 23°; but the heat was greater than it seemed to show. I attribute the cause of this to the want of air, which is common here; this basin being closed in on all sides, and especially on the side of the reigning winds.

Source Lewis de Bougainville, A Voyage Round the World Performed by Order of His Most Christian Majesty in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768, and 1769. Translated from the French by John Reinhold Forster, F.A.S., Dublin, 1772, pp. 332-3, 339, 342-3

C96  Dumont D'Urville Reports on Port Praslin, 1827

First of all I intended to go into the channel between Lambon Island and the mainland of New Ireland so that I could reach a mooring at English Cove. This was because I would not have minded catching sight of Port Praslin again since it had become so famous as a port of call of Messieurs Bougainville and Duperrey. However, when I reached the coast the sky was so threatening and the wind so unreliable that I began to be afraid that I would be taken unawares by the calms or adverse squalls in such a deep and narrow channel ...

Despite the bad weather and the easterly wind, I did not dream of retracing my way through Saint George’s Channel. For better or worse, I had to steer through the straits of Dampier. You must agree with me that a land swamped by such frequent and extraordinary rains does not offer the human race a pleasant and healthy stay. So I was cured of the favourable impression of New Britain that I had gained from Dampier’s account and President Desbrosse’s conjectures. If the latter had shared our company’s discomforts he certainly never would have chosen this country as the centre of the colony which he wanted to found in this part of the world. I have never, in any country at all, seen such torrents of rain as those which submerged us for twelve days on end. Bougainville and D’Entrecasteaux had experienced the same fate in their moorings at Praslin and Carteret. It is true that we were luckier on the Coquille when we enjoyed generally fine weather at Port Praslin. But it seems that these are rare occasions and therefore of little relevance.


C97  The Marquis De Rays Launches his Scheme, Marseilles, 1879

But which part of the world will we choose? America and Asia are already taken. Africa with its unhealthy shores would not suit our purpose and moreover this vast continent’s interior, which so far has not been explored would offer enormous obstacles to a maiden expedition like ours. It is only Oceania which is still largely unoccupied and which can consequently present to our endeavours a worthwhile field of action. So it is that we have turned our eyes by necessity to this part of the world.

What is needed as our expedition’s departure point is a good seaport which we can use as the basis for our first camp. In addition we require some well equipped and armed ships conforming to French regulations and suitable for such waters. Likewise the German trading house set up in the Navigators Archipelago must be taken into account.

A suitable port has been found which is in the south east part of New Ireland which is an archipelago of New Britain. It is on the St George’s Channel and also on the long sea route between Australia and China.

This port has been chosen wisely. It has been visited by
Land Tenure in the Free Colony

Dumont D'Urville and commented on by Duperrey. Undoubtedly the French have greater right than any other nation to set themselves up there. Furthermore we should not forget that we are at all times merely individuals and that our government is in no way responsible for our actions.

Our expeditions can extend from Port Breton, today known as Port Praslin, over New Britain, the Louisiade (Archipelago) which was discovered by our navigators, the Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

The northern part of this last is already occupied by the Dutch who are our masters in this new type of colonisation. We could not miss out on these vast expanses of land.

So we have the right port, the temperature which is oceanic, is very moderate there despite the proximity of the Equator and it usually only varies a degree or two, between 25 and 28 degrees. The land is heavily wooded and very fertile with good irrigation. It rises rapidly from the sea which lets everyone choose the height and consequently the temperature best suited to him. The abundance of streams means that all sorts of industries can be economically created which require a propelling force. The natural irrigation of the countryside will facilitate the growth of all kinds of colonial crops in these outstandingly fertile conditions.

Source: Extract of a Speech by the Marquis de Rays, 4 April, 1873, to the Salon des Ouvres, Marseilles, La Colonie Libre de Port Breton, Nouvelle France en Océanie, (n.a.) Marseilles, 1879, pp.12-13. Translated from the French by Antoinette Wyllie.

C98 Port Praslin as Described in Europe, Paris, 1880

The Marquis de Rays has selected the southern end of Tombara Island or New Ireland as it was also called, as the focal point of his colonising efforts. It is now called Port-Praslin.

Port-Breton, the natural port of the island is in this area and is completely sheltered in all directions and protected by a circle of mountains. What is more, it is safe as it is convenient. The sea is deep enough there to enable large vessels to anchor close to land. So the old proverb which has been proved true so many times across the centuries is again: Uhus acquae conduct—and this is never truer than in a spot where fresh deep streams are found near shore and running across a country which rejoices in rich vegetation shadowed by large forests.

Port-Breton has the following advantages: the shores of its harbour show many seams of madrepore limestone interspersed with fresh water streams flowing from those same mountain peaks which provide shelter for the port. The little streams' mouths indicate safe moorings and easy landing places.

The land around Port-Breton is covered with coral deposits left by the retreating tide. The rising tide covers the beach and advances to the very feet of the trees at the edge of the landscape.

After you have disembarked you can see such prolific and vigorous vegetation that you could well imagine its invading the shore line and only being halted where the sea contest sovereignty over the land; this is proof of the constant tranquillity of the ocean waters which lap around Port-Breton's coasts.

One of the nutritious plants growing in these quiet dark spots is 'laka' or 'inocarpe'. There is nothing remarkable about its height in Tahiti but in New Ireland it reaches enormous proportions. There are also Caribbean (sic) cabbages and arak which is filled in large numbers to obtain the terminal shoot. This is also a sort of cabbage. False sago trees grow there and provide the natives with its pith which they use to make a bread like that made from real sago.

This opulent island's outstanding location has made it into one of the most fertile and healthy in the world.

It is really not so hot there considering its proximity to the equator; the vast forests covering it are constantly watered by heavy rain storms and are hot and humid. Its temperature range is between 26° and 28° C.

There are never any incidents of yellow fever, epidemics or other infectious illnesses or even acute respiratory tract complaints. These afflictions cannot find here the conditions essential to their germination or subsequent development. There are never any sudden changes in temperature and the difference between night and day temperature is only about one degree.

This island can be climatologically compared to Madeira which, although it is close to the burning African desert winds is supposed to enjoy perpetual springtime. Similarly the heat of the night there only varies by two degrees from the day and the woods which ornament this island provide a true Eden. Invalids go there to regain their strength after long convalescences from fatal ailments nurtured by our foggy climate. There is no yellow fever or cholera here either and, strangely enough in this torrid zone, there has never been a recorded case of canine rabies. When Madeira was discovered people were afraid to explore it for fear of wild animals. However, there are no ferocious beasts only beautifully plumed birds. This is also the case in Port-Breton.


C99 Arrangements for Land Tenure in the Free Colony, Paris, 1880

PROSPECTUS

New France: Conditions for becoming a land-owner in Nouvelle-France

Purchase Price

50 francs

(1) Gives the right to one hectare of land

Cultivation of Land

The landowner is free to cultivate this hectare as he wishes or alternatively, he can hand it over to the Colonial Administration which will give him 1/15th of the harvest.
C100 Information for Intending Immigrants to New France, Paris, 1880

1. The island of New Ireland, the centre of colonisation whose capital is at present Port-Breton (formerly Port-Pralin) lies to the north east of Australia between it and China in the Great Equinoctal Ocean (Oceania), to the east of New Britain (another of the colony’s islands) by 2 degrees 30 minutes, and is at 4 degrees 50 minutes latitude south by 148 degrees 18 minutes and 150 degrees 50 minutes longitude. New Ireland is 350 kilometres long by 35 wide and has the same area as Belgium. It is mountainous and has many forests. There are many cocoanut and muscat trees there. There are many birds of different species to be found in the woods. The natives, of whom there are not many, have not learnt to be afraid. In their tongue the island is called Tombara. The temperature is constantly kept cool by sea breezes and does not exceed 28°C in the open air while the minimum is 26°C. The temperature is lower in the mountains. The soil is continually fertile there.

2. New Ireland has been visited by engineers and navigators on the orders of the Marquis de Rays who founded the colony. They made a study of the composition of the soil and how it should be cultivated.

3. 600,000 hectares have been offered for subscription in both New Ireland and the neighbouring island of the archipelago of New Britain of which the former is a part.

4. The land purchasers have the following choice: either to cultivate it themselves or to allow it to be cultivated as far as it can by the Colonial Administration which will return to them one fifth of the net produce. It can also be leased for 5 francs per hectare paid in one instalment. This society then returns to the proprietor half of the profit.

5. Exploitation of the colony includes firstly the woods which cover the island, secondly fishing, thirdly mining, fourthly land cultivation and fifthly, in due course, the raising of oceanic pigs and of cattle.

6. The development of the country will be agricultural and industrial.

Agricultural cultivation includes the pulp of the Manioc root which produces an excellent food, the sweet potato, yam, banana, (a delicious fruit), hemp, vanilla, coffee, tobacco, cocoa, sugar cane, and in general all the products which colonies usually grow.

Industrial cultivation in particular includes the banana and sugar cane distillery and the sugar refinery.

7. Food comes from ground and winged game, kangaroo and other non-carnivorous animals, oceanic pig, farmyard poultry, fish which are plentiful, molluscs (oysters etc.), butcher’s meat of course in small quantities and in moderation due to the climate, manioc and sago (extracted from the sago tree), sweet potato, yams, delicious fruit (oranges, pineapples, bananas, dates, cocoanuts, etc etc.).

The climate is not conducive to the growing of wheat but it is imported from Australia. Drink varies between palm tree wine, brandy, rum, coffee and tea.

8. The natives do not share our idea of ownership and do not argue about the land with the new occupants. They only consider themselves masters of the game they hunt, the fish they catch and what they can grow in their primitive way. They seem hospitable and love bargaining. They have no firearms. They are pagans who will be converted to Catholicism by the missionaries who will teach them to cultivate the one piece of land and will settle them on land which they will use effectively. The natives bear missile weapons, lances and arrows, but these are not deadly. The colonists are on very friendly terms with the natives.
9. The occupied parts of the main island of the colony are Port-Breton, the administrative seat which is at the island’s south, and Liki Liki, another port a league from Port-Breton on the island’s east coast.
10. There is perpetual summer with rather frequent storms. Winter is shown by downpours of rain.
11. No dangerous animals are seen there. One presumes, nevertheless, as in all hot countries that there are reptiles which flee from inhabited places and avoid man.
12. All land purchased by colonists is near to the centres established by the Colonial Administration, as far as possible.
13. The armed force is composed of police, the constabulary and soldiers. Military service is on a voluntary basis.
14. The land’s fruitfulness began from the first year with colonists themselves growing sugar cane, potatoes, yams and manioc. It takes four or five years to grow coffee. One hectar of coffee after five years yields at least one thousand francs. A vegetable garden of one or two hectares gives an immediate yield enough for a family.
15. Farming implements, tools for growing foodstuffs, clothes, machinery, arms and so on can be obtained in the Colony at the same price as in Europe.
16. The French Civil Code adapted according to Catholic principles, has been adopted by the Colonial Administration.
17. Catholicism is the State religion and the only protected one. Each colonist is assured personal freedom of conscience. Political legislation and social order are based on Catholic precepts.

Priests, monks, missionaries and nuns will establish themselves in the colony along with doctors, justices of the peace, magistrates, etc.
18. The colony’s freedom over its taxes and own affairs will be established. Freedom to make one’s will is guaranteed absolutely to colonists and land owners even over their lands.


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**C101 The Symbolism of New France, France, 1880**

The journal *La Nouvelle France* published in France, was used by the promoters of the colonization scheme to attract capital and colonists for the venture. The following description of its frontispiece tells us something of the high hopes entertained for the colony by the promoters. The frontispiece itself is reproduced in A. Baudouin, *L’Aventure de Port Breton* etc., p. 24.

**OUR NEW FRONTISPICE**

We are keeping our promises in offering to our readers a new vignette for the title of our journal. The allegorical meaning of this etching is easy to understand. On a hemisphere representing Oceania, is seated Religion, with the attributes of theological virtues. It is the Christian Faith taking possession of Nouvelle France. On the right of this main figure are shown missionaries preaching the Gospel to the natives. On the left, Charity Sisters take care of the education of young children. Underneath Religion, is shown a beehive, symbol of the activity work and order in the State. Under this beehive are the arms and the flag of the colony with the beautiful motto: *Parsere subjectis, debellare superbos* which winds around the shield. On the sides accessory scenes represent sugar cane plantations and various cultivations. Barrels of food stuff, packages of goods handled by bustling workers, represent colonial business, as also do ships anchored in the harbour, while things such as a movable steam-engine, and a plough symbolise Industry.

In the background one can see Port Breton, the roadstead and the town. On a hill, some fortification, on the horizon the high seas with ships arriving, some at full steam, others in full sail . . .

Behind all that our mountains covered with a rich vegetation. In the sky, a Bird of Paradise flies, at the same time a symbol of divine protection and one of the more graceful specimens of the Oceanian fauna.

The whole drawing is encircled with tropical vegetation where birds of the colony perch, and right at the bottom on pennants are written the noble devices of the Colony, *Hope and Faith — God, Country and Liberty*.

So our vignette, whose imposition and execution do the greatest honour to our engraver, a distinguished artist, is a symbolized summing up, a graphical synthesis of the generous enterprise of M. Le Marquis de Rays, and as the foretold story of the nation founded by all the friends and subscribers of *La Nouvelle France*.

**Source La Nouvelle France, Journal No. 11 1st year, quoted in, A. Baudouin, L’Aventure du Port-Breton et la Colonie Libre dite Nouvelle France; Souvenirs Personnels et Documents, Paris, n.d., pp. 23-6 trans. Roland Orny.**

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**C102 The Maddest of Schemes, New Britain, 1880**

The Steamer ‘Genil’ called at Duke of York last Friday. She is on her way to the New Colony, and her Captain reports the approach of the *Port Breton* (2000 tons) with seven or eight hundred men, women and children, a steam washing machine driven by a large engine, a macaroni machine driven by steam also, and Ô ye gods listen,
The Port Breton Colony

carriages and pairs where with to ‘do the block’ that is, if they can either find or make a ‘block’ to ‘do’ which I very much doubt. Horse-flesh will be cheap down about New Ireland soon. Will you invest? Put me on commission and I will do my best for you. Well, after all it is a poor and an ‘ill wind which blows no one any good’ so possibly I may get a horse by and by for the taking it away! I am afraid there will be fearful misery there before long. It is a mad scheme, about the maddest of all the mad schemes of the Nineteenth Century. More have died since we last wrote to you and more will die. This is a fearful climate for the ‘new chum’ and not much less so for the acclimatised.


C103 The French Colony at Metlik, New Ireland, 1880

When we arrived at Metlik I had to go ashore in our boat and hurry them up if they wished to get away, for a heavy swell was setting in to the shore so that the Ripple could not anchor, but had to stand off and on while the men and their goods came off in the boats. I cannot soon forget the sight which met my vision as I landed on the beach. Some two dozen men came rushing down on to the beach as fast as their trembling limbs could carry them. Bandaged legs, pale emaciated faces, eyes sunk down in their sockets giving a ghastly appearance to these creatures who are called men. Some were reduced to mere skeletons and were supported for the time being only by the hope of getting away from this death yielding place. Eager questions were asked and answered and as soon as they knew that they were to leave in the Ripple there was a general rush to their houses—if we may call them such—and in five minutes they had packed up all their goods and were on their way to the beach.

I took a walk up to the settlement accompanied by Capt. MacLaughlin. It consisted of one road about 20 feet wide, each side lined by what they called houses, but what name to give them I do not know. The native houses although smaller are much more healthy. They consisted of a few posts stuck up in the ground and then a kind of an apology for a roof thrown onto a few rafters, the substances thrown on, not being a proper grass thatch but leaves of the Pandana tree and other broad leaves, which, being green when put on, gave off a foul smell when burnt by being exposed to the sun’s rays. The sides were made of Cocoa-nut leaves, very badly plaited and affording no adequate protection from the night dews and destructive malaria. When I saw the state of the houses I turned to Capt. MacLaughlin and said, ‘You ought to thank God that you are alive at this moment.’ At the lower end of this street stands, what Capt. MacLaughlin named ‘the Block-House’, but what I call a shanty. It is about 24 feet long and 14 feet broad, two storeys high, having a ground floor in the lower storey. It is simply a shell made of flooring boards fastened by small bolts to a framework of angle iron, the pillars being made of that article and simply stuck into the ground. A good gale would blow the whole place down to the ground. In fact everything seemed to me to indicate that no permanent settlement was intended here by the promoters or heads of the scheme. Surely if permanency had been intended something more substantial than the above would have been put up as a store room and the health and well being of the colonists would have received more careful consideration. I went through the storeroom and examined their stock of provisions which consisted principally of biscuits and coffee in the berry and the former not of the best description. All the wine had gone sour. The salt fish had become rotten and unfit for food. Only nine suits of clothes were in store, a few tin basins and a large kind of flask. Three barrels of salt pork, two barrels of salt, no tea, no sugar, three cases of tinned meats constituted about all of their stores, with the exception of a few bags of beans and one or two of peas, on which about 60 men were to live on for an indefinite period of time.

Those who were sick could not eat the nasty looking biscuits which formed the chief article of food and consequently became weaker and weaker every day. I am sure that if assistance had been withheld for a few more days many of the men would have died.

Some attempt had been made at cultivating the ground the result of which was a small banana plantation, another of sweet potato, a few tobacco plants doing well and some few flowers growing each side of the garden walks. After looking at all the Captain thought proper to show me I went down to the beach to superintend the embarkation of the men and goods. One boat load had already gone away in the ship’s boat. A heavy shower of rain came on which drenched me to the skin but we must keep at it for the weather looked quite black and angry. We soon all got on board and away we went for Port Hunter leaving some six or eight men behind who had expressed a desire to remain in Metlik with Capt. MacLaughlin

Source Methodist Church Papers, Rev B. Danks; Daily Journal, New Britain 1878-1882, Mitchell Library, MS. Meth. Ch. 616, listed at A5015; entry for 2 April, 1880, pp. 201-4

C104 A Naval Officer’s Report on the Port Breton Colony, 1880

I have the honor to report that I this day visited the Colonists established in Irish Cove about 7 miles south of this place (Port Carteret). Hearing from the natives here that they were somewhere in that direction, I left the Ship this morning at daybreak in the whaler, to examine the coast and proceeding for Wallis Island, caught sight of a steamer lying in Irish Cove, on going in, a white man came out to meet me in a canoe who proved to be Captain Rabardy of the Genie which with the India were the two steamers. Monsieur le Provost commands the expedition—Captains Le
Ray and Rabardy the India and Genil respectively. The Genil has been cruising about for some two months; the settlement at Melick or Likiliki is given up. All the original party that came out in the Chandernagore except two, have returned to Sydney in the Victor and after due consideration Irish Cove has been selected as the most likely place to found the new colony. The two ships fly the Liberian colours under authority from the Liberian Consul or representative at Barcelona. The emigrants are 350 in number, 150 being men, the remainder women and children and these are all Italians, who embarked at Barcelona. The Commandant, M. Le Provost and the Captains of the steamers are French as are the officers of the expedition such as Doctor, Priest etc. One gentleman with his wife and child are of the party, the remainder I am told are agricultural labourers and artificers etc. Irish Cove seems to have been selected from there being an abundance of fresh water there and because the steamer can lie quietly there very close in shore; whether they could do so in safety in a blow from the S.W. I don’t know, but feel doubtful of, and I don’t think the place is as safe for shipping as it seems for though where they lie it is land locked by Wallis Island, there is not swinging room for the steamer and the India is moored head and stern lying about S and N.W. and would feel a S.W. swell much.

The Genil after examining the coast of New Ireland and the shores of Blanche Bay, selected Irish Cove I believe and the India went there at once. She arrived on the 14th October—from Singapore last. The colonists have cleared about 4 acres of low ground, lying at the foot of the mountains and are busy clearing more land, and erecting a large shed for the cargo of the India which consists of six months provisions, machinery for a sugar mill etc. and a wooden house to put up ashore. The soil appeared to me to be very poor, mostly coral, but it was dry, and not damp or marshy, and likely to be healthy I think. Two streams flow into Irish Cove, one of which is of excellent water, and of that necessity there will certainly be no lack.

Agricultural officers of the expedition report favourably on the soil and I think they all seem satisfied with the choice made. It is not expected that the colony will be self-supporting as regards food for some years and more ships are expected to arrive from France with provisions. Up to the present the colonists have been very healthy. Some of the children died I believe on the way out but none since their arrival at Irish Cove, or as they call it Port Breton. The land they have cleared lies so little above high water mark that I should think they would be exposed to inundation from the sea in S.W. weather. Irish Cove is I understand to be the depot and other settlements are to be made bye and bye in other localities. Few natives are living near Irish Cove, but those that are about seem friendly enough but cannot be got to work tho’ offered good payment. The site of the settlement is a small piece of level land with 2 streams flowing through it, on each side of these streams and lowlands, very high hills rise with great abruptness. I think there is perhaps a danger of a flood from rivers in heavy rains, but since the arrival of colonists the weather has been fine; the bush is very thick and the labour of clearing will be considerable. I don’t think the land on the hillside could be made any use of even were it good soil—it is so precipitous. As I understand, besides the Marquis de Ray’s party there is another separate adventure accompanying.


C105 The State of the Colony, Port Breton, 1882

Captain,

On the 23 December last, I had the honour to send you a report of the epidemic which prevailed among us; in my opinion this epidemic was caused not only by the undeniable influence of the ground and the sky (the elements, rain, heat, winds etc.), but also by the want of supplies suitable for sick people and convalescents, and mostly by the lowness of spirits, the deep grief which sapped the population's morale.

Since then a series of unforeseen events have worsened the situation. The Nouvelle Bretagne which was supposed to bring various supplies for us from Manila and also some new colonists has come to Port Breton, dumped a few supplies and an incomplete house, and has disappeared after a few days in port and has been arrested by a Spanish Frigate. Captain Henry was arrested and this was the signal for a real dislocation of the colony. The Chaplain, the government employees and more than half the population believed that it was their duty to follow the arrested governor. Worse the ships, still with the colony, deserted and thus deprived the colonists of all means of communication with the outside world.

Such a situation soon brought a bad effect upon the public health and an event then took place which is worthy of comment. If we examine the composition of the settlers taken away by the Legaski we can see that it included about forty or more sick people of the colony. The forty seven remaining persons were all, or nearly all, in good health. But today, less than twenty days after the selection, three quarters of us are stricken with disease. Only six men amongst us can be classified as healthy. A few young men of the commissary until then free of any disease have been hit in a few days. A young girl has succumbed in a few hours and yet it is well known that children enjoy a remarkable immunity against disease during their acclimatization in the colonies.

Twenty eight persons are dangerously sick, about ten drag themselves along miserably, without strength or energy. A fact which will awaken a painful echo outside this colony is that we cannot recruit any staff to bury the dead. The Kanakas carry our dead and it was with difficulty at the last burial that we were able to find two men to dig the grave.

It is now my turn to feel my strength diminish and although I desire to do my work, soon I won't be able to do it adequately. You yourself have so far been exempt from
the pernicious effects of the climate; after two years you
are used to it, but in the last four days you have realised
that this climate spares nobody.

Such is the picture at the present moment but if we look
at the future the prospect is even darker. Soon indeed, we
will be at the season of the rains without being able to say
that even one house will be weatherproof. The headquarters
house is not only unhealthy, infested since the epidemic
with numerous morbid germs, but it is built unfortunately
on a swamp. This house is not only deadly because of these
reasons but its roof is permeable to even minor rains. The
heat of the dry season has increased the number of cracks in
it and the lamentable scenes of September will occur again
when bedding, furniture and the floor were flooded every
night. The only difference will be that the holes in the
roof will be more numerous. The sick inhabitants will be
unable to improve their lodgings or to build new ones.

As far as the food supplies are concerned they are not
better protected. The Marquis de Rays' hold is very unhealthy
as the ship is taking in a lot of water. Deteriorated food
supplies have been packed there for a long time. Even now
the biscuits and flour stored there are in a state of fermentation.
It is necessary to put them in a proper storage place
as soon as possible but we have no proper store-room.

It is necessary after all this to emphasise the question of
morale. I will say only that morale, already deplorable a
month ago has been deteriorating as the situation has
deteriorated. We can say that minds as well as bodies
are sick at Port Breton. The dreams that everyone has
at the start for future fortune have been cruelly scattered
by the brutal reality. The obvious powerlessness of any
human effort to create something from a piece of ground
which so far has produced nothing but the germ of fever
has led to one fixed thought, to get out of this place.

As far as I am concerned I do not hesitate to declare
that this wish, by its fixity, shows all the symptoms of a
disease among most settlers. The population of Port Breton
is sick with madness for departure. The dying ask for it as
much as the other. I add that from the medical point of view
I would consider it a crime to oppose such departure.

SOURCE Report, A. Baudouin to Captain Rabardy,
dated Port-Breton, 9th February, 1882, A. Baudouin,
L'Aventure du Port Breton et la Colonion Libre dite Nouvelle
France; Souvenir Personnels et Documents, Paris, n.d.,

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Jean Baptiste Octave Mouton was born at Namur,
Belgium on 9 October 1866, the son of a commercial
traveller. At eleven years of age he left school to be
apprenticed as a barber and wig-maker. In 1880
Mouton's father joined the Marquis de Rays' expedi-
tion to the colony at Port Breton in New Ireland.

Mouton and his father sailed on the Nouvelle-
Bretagne from Barcelona in 1881 and arrived at Port
Breton on 15 August 1881. After the break-up of the
colony at the beginning of 1882 the Moutons stayed
on in New Britain in the employ of Thomas Farrell.
Mouton Senior acquired an extensive piece of land at
Kinningunan by purchase from the local people. This
land was developed as a copra plantation and became
the basis of Mouton's prosperity.

Octave Mouton, as he called himself, engaged in
various trading activities throughout the Bismarck
Archipelago over a period from 1896 to about 1926.
In 1929 he entered into a partnership to run the
'Rabaul Times' newspaper and soon became the sole
proprietor of this and its associated Rabaul Printing
Works. He sold his plantation to the Catholic Mission
at the same time. Mouton maintained his 'Rabaul
Times' interest after his retirement in 1930 to Sydney
where he died on 7 September 1946.

However after a long tedious time we managed to reach
Port Hunter in Duke of York Island only a few miles from
our goal. We stayed about a week at Port Hunter, this Port
Hunter was occupied by the Methodist Mission, and while
we were there our people put a monument made of coral
stones on the graves of the 11 or 12 of the former members of
a previous expedition who died and were buried on the
island. The story goes that they all died of Malaria fever and
I quite believe (it) they were lacking of quinine as we were.
This island was beautiful and while we were there we went
on shore every day. The natives seemed to be very peaceful.
I presume that the mission had a great deal to do with it,
though they were only beginning to teach their Gospel.
After a week the Genil, a small steamer belonging to the
Marquis de Rays came at last to our rescue and towed us to
Port Breton it took only a few hours to do that.

We arrived at Port Breton on 15th of August, 1881 at 4
p.m. and what a delusion our paradise became a hell rather
than a land of promise. Some of the passengers were so
much affected that they cried from disappointment. Imagi-
...
our vision was not the best either for the same reason.

According to the description given by the Marquis de Rays' newspaper the Colonie Libre de Port Breton was much to be desired. This newspaper called 'La Nouvelle-France' made a paradise of this hell of a land. For this reason we felt it all the more for we could realise the contrast. No doubt this newspaper got those pictures and information from other countries and made use of it to deceive the poor fools who spent their savings to buy land. Those were indeed to be pitied. One of them, a man named Pitois, was nearly out of his head when he asked for the locality of his 18,000 hectares. There he was pulling his hair and crying. The poor devil was to be pitied.

Well after anchoring we met Scuaman who was wearing an oilskin coat. He did not look too happy and Henry Hunt-erman was no happier. Both looked very glum. No doubt Scuaman realised the deception behind the whole enterprise. Because his knowledge and experience were not to be of any value his disappointment was terrible.

I will try to describe this famous Port Breton to the best of my ability. The harbour looked very small and is no more than a little bay protected by the narrow entrance and a reef with room enough for about two or three vessels and not too large at that. Along the harbour there is a road made by the members of the previous expedition. This road was about 12 feet wide. The far side of the bay was occupied by the main body of a long building like a shed with no ornament. It had a roof of corrugated iron. This long shed called the blockhouse had weatherboard walls. This shed was divided into sections of about 14 to 16 feet along its whole length. A lot of people lived within. At one end was the church. Then came the different families. Even the Italians had some of the sections allotted to them. There were a few buildings of the same pattern made of native materials. These had no doubt been put up by people who wanted more space. The priest had one and used the church as a sleeping place. The officers and their wives, the colonists with their families, Italian and Spanish, soldiers of all nations were there. In all I presume that the whole colony on this little piece of land numbered 60 or 70 if that many, all living according to who they were in those compartments.

Along the bay a little further, about 600 yards, was a cottage which must have been built by the former governor. This cottage was occupied by the notary named Chambeau with his wife and child. As far as architecture was concerned this was the best of all the buildings.

The ground available for cultivation was very poor and consisted of a flat of no more than 100 acres if that much. Through this flowed a stream from the hill. This was no more than an outlet and about 100 feet wide. The water however was crystal clear and pure and this was the best feature of the whole place.

The settlers had made some attempts at gardening. It was apparent that the former colonists had done the same because the land was cleared and all the present colonists had to do was to clear away the small growth and the ground was ready for gardening. I think that gardening was the only thing suitable for this land. There was not enough of it for anything else. Besides should the river have overflowed God knows what would have happened. Part of the sugar (mill) machinery of the former expedition also remained. It appears that the machinery had arrived before the sugar could be planted. Even if enough land could be found at Port Breton for sugar growing I doubt if it would be a suitable crop.

In a way we were more fortunate (than the people at Port Breton). Our selected land was at a place about 5 miles along the coast at a bay called Marie Bay. This bay was very exposed and could not be used as a sheltered anchorage. This place was also a flat surrounded by high mountains. But here we were more open (than at Port Breton). There was a building there constructed by the first settlers. It was built of logs and of two storeys. The walls had loop-holes for the insertion of guns and the place was like a barracks. It seemed to me that the place had been planned to resist attack should such occur. We all lived there for the time being. Then we built a hut made of Malay mats which we had brought with us from Singapore. This hut was very soon made for when the frame was up the rest was simple; we only had to nail the mats onto the frame. This hut was about 40 feet long by 12 feet wide and about 7 feet high. At one end was the cooking place which was very simple and also the dining room. All the rest of the hut was used for sleeping. The floor of the hut was earth and our iron beds rested on this.

From Marie Bay we, who were the first settlers there, made a road to the main settlement at Port Breton. It was I should say about five miles long. This road was used when the sea was too rough. When the weather was favourable we used a native canoe made from hollowed out wood, with an outrigger. This would hold about four people. Generally it was my job to go to Port Breton twice weekly to collect the rations. These consisted of claret wine, salt pork, coffee, rice, olive oil and biscuits. Unfortunately flour was not issued, butter was unknown and only those who knew better had a better diet.

Source The Mouton Papers, extract from the Memories of J. B. O. Mouton, pp. 18-22, typescript in the possession of Mrs W. D. Sturrock, Sydney, 1968
PART 2

Some Results: Impact, Interaction and Change

The main apparent result of sustained contact between Europeans and the people of the coasts and islands of New Guinea was violence. This occurred on and off throughout the period of sustained contact and reached a degree of intensity following permanent European settlement in the Bismarck Archipelago in the 1870s. The lack of capability of various European governments to regulate relationships between their respective nationals and the indigenes in New Guinea waters was an important factor in this aspect of sustained contact. The coastal and island people of New Guinea came into contact with a variety of Europeans who were beyond the range of effective government control. Even as late as the early 1880s for example, British subjects and others in the Duke of York Islands could react violently to an alleged expected threat from the island people and being on the fringe of jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific could plead self-defence in the absence of protection of government. ¹

Examples of violence throughout the period of sustained contact and early settlement come from most types of contact according to the categories of Europeans involved; merchant seamen using the New Guinea shipping routes (B102; C32), traders and whalers (C5), and missionaries (C15 to C31 introduction; C119 to C121). Crews of naval vessels were not infrequently involved in violent incidents² (B64; B65) as were also scientists and explorers.³ While people in all areas of sustained contact were involved, violence was prominent above all in the Bismarck Archipelago where commercial shipping traffic and European economic activity were more sustained than in other areas of New Guinea. In particular within this area, St George’s Channel—the Duke of York Islands and the Gazelle Peninsula—were the scenes of violence and bloodshed. With the coming of permanent European settlement to this region in 1875 isolated acts of violence which hitherto had involved a few transient Europeans and a few indigenes extended to prolonged racial tension and acts of sustained hostility involving the whole of the European population and large numbers of local inhabitants. A notable example of this, illustrated by the documents (C119 to C121) in this part, was the action involving the European community of the Duke of Yorks and the Gazelle peninsula and the people in the hinterland of Blanche Bay. This action was on such a scale that it was described as warfare by its European protagonist, the Wesleyan Methodist missionary, the Rev. George Brown.

It has been shown (C52 to C70) how the Rev. George Brown established the New Britain mission at Port Hunter on Duke of York Island in 1875. In the first three years of its activities the mission deployed its Fijian and Samoan preachers and teachers on the Duke of Yorks, on the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain and on the coast of New Ireland bordering St. George's Channel. (Plate 43) In this district 28 preaching places and 14 churches were established and served by 24 mission workers from Fiji and Samoa and 2 local preachers.⁴ Until the arrival in December 1878 of the Rev. Benjamin Danks (C66), the Rev. George Brown was the sole resident European missionary in the district.

It was in the course of this initial rapid expansion of the mission that in April 1878 an attempt was made to contact the people living on the Gazelle Peninsula between Ratavul on Blanche Bay and Kabakada on Port Weber. (Plate 56) This attempt ended in tragedy when the mission party made up of a minister and three teachers were killed by the followers of Talili, a leading man of the region. This killing of the four missionaries led to the Six Day War which followed.

¹ D. Scarr, Fragments of Empire, Canberra, 1967, p. 127
³ On D’Albertain in this regard see William Maclean’s Journal of his New Guinea Expedition Commencing 29 May 1873 and ending 20th August 1875, MS. Linnean Society of N.S.W., entry 18 August, 1875

(C119 to C127) It was the opinion of the Rev. George Brown and of a British naval officer who reported on the war that Talili's motive was to eliminate the threat posed by the missionaries of interference to his control of trade from the coast to the inland villages.5 (C127)

The hostilities lasted for six days and the campaign planned by Brown and other Europeans involved the recruitment of auxiliary troops from Matupit, Nodup and Malaguna. The force was divided into two detachments one of which went by land from Malaguna into Talili's country and the other went by sea to Port Weber to cover the rear. In the course of the action several villages were attacked and burnt. Brown estimated that about 100 casualties were inflicted on the villagers. The attacking party suffered no casualties. (C121)

This action brought a great deal of criticism to the mission from the Australian press. Brown was arraigned before the High Commission Court in Fiji in November 1879, but the charge of manslaughter was not proceeded with.6 The Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Board supported Brown in his action but regretted that 'no other course seemed to him to be open.' (C124) It was suggested to him that perhaps he had erred in attempting too much too quickly in the expansion of the mission and he was advised to strengthen the mission's centre on the Duke of Yorks and to consolidate generally. (C125)

Talili was not chastened by his experience in the Six Day War. The year following he was again threatening the Methodist missionaries and was arming his men with breech-loading Snider rifles. The Rev. Benjamin Danks on this occasion sought for and gained the help of a British man-of-war in the area. A naval party went ashore at Kabakada into Talili country and burnt houses and cut dawn banana trees. A rocket was fired inland from the ship. Talili was not cowed. He refused to acknowledge any fault on his part and Danks not having received effective help from the temporal power had perforce to seek solace of the spiritual. (C128) After an inconclusive confrontation in 1880 with Talili over dancing on the Sabbath Day at Kabakada, Danks recorded:

'I think Talili has been spoilt since that unfortunate Blanche Bay affair. Both traders and missionaries have paid him too much attention, the former because he rules a vast copra country, and the latter because he would prove a very bad enemy, and, if obtained, a very good friend. He has thus obtained a very exaggerated opinion of himself.'

In the future I intend to watch him keenly but not let him know it. I have no faith in his friendship. He is cunning and treacherous and I don't think he would hesitate one moment about having another missionary join for dinner if he thought he could do it without it costing as much as his last did.7

The other notable incident involving sustained violence in the pre-government period occurred also in the Bismarck Archipelago. This was the Mioko Massacre so-called when in 1881 the European settlers in the Duke of Yorks Islands under the leadership of Thomas Farrell (C87) launched a punitive action against the inhabitants of Utuan Island. This action followed the murder by the islanders of a German naturalist named Kleinschmidt together with his two companions. These murders had their origin in a land dispute. Kleinschmidt had purchased Kapakon Island and believing that his proprietor rights gave him complete ownership of the land and the flora upon it, he excluded the former owners when they came to gather produce. Kleinschmidt expressed his views on land ownership to the Rev. Benjamin Danks:

'It matters not whether the natives consider or wanted to say now that I only bought the ground and not also the bush, forest, etc., or it ... Who would buy an island without the right to fauna and flora on it? What good would the ground be unless one can realise that which it produces?'8

Following the murders the European community suspected that the Utuan islanders planned to kill all Europeans on the Duke of Yorks. Farrell thereupon organised an armed party and using ships in the operation, proceeded against the Utuans. A contemporary observer, Dr Baudouin of the French colony at Port Breton, described the action:

'Rabardy (commander of the French colony) proved to be a powerful ally since his ship was prepared for war and had a 30 man crew. He was offered the post of commander-in-chief.'

He hastened from Port Breton and on his arrival made the following provisions:

He armed with rifles 40 kanakas under his ally King Talitoro as well as his own sailors, assembled them on the starboard side of the Genil and then moored his ship broadsides on to the entrance to the channel separating Utuan Island. This was where the insurgents from the large adjacent island were swarming. He then ordered Farrell's fleet to hug the coast in the direction of Meoko and at the same time to bombard the enemy villages with ammunition and rockets. The reaction he had predicted was not long in arriving.

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The natives were terrified by the gunfire and explosions and hurled themselves towards the opposite bank in order to board their dugouts and reach the neighbouring island. Warriors and women and children alike threw themselves into their boats. No sooner had the fugitives reached the middle of the channel than the Genil, moored there, opened fire mercilessly on the defenseless fleet. The water was instantly covered with debris, corpses and wounded. Rabardi's story from that time was that he had only killed 50 but Talitoro, who did not have the same motives for juggling the figures, would open and close his ten fingers twelve times at least when asked the number of dead at the Meoko massacre.  

In the official British enquiry which followed this action H. H. Romilly, a deputy commissioner for the Western Pacific High Commission, concluded that the Europeans were justified in their action on the grounds of self-defence.  The Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed with Commodore Erskine (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Station) that 'under no circumstances could the action of traders in levying war on their own account be justified ... (and that it was) most desirable that stringent instructions should be issued to the High Commissioner prohibiting any such expeditions in future as far as British subjects (were) concerned'. There the matter rested until government had the strength and presence to carry out punitive actions on its own account. (C130; D40) European settlers continued to use their own private resources of armed power to protect their property and to overawe their indigenous neighbours. (C130) There was no repetition of action after 1881 on the scale of the Six Day War and the Mioko Massacre. When the labour recruiters came to the Bismarck Archipelago in 1882 missionaries and government officials alike attempted to protect the local people from them. (C131 to C133) In this they were not altogether successful. The labour recruiters with their ships had the advantage of mobility over the representatives of church and state. A number of violent incidents occurred in the vicinity of St. George's Channel. Thus in the history of sustained contact in this area in the pre-government period, labour recruiting was one cause of violence, the concomitant of that sustained contact.

It was against this background of violence and its associated tension (C129) that Europeans pursued their various goals in New Guinea. The response of Europeans to the country and its people were as various as the social groups from which they came. Mklouaho-Maclay (C13; C14; C114) from an educated Russian background was able to bring an attitude of detached scientific interest combined with a warmth for human relationship to the people of Astrolabe Bay. He went amongst them unarmed. The rapport he created was unique in the history of sustained contact up to that time and it was evident that both parties profited from the relationship. The document (C114) in this part illustrates the nature of Mklouaho-Maclay's remarkable achievement. James Chalmers of the London Missionary Society (C32 to C51) was another who like Mklouaho-Maclay succeeded in building up a successful relationship with the people he moved amongst. He was able to adjust his evangelical Protestant ideas to the customs of the people. (C111) He too appears to have gained as much from the indigenous people as they gained from him.

Other Protestant missionaries appear in general to have found it difficult to adjust to indigenous custom. At least one observer drew a distinction between Protestant and Roman Catholic missionary attitudes to the indigenous culture. (C113) The Rev. Benjamin Danks who came to the New Britain mission field from a tradesman's background and with little formal education would meet his first man of Duke of York Island and see that 'utter and complete degradation was stamped on every line of his features'. (C108) An incident involving bodily violence to a Duke of York woman he reported in terms of 'sin, vice and horror'. (C109)

Education was seen by the missionaries as a means to break the grip of the indigenous culture and to bring the youth within the influence of the mission. Both the Wesleyan Methodist and the Lutheran missions gave education a high priority in their work. Results were varied and the problem of the language of instruction and apathy were reported on. The three documents (C115 to C118) in this part report the hopes which the missionaries placed on education. Rarely were these fulfilled in practice. In the New Britain mission, language was seen to be the barrier in education and in evangelical effort. This recognition led to Brown and Danks attempting to give the Duke of York dialect a written form and to Rickard doing the same for the Blanche Bay dialect. Already sustained contact had taken English to some of the people in proximity to ships' refreshment ports. (C107) Sustained contact resulted in important language interchange and in the creation of the lingua
franca, Pidgin English. This had important permanent results for both Europeans and indigenes in New Guinea.


ATITUDES AND RESPONSES: DOCUMENTS C107 to C114

C107 Communication, Duke of York Island, 1875

Sunday, 15th—Several canoes came off by day-light from New Ireland. Partly in broken English, partly through Tim, a lad of Duke of York, who was now returning from Sydney, we told the people there could be no bartering to-day, but a few trifles were given to show our good will. About 1.30 we anchored at the Duke of York, at a sheltered inlet, dignified with the name of Port Hunter, and giving room for about one vessel. Many canoes came off. The ship had been expected, and was recognised as ‘Missionary’, whatever might be the particular meaning attached to the word. Captain Ferguson, who has long traded here, and who had seen Mr Brown in Sydney has spread the report of the vessel’s coming, and so far prepared our way. The natives had not even a primitive girdle or leaves. Topula (alias ‘King Dick’) soon came on board. The Fijian and Samoan teachers and wives were after a while introduced to his unclad majesty. He received them with all dignity and nonchalance. Other chiefs also have been dubbed ‘King’ by the white men, so we had a ‘King Billy’ and a ‘King Johnny’, in the company. There is no one leading chief, but a number of petty chiefs, whose influence is circumscribed and who appear to look well to one another’s doings. The natives are of fair stature. We saw no cases of ophthalmia or elephantiasis, a marked contrast to what would be seen in any like number of Fijians, or Tongans. But many suffered from a cutaneous disease, which I had seldom seen. As we anchored on the Sabbath, there was no bartering. The natives left the vessel about sundown, having been present at a Fijian service on the quarter-deck in the afternoon, when all behaved well. In the evening we had our usual English preaching, and thus ended our first Sabbath, and the first probably ever marked by public worship in this place. The introduction to the people was as satisfactory as we could have expected.

Our conversation with the natives was chiefly in ‘pigeon English’, if English it deserves to be called, though some on board seemed inclined to plead for it, as they did for ‘baby talk’, as something far more sensible under the circumstances than English undefiled. So tastes and judgments differ. We give a specimen or two of this lingo. ‘Me savee’ (I know). ‘Tobacco pickaninny’ (a small piece of tobacco). ‘Now no gammon’, (Do not deceive or fool me). ‘Tomorrow make work’, ‘No kaikai pig’, (do not eat pork). ‘Plenty man kaika pig.’ (There are plenty that eat pork.) ‘Name belong that fellow,’ (What do you call it?). ‘Where you catch him?’ (Where do you get it?) ‘He plenty stop bush,’ (there are plenty in the bush). Some words were used in a way that puzzled us all. With such English as the medium of intercourse serious mistakes might, we should fear, at times arise I heard one interpret the native name ‘Urukuk’ which was intermingled with this broken English, as ‘Captain Cook’, and he thought at first he had hold of some native account of the great navigator.

SOURCE Notes kept by William Fletcher on mission voyage to Duke of York Islands, dated Sydney, 19 October, 1875, The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, Vol. 14, No. 8, Sydney, 3 November, 1875, p. 125

C108 A Missionary’s View of Native Society, Bismarck Archipelago, 1881

I shall not soon forget the feeling which came over me when for the first time I saw a native of Duke of York. It was night time and on board the John Wesley. We had nearly reached Port Hunter when the wind failed us and we lay all night in the channel. A. man, whose name I afterwards ascertained to be Dukduk, came on board accompanied by two or three others. Neither he nor his companions had any clothing on and in the light of the flickering lamp they presented anything but an inviting appearance. About five feet six high, covered with dirt and filth as though he had not been washed for years, his eyes never seeming to be at rest, while his black teeth, caused by eating betel nut, contributed not a little towards the general ugliness of the man. Utter and complete degradation was stamped on every