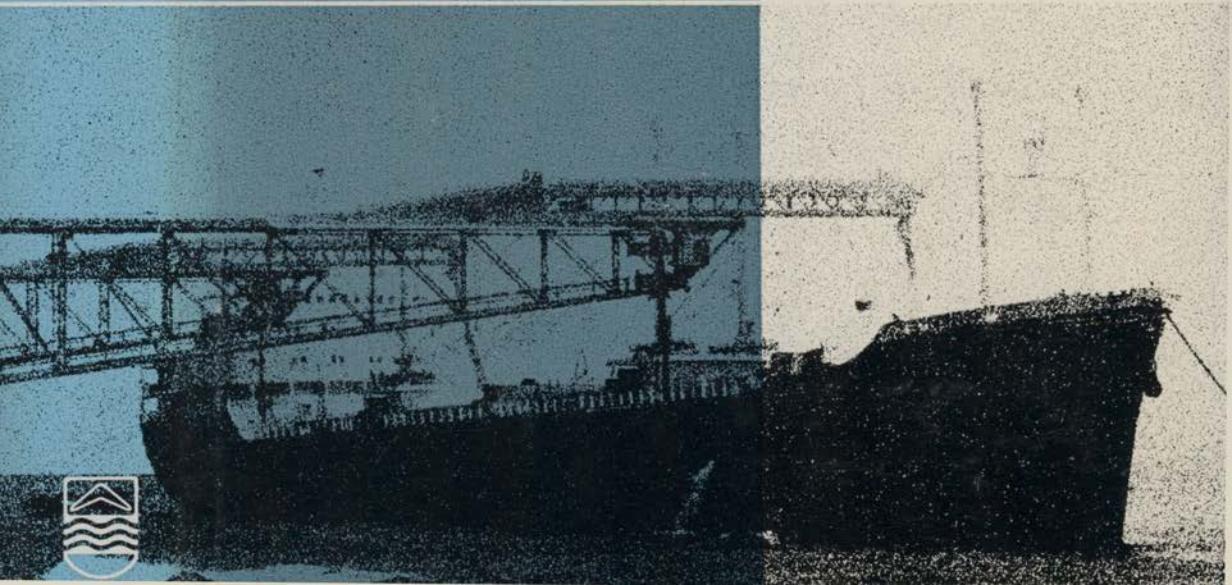


NAURU
Viviani

NAURU

Phosphate
and
Political
Progress

Nancy Viviani



Nauru: Phosphate and Political Progress

is the story of David and Goliath
in a modern political setting in
the South Seas.

Controlled, protected, or occupied
successively by Germans, Australians,
British, and Japanese and then again
by Australians under U.N. Trusteeship,
all (except Germany) for the
purpose of exploiting the island's one
resource—phosphate—Nauru is one of
the smallest and most isolated islands
in the Pacific, with a mere
3000 inhabitants.

The struggle the Nauruans waged
against Australia was not only for
political independence but, more
important, the right to control the
phosphate industry for the benefit of
the Nauruans.

Their victory will encourage
dependent minorities throughout the
world.

This book is a timely and important
work that will be read with pleasure
and profit by all interested in the
progress of colonial territories towards
independence.

This book was published by ANU Press between 1965–1991.

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NAURU

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Phosphate and Political Progress

NANCY VIVIANI

Australian National University Press

Canberra

1970

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*Printed and manufactured in Australia
Gillingham Printers Pty Ltd, Adelaide*

Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a book

*Library of Congress Catalog Card no. 78-93784
National Library of Australia reg. no. AUS 69-3409
SBN 7081 0765 6*

To my mother

Foreword

This is a timely and important work which will be read with pleasure and profit by all interested in the progress of colonial territories towards independence. Its setting is the South Seas, but its theme and treatment are so different from the conventional book on the islands that the first reaction of a reader not conversant with the modern Pacific may well be one of surprised realisation that the carefree children of Paradise have apparently grown up, and on reaching maturity are no longer willing to accept the hand-outs of the once revered European with an uncritical sense of gratitude.

Nancy Viviani has in fact given us the story of David and Goliath in a modern and political setting: the 3,000 Nauruans, inhabiting one of the smallest and most isolated islands in the Pacific, versus the Commonwealth of Australia; and the stakes, not only political independence but, even more importantly, the right to control the phosphate industry—the island's sole resource—for the benefit of the Nauruans rather than the Australian farmer.

On the whole it is not a picture in which Australia can take an unmixed pride. The administration, both in Canberra and Nauru, exhibited the typical syndrome of colonialism: 'big brother knows best'; while at the same time being clearly unwilling to subordinate Australian interests to Nauruan. A few Administrators, such as General Griffiths, were prepared to stand up for the islanders *vis-à-vis* the British Phosphate Commissioners, but others were more concerned with the public recognition of their personal status. It was paternalism at best and a quarter-deck autocracy at worst; while the Phosphate Commissioners, like monopolists the world over, maintained a complacent taciturnity which not even the United Nations could penetrate.

And yet, possibly for the first time in history, it was the Nauruan David who won on all counts, and in a protracted battle of wits where Australia's negotiators pulled no punches. Hence the importance of Mrs Viviani's book for dependent minorities throughout the world and those concerned with their welfare. For however deep we go back into the annals of history it is impossible to discover a parallel case in which a community of near comparable size has gained its independence in the teeth of opposition from a metropolitan country numbering over 10 millions. Andorra, San Marino, and Liechtenstein spring immediately to mind; but after all they did not gain their independence, they merely maintained it in the face of neighbouring national consolidation.

For its size Nauru possesses several remarkably able political leaders—and in Hammer DeRoburt, in particular, a statesman who bears comparison with some of the most astute in Australia or abroad. But ability alone would have proved insufficient without the aid either of a powerful lobby in the Commonwealth itself, which was non-existent, or an external sponsor of sufficient stature to counteract the understandable dictates of national self-interest.

In this case Nauru's fairy godmother was that much-maligned organisation: the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. There is one reader of Nancy Viviani's book at least who can forgive the Council its posturings over independence for Pitcairn Island, whose 83 inhabitants could imagine no worse fate, or even its pusillanimity over American designs in Micronesia, in consideration of its consistent support of the Nauruan interest. It is fortunate, too, that the Nauruans were, after all, dealing with a democracy, and thus could obtain the advice and assistance of independent experts such as the economists Helen Hughes and the firm of Philip Shrapnel, and the constitutional authority J. W. Davidson; while the actual negotiations, though hard-fought on both sides, were conducted throughout in accordance with the usages of civilised societies.

Yet anyone who considers that Nauru would have attained either political or economic control of its own affairs without the support of the Trusteeship Council should pause to consider the situation of its nearest neighbour, Ocean Island,

only 165 miles to the east. In 1886 British and German negotiators in Berlin drew a straight line on an Admiralty Chart from lat. 8°50'S and long. 159°50'E to lat. 6°N and long. 173°30'E. The object of the exercise was to define the British and German spheres of interest in the Solomons and eastern Micronesia respectively, but it so happened that the ruled line ran between Nauru and Ocean Island and thus had the effect of placing the former in the German and the latter in the British sphere.

This result, quite irrelevant to the imperialist draughtsmen, who had in all probability never previously heard of either island, was fraught with the utmost significance for their inhabitants, since fourteen years later, and *after* the discovery of its lucrative phosphate deposits, the manipulations of European power politics resulted in the annexation of Ocean Island by the British Government, while consequent on the defeat of Germany in World War I Nauru became a mandated territory and ultimately a United Nations trust.

At this point the Nauruans were receiving $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a ton in royalties while the Banabans were being paid 1s., plus additional payments for land purchased and compensation for food-bearing trees destroyed. By 1967, on the other hand, the Nauruans were being given royalties of \$4.50 a ton from the phosphate industry, which they now own. At the same time the Banabans received 70 cents, while more than \$3.50 a ton in phosphate tax, in addition to other taxation, was being taken by the administering authority for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, with whom the Banabans had no political connection until annexed by Great Britain, and which are certainly a British but scarcely a Banaban responsibility. Comment would seem superfluous.

Nauru has now got what she fought for and the world will wish its newest and smallest independent Republic all good fortune in the future, for to many it will seem that the difficulties which she has been through could be as nothing to those that lie ahead. To anyone who knows the history of her central plateau the proposed re-soiling project offers little prospect of success: in a region subject to periodical droughts it was never coconut-bearing land. Furthermore, there are insufficient tourist attractions to offset the island's isolation

and diminutive size in a Pacific where tourism is increasingly becoming a fiercely competitive industry.

Wise investment of the community's profits from the phosphate deposits, while they last, is clearly crucial, and probably nowhere can they be invested more profitably than in the education of Nauru's younger citizens to their highest potentials. For, despite wishful thinking, Nauru alone will never be able to support the natural increase of her population in the standard of living to which it is becoming accustomed—once the phosphate industry has ceased operation.

What if young folk go to seek their fortunes in the outside world? Other islanders elsewhere have done the same; and without either severing their links with the homeland or causing the disintegration of the local social structure.

However, *che sarà, sarà*; and in the meantime few infant states can have had their conception, gestation, and birth so carefully chronicled, while many of the events were actually taking place.¹ If Nancy Viviani's book helps us not only to appreciate the historical processes which led to the establishment of the republic of Nauru but also to follow with understanding and sympathy the future progress of her attractive and hospitable people, it will have doubly served its purpose.

Australian National University
1 January 1970

H. E. MAUDE

1. J. W. Davidson's *Samoa mo Samoa: the emergence of the independent State of Western Samoa* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1967) is, of course, a conspicuous exception.

Acknowledgments

My chief debt is to Dr Helen Hughes, whose encouragement and friendship helped greatly in this work. I also wish to thank the many friends at the Australian National University who drew on their wide experience of the Pacific to help clarify difficult issues, and I am particularly indebted here to Mr H. E. Maude.

The librarians of the Australian Reference Section of the National Library, of the R. G. Menzies Library at the Australian National University, of the Commonwealth Archives, and of the Australian War Museum Library, persevered cheerfully with my requests for documents, and Mr R. Langdon of the *Pacific Islands Monthly* and Mr H. Clarke of the Department of Territories greatly helped with the illustrations. Mrs E. Gintz of Melbourne painstakingly translated the microfilms of the German documents. My thanks also to Mrs D. Shaw who typed the manuscript and to the staff of the Australian National University Press.

Thanks are also due to Sir William Dunk, British Phosphate Commissioner for Australia, the Nauru staff of the British Phosphate Commissioners, and members of the Nauru Administration, who were informative and helpful.

To the Nauruan people I owe a special debt. Their hospitality is unforgettable, their patient help with information and the welcome they extended made my stay among them a very happy one.

This book has been published with the assistance of the Republic of Nauru Fund of the Australian National University.

Canberra
November 1968

N.V.

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Introduction

Nauru is a very small, very isolated island with a small indigenous population, yet in 1963 it was making world headlines. Microscopic though its problems were, they seemed in some ways typical of those of many emerging countries, and the very limitations of the island's existence, circumscribing political, economic, social, and cultural change, promised to allow me the opportunity to examine such variations at close range without the complication of the many factors which would intrude in larger more populous areas.

From the pre-annexation days before 1888 Nauru's evolution to 1968 has been quite complex. Politically it experienced four colonial administrations and has now achieved independence. Economically it has moved from a time of subsistence overshadowed by droughts into sixty years of abundance by Pacific standards which now, however, could be jeopardised by the imminent exhaustion of the phosphate deposits; and socially and culturally it has changed from a pre-European contact stage of 'happy savagery' to a baffling cultural unease. A hope of being able to understand the 1968 Nauruan is another reason lying behind this work.

The Nauruans are a distinct people. Although they lack racial homogeneity, their geographical isolation on one island, their particular culture, and their own language have forged them into a separate people quite distinct from other Pacific peoples. But like other Pacific peoples, their main determining factor of change has been European contact.

This book falls into four chronological periods. The first period, pre-1888 (Chapter 1), briefly discusses the discovery of the island and the beachcomber era. The second, 1888 to 1920 (Chapter 2), outlines the background to the German annexation of Nauru, the German administration, the dis-

covery and working of the phosphate and the World War I years. The third period, 1921–47, traces the British domination of the island in which years Australia assumed its role as political administrator and became chief beneficiary from the phosphate. World War II ends this era (Chapters 3, 4, and 5). The post-war section discusses the emergence of the Nauruan people from political lethargy and attempts to show why their national identity became the focus of the post-war struggle for political and economic rights (Chapters 6, 7, and 8).

I have argued that European contact has been a persistent cause of change for Nauru and the Nauruans, but an equally important factor of change, the economic value of the phosphate deposits, has worked in quite a different direction. Given the importance of Nauru's phosphate to Australian agriculture, conflict between Australia's economic interests and her duties as an Administering Authority under the United Nations Charter was inevitable, and this unhappy division of loyalties is the secondary theme of this work.

Old Nauru

One old Nauruan legend has it that the Nauruan people believed their beloved island to be the centre of the universe. Although their cosmography needed some correction, at least Nauru, which lies just 26 miles south of the equator on longitude 167°E, is set very close to the mid-point of the world. It is a solitary island, for it belongs to no chain and its nearest neighbours, Ocean Island, 165 miles to the east, and the scattered Gilberts some 200 miles further away, could provide contact only through the mischance of island sailors blown off course and cast away on Nauru. Communication by the Nauruan people was also severely restricted by the strong South Equatorial current which could sweep unwary fishermen over a thousand uninhabited miles west to the Solomon Islands. Much of the development of the Nauruans as a distinct people can be ascribed to this isolation. The topography of the island, which is only 9 square miles in area and shaped like an inverted soup plate, with a low crown of central plateau and a rim of flat coastal belt up to 300 yards wide, made it relatively easy for sailors to pass by Nauru altogether. Visitors were further discouraged by the living coral reef which girdled the island completely, for it provided entry to neither harbour nor anchorage.

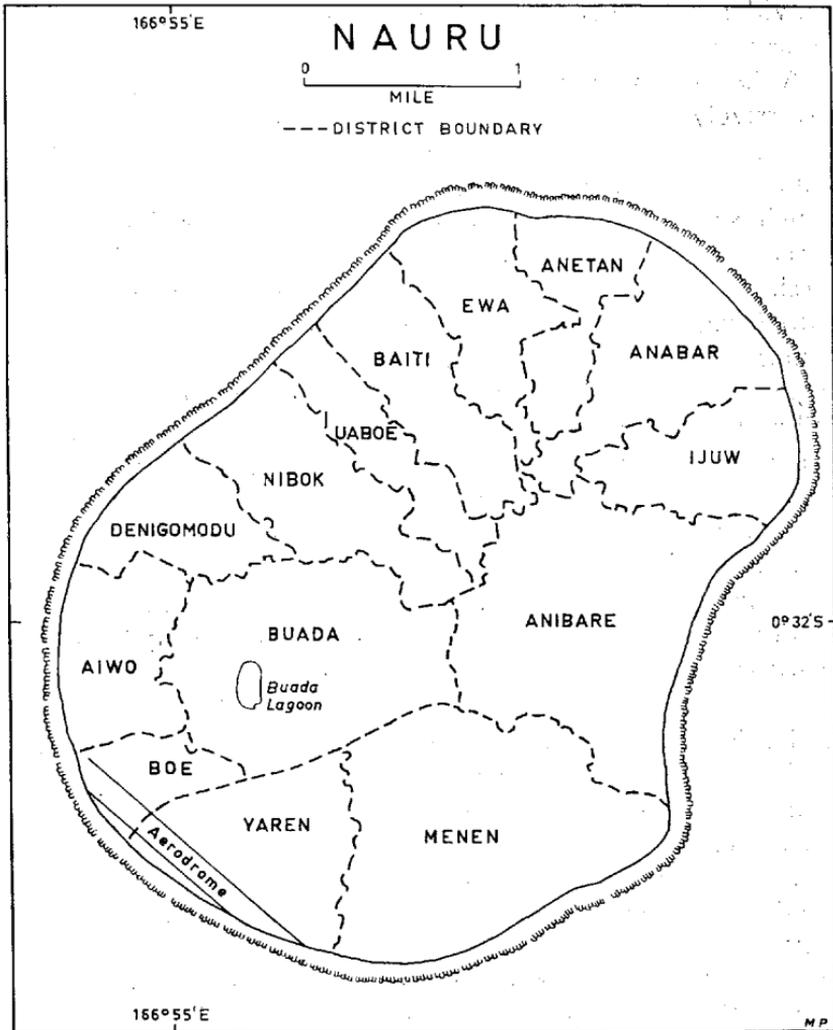
In the ancient legends of the Nauru people their myths of creation described the Nauruans as a race sprung from two parent stones but they were themselves migrants to the island. Of medium height, stocky build, and pleasant countenance, the Nauruans were believed by some observers to be of mixed Micronesian, Melanesian, and Polynesian

origin with the last strain predominating.¹ Others found the Nauruans resembled more the Micronesians and especially their neighbours in the East Caroline Islands. Their language, however, although it contained some Micronesian elements, was unique and quite different from other Pacific dialects. Perhaps the original Nauruans, blown off course while attempting to reach another destination, became prisoners to the island's isolation, and probably willing prisoners for neither Ocean Island nor most of the Gilberts could have provided for their needs as abundantly.

The Nauruans settled the coastal ring of the island where coconuts flourished, and also the fertile area around the Buada Lagoon, which covered about 30 acres in a depression on the plateau. By one of nature's paradoxes the plateau, which was about four-fifths of the area of the island, was of little use to the Nauruans, for the phosphate rock of which it was composed, while vital to modern agriculture when manufactured into superphosphate, could support only scrub and some coconuts and pandanus, in its natural state. Only the *tomano* tree, which the Nauruans valued for canoe building, did well on the plateau.

In spite of this limited amount of useful land, the Nauruans lived well on the coconut and pandanus and a usually plentiful supply of fish, and one early visitor estimated that the island supported about 1,000 to 1,400 people in pre-European times.² This population did not expand progressively, however, because the recurrent droughts made some artificial restriction necessary. Rainfall has been known to vary from 5 to 180 inches a year on the island, and it is so undependable that some Nauruans report having seen rain clouds divide over the island and rain fall into the ocean as occurs in other parts of the Pacific doldrums. The droughts retarded the growth of the coconut and made the pandanus a precarious crop, while water for domestic use was often in short supply, for apart from the Buada Lagoon, which was often undrinkable, there were only a few brackish ponds on the north-east of the island and an underground lake in Moqua Cave in the south-west.

In normal years the Nauruans fared considerably better than many other Pacific islanders. The men spear-fished



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY, A.N.U.

Map I Nauru, 1965

from the reef and ventured beyond in chase of the prized bonito and yellow tail, in graceful outrigger canoes of the Polynesian type which were built from planks of the *tomano* tree and sewn together with bone needles and coconut sinnet. A spectacular and popular recreation was the hunt for flying fish by torchlight at night, but most of the fish were netted.

Fishing was often curtailed by stormy seas and in some drought times the supply of fish failed so that fish farming

provided an alternative source as well as supplies for special occasions.

A fisherman would collect the fry of the *ibija* fish, an excessively bony kind, from the reef at low tide, with a small flat coconut leaf sieve, placing the fry in a half coconut shell hanging by a string from his mouth. This shell, or a larger conch shell, was put outside the man's house for two or three weeks and as the evaporating salt water was replaced by fresh water, the fish became acclimatised for their release into Buada Lagoon or other ponds. It was essential to the fisherman that these fish remain his private property so the lagoon was divided into strips by low coconut palm divisions. When the fish were grown the owner and his family retrieved them by dragging a net across his area. At this time anyone asking for fish would be satisfied and as fishermen were generous when landing their catch, communal obligations were fulfilled. This method of fish farming was not uniquely Nauruan for it was known also in the Gilberts and in parts of South East Asia, but it had its distinguishing Nauruan features.

The system of individual ownership of fishing channels and fish farms extended as strongly to the land. Each plot of land on the island, whether waste or not, had its own name and was individually owned. The coconut palm was for the Nauruans their tree of life. Its wood was used for the frame and its leaves for thatching their houses. The coconut itself gave milk and meat and was stored in large wooden slatted huts against future droughts. Toddy, cut from the spathe of the palm, was the main drink and source of vitamins. The shell of the coconut was used for household utensils and its leaves were woven into mats. The fruit of pandanus supplemented the coconut and was harvested, cooked, and dried for future needs. Both men and women usually wore only the *ridi*, a foot-long skirt usually made from coconut leaves, although mats were occasionally used instead. Some seabirds were caught and eaten in hard times, but the Nauruan pastime of catching frigate birds with a bolus and training them with tamed birds to eat on command was practised for entertainment and as a religious rite.

Clan and family relationships were the core of Nauruan

social life. The Nauruans were divided into twelve clans or tribes which had been originally totemic and bore the names of creatures such as the fish, eel, or grasshopper. Nauruan mythology explained the creation of these clans but they did not function as ritual units. Descent in the clan was traced matrilineally from the original foundress through the line of eldest daughters and the most important man in the clan was the eldest son of a woman who could fulfil the requirement of unbroken descent. No clan claimed a particular area as its own and clansfolk were usually scattered about the island, because the rule of marriage with a person outside one's clan was strictly kept and it was also usual for a man to live with or near his wife's mother's family.

The Nauruan people were also divided into classes but this was on a much looser basis than clan divisions. It was often difficult to distinguish precisely between the first two classes, the *temonibe* and the *amename*, because of the absence of special insignia of rank or privileges and obligations. Although the *temonibe* were usually large landowners they were not automatically leaders in war and other projects and frequent intermarriage between them and the *amename* further blurred the distinction. The remaining class, the *itsio*, was a serf class which comprised prisoners of war and refugees; castaways were usually ranked higher than the *itsio* and often accepted into the families of the first two classes.

Family relationships and responsibilities were held more strongly than clan and class relationships by the Nauruans. They lived in homesteads or villages of two or three families who were near kin to one another. Marriage was regulated partly by the clan and partly by genealogical relationship, and although clan exogamy was observed it was permissible to marry a member of the father's clan. Though not widely practised, polygyny was allowed and was only dependent on the supporting person's economic standing and emotional stamina. Girls became marriageable at puberty and for girls from chiefly houses this was made public by a dance performed on the beach. Men married at about eighteen years of age after a lengthy period of seclusion during which the manly arts, particularly wrestling, were taught and practised.

Marriages were usually arranged by the parents but where dislike was evinced by either party the marriage was not pursued. If the parent's choice was acceptable, an extended season of visits began, culminating, if successful, in a coconut oil anointing, or if unsuccessful, in excuses for the necessity of visiting one's grandmother.

Most Nauruans had only two or three children in spite of the early marriage age. There was a tabu on sexual intercourse between conception and the time when a child began to walk, but a high infantile death rate would seem to be the chief reason for the small size of families. The frequency of drought, which intensified pre-natal and infantile vitamin deficiency,³ undoubtedly raised the mortality rate and in this way restriction of the population to the limited resources on the island was achieved without recourse to infanticide or alternative artificial means of population control. When a child was born, some of the parents' property could be taken by the custom of *epaba*. This act broke the tabus surrounding childbirth and was a public demonstration of return to normal life, but how far this looting was allowed to go in practice is problematical. The Nauruans cherished their children, brought them up without corporal punishment and schooled them in the art of generous giving. Although the Nauruan's society was matrilineal, a child's maternal uncle had no special responsibilities and the child was fully dependent on his father.

The Nauruans observed no special death rites, for the dead were left unburied or thrown into the sea, though the dead from chiefly houses were often embalmed. Religion and magic had little real social significance for the Nauruans, for they practised only the cult of *Eijebon* in which personal offerings were presented in the bush. Even this cult was an importation, probably brought by castaway Gilbertese, for it had its origins in the Gilbert Islands. Nauruans believed in a large range of ghosts or spirits and often consulted fortune-tellers who were usually old women, but because of their successful adaptation to their environment they possibly had little need of religion or magic to fill the gap between endeavour and success. Law enforcement was neither formal nor organised. In the family group a senior member usually

settled quarrels or punished departures from norms. Public ridicule and scorn descended on any who disregarded folkways, and inter-clan disputes were settled by war.

The family was the economic unit in Nauru, for no class or clan had economic bonds such as the communal ownership of land to hold it together. Rules for inheritance of property were based on two norms; the high regard in which first, daughters were held by their parents and second, sisters by their brothers, because it was they who would continue the clan. This system was an interesting mixture of matrilineal and patrilineal principles, for in a matrilineal society it is usual for a man to leave his goods to his sister's son, whereas on Nauru, if a widower died, all his goods, except male occupational implements such as canoes and spears, were left to his daughters. The homestead also went to the daughters while coconut and pandanus lands were held jointly by all the children. If a wife was left she had authority over the property while she lived or until she remarried. Girls retained all their property rights on marriage and parents could disinherit their children. These rules were not always rigidly applied and variations often occurred.

In daily life the older members of the families did most of the work, the men fishing and the women gathering and preparing food. Compared with the Banaban people who lived on Ocean Island, the Nauruans had a fairly easy existence. The young Nauruans spent a great deal of time wrestling, playing ball games, singing and dancing, inventing string figures, weaving mats, and love making. It was indeed a halcyon existence except in times of drought.

The end of the Nauruan's life in happy isolation became inevitable when Australia was settled in 1789 and trade routes from the Great South Land through the Pacific to the China Seas were forged by frequent use. Thus Captain John Fearn of the ship *Hunter*, on a voyage from New Zealand to the China Seas, became the first to record discovery of Nauru.⁴ On 8 November 1798 the *Hunter* rounded the island and Fearn named it Pleasant Island because of its beauty. None of the *Hunter* men landed, but about a dozen canoes paddled out to the ship, and the Nauruans urged the sailors to anchor, offering them fruit and coconuts. The islanders

would not board the ship, but Fearn believed that some ship had been there before him because of the Nauruans' confident and courteous manner. They carried no weapons and Fearn found their straight black hair and coppery colour similar to the Maoris' although they wore no beards and were not tattooed. The density of the population of the island surprised Fearn for he saw at least 300 people in canoes, many more on the beaches, and a great many large sturdy houses.

The day after this mutually satisfactory meeting the *Hunter* sailed from the island and for the next thirty years few reports of the island reached the outside world. In the 1830s, a Venezuelan, Michelena y Rojas, claimed to have visited Nauru. He told of a friendly reception by the Nauruans who bartered pigs for trade goods. He also claimed that at the time of his visit there were neither white men nor fire-arms on the island, but his visit cannot be authenticated and remains suspect because of the unreliability of his accounts of the other islands.⁵

Perhaps because of its isolation, Nauru remained free of permanent European contact for longer than most Pacific islands. However, when whaling ships began to hunt in the Line whaling grounds in the early 1830s and for the next 30 years, Nauru became important as a source of food and water and it was as a result of this contact that Nauru received the first of its many beachcombers. Reports of these were first heard in Sydney in 1837 when five seamen, who had deserted their whalers to settle on Nauru, found the island little to their liking and stowed away on the *Duke of York* to return to Sydney and civilisation. These five had only been on Nauru a few months, but besides them there were eight other Europeans most of whom had been on the island for some years. Two of these, Patrick Burke and John Jones, were Irish convicts who had escaped from Norfolk Island penal colony. The seamen believed that Burke and Jones had been on the *John Bull*, which had mysteriously disappeared near Ponape, and that on a voyage from Rotuma to Nauru they had killed and eaten their companions. The seamen told how Jones had become virtual dictator of Nauru. They had been stripped of their clothes and

possessions by the Nauruans on landing on the island and only lived there on Jones's sufferance. Two beachcombers who had displeased Jones had been set adrift in a canoe and the seamen told how the Nauruans kept another European prisoner in the interior of the island on Jones's orders. Jones apparently planned continually to capture vessels that put in at the island, so that the stowaway seamen had no regrets in quitting Nauru.⁶

Jones's reign of terror came to a climax in October 1841 when he poisoned seven and shot four of his fellow beachcombers, fearing that they would usurp his influence over the Nauruans.⁷ He tried to blame the Nauruans for these murders but they ostracised him and he was forced to leave secretly for Ocean Island. Some months later he attempted to return but the Nauruans threatened him and he left Nauru for good.

The story of this massacre was told by a beachcomber to Commander T. Beckford Simpson, master of the bark *Giraffe*, which touched on Nauru on a voyage from Sydney to Manila on 1 February 1843. In his private log Simpson expressed great moral indignation at the life led by the beachcombers:

This island, and many others in the Pacific, are infested by Europeans who are either runaway convicts, expirees, or deserters from whalers, and are for the most part men of the very worst description, who, it appears prefer living a precarious life of indolence and ease with the unenlightened savage, rather than submit to the restraint of the salutary laws of civilized society.⁸

At the time of his visit there were seven Europeans on the island, all deserters from their ships, who quarrelled frequently among themselves. One frequent cause of such quarrels was dispute over Nauruan women, aggravated by the intoxication of the beachcombers who distilled sour toddy to make alcoholic liquor. Simpson was most concerned with the effects the beachcombers had on the Nauruans, believing that their atrocious crimes were a bad example to the islanders and that they deliberately precipitated tribal quarrels so that they could share in the spoils.

As for the Nauruans, Simpson found them 'mild and tractable, but much addicted to pilfering', and they were eager to barter, especially for pipes and tobacco. He believed there

were about 1,400 islanders whose high birth rate could make it impossible for the island to support them. At this time the Nauruans had a queen who ruled the tribal chiefs and had the right to judge disputes and make peace and war.

Apart from the notoriety conferred on Nauru by the deeds of Jones, the Nauruans themselves seem to have escaped any reputation for violence at least until 1845. But from this time until 1890 they achieved a particularly bad name for bloodthirsty deeds, and the island came to be avoided by passing ships. Captain Andrew Cheyne, in an account published in 1852, related how the Nauruans

appear inoffensive in their manner to a stranger, but notwithstanding their mild appearance, they are not to be trusted, as they succeeded in cutting off a whale ship some years ago. They had some runaway convicts residing among them at the time, who not only planned the attack but assisted them to capture the vessel.⁹

Cheyne neither named the ship nor dated the attack, but a similar fight over the American brig *Inga* in December 1852 was described in more detail by Captain Hammett of H.M.S. *Serpent*, who published the statements of three beachcombers who had been involved in the fracas. The three men told how they had been ordered off the *Inga* by Captain Barnes, who was armed with pistols and a cutlass. The Nauruans, who also wanted to trade with the vessel, had not left it instantly when ordered to do so, and had been attacked by the Captain. They retaliated and forced the beachcombers to help to try and bring the ship to shore. This failed, as did attempts to fire and scuttle the ship, which was then abandoned. Although the Captain and some of the crew were killed, both the beachcombers and Hammett believed that the Nauruans were not at fault.¹⁰

After the massacre of the *Inga* it was clear that the Nauruans had learnt their lessons from the beachcombers well, for in that same month they attempted to cut off an American whaler but were frightened off when one of the ship's crew claimed to have sighted a man-of-war in the distance,¹¹ and at least one other ship was reported to have been cut off by the Nauruans.¹² Captain E. B. Brown of the bark *Nightingale*, who visited the island in October 1864, found further evidence of the pervasive influence of the

beachcombers.¹³ Many of the Nauruans suffered from venereal disease, all spoke good English, and there was an abundance of firearms in evidence. There were three whites and a few Negroes on the island at this time, and some were beginning to turn to regular trade in coconut oil and copra on behalf of German firms such as Godeffroy and Henschheim but the unsettled conditions on the island made trade difficult.

One of the beachcombers on Nauru at the time of the *Nightingale* visit was William Harris, who had come to the island in 1842 when he was 29 years old.¹⁴ It was rumoured that, like his peers, 'he left his country for his country's good', but unlike most of his fellow beachcombers, he settled on the island permanently. He took a Nauruan wife and produced a large family. Because he was adopted as a Nauruan he had a strong influence among them, and his family continued to be important on the island after his death. Little is known of his life except that he turned to trading and was lost at sea in 1889 when his canoe was borne westward by the strong currents. Harris, like all beachcombers, was an intermediary between two cultures. His acquiescence to his wife's and daughters' insistence that his son John, killed in a clan war, should not be buried, showed his integration into Nauruan life, yet when he sent his son William to Kusaie to be educated at the Boston Board of Missions' School there, together with a request for a missionary for Nauru to prevent the spread of clan fighting, he opened the way for a new part of Western culture to enter Nauru.

A much later settler on Nauru, Ernest M. H. Stephen, had a similar influence on the Nauruans because of his permanent residence there.

Stephen was the victim of mischance. He had lived as a child with his father, who managed a nickel mine in Noumea, New Caledonia. Stephen's father allowed the thirteen-year-old boy to travel with a cargo ship that was visiting various islands. The ship *Venus* when at Nauru had full holds and so the captain, considering it impracticable to return to Noumea just to return the lad, left Stephen with a trader, saying that he would return for him. The captain never returned to Nauru or Noumea. Eight years later, in 1887,

Stephen's father, after an extensive search, found his son on Nauru—a trader with a wife and three young children. The father remained on Nauru till his death four years later, teaching Stephen all he could.¹⁵

The importance of the beachcombers in the history of Nauru cannot be overestimated for, unlike most Pacific islands, Nauru missed the successive waves of blackbirders, planters, and traders before official control was imposed. The island had no sandalwood, tortoise shell or *bêche-de-mer*. Shark fins were its only marketable product and these were plentiful elsewhere. The island's male population was too small, too distant, and too alert for effective blackbirding, and the reef formed a natural barrier against surprise raids. Thus the beachcombers held sway until the almost simultaneous arrival of official government and the missionaries.

It is clear that the Nauruans welcomed most of their visitors except of course such undesirables as John Jones. The clans were eager to adopt the beachcombers, who enabled them to barter pigs and coconuts in return for steel tools, firearms, alcohol, and other goods of white civilisation. Perhaps more important the Nauruans learnt the techniques of weapon repair and fairly sophisticated warfare while it is fair to say that some of their violent attacks on ships can be attributed to the example set by some early beachcombers.

To most of the beachcombers Nauru provided at least a temporary haven from prison or shipboard life. The island's natural advantages of beauty and isolation were further enhanced for the beachcomber by the power, prestige, and relative wealth which his hosts conferred on him. While he remained only an adopted member of the community, he usually conformed to its social patterns and thus he became 'an excellent mediator . . . and in performing this function he probably made his major contribution to the ultimate welfare of the people among whom he lived, cushioning by explanation the inevitable onset of culture change'.¹⁶ If in his role as a buffer between two cultures the beachcomber changed Nauruan society radically, he also changed its racial composition dramatically, for with the admixture of Caucasian and Negro blood, most of the new Nauruans bore less and less resemblance to their forefathers.

Clan warfare had always been part of Nauruan life but was of only sporadic occurrence, for the normal clan dispersal of the Nauruans made the pre-eminence of one clan temporary and only dependent on the number of clansmen living in one locality. The balance of power in this situation was disturbed by the coming of the white man and his weapons and inter-clan feuds became more frequent and bitter.

Clan warfare gradually became worse until it culminated in the 'ten-years war' which began about 1878 and ended in late 1888. Frederick J. Moss, a member of the New Zealand House of Representatives and an ardent Pacific traveller, was on Nauru in 1887 and he described the origin of this strife as a dispute at a ceremonial feast where, in a quarrel over some coconut oil, the wrong man was shot with an old horse pistol.

This incident was aggravated by the traders anxious to sell arms and ammunition, so that nearly all the villages began fighting with their neighbours, and it finally degenerated into a civil war with the districts of Menen and Arubo as the major participants. All the men and most of the boys were armed with repeating rifles and carbines in working order, for they had now become good gunsmiths and had obtained a large supply of ammunition over the years of trading with visiting vessels. Their fighting methods were to say the least unorthodox—Moss described them as absurd—for 'small parties skulk about and blaze away at other parties at long distances on speculation, but shoot remorselessly any unfortunate man, woman or child of the enemy's tribe who may chance to fall in the way of these "braves" or "warriors" as they call themselves'.¹⁷ This kind of fighting produced many casualties, and so the war was prolonged as a vendetta. Both English and German warships visited the island during the war and warned the people to desist, but because they failed to disarm the people, the war continued. Moss remarked that he felt the people had had enough of it and would be glad to be disarmed if all were disarmed at once but it was clear that some concerted show of force would be necessary to achieve this.

When the war was finally ended by the official incorpora-

tion of Nauru into the Imperial German Protectorate of the Marshall Islands on 1 October 1888, it was clear that Nauruan society and culture, weakened by nearly 60 years of beachcomber contact and riven by ten years of civil war, could offer little resistance to the advent of the powerful coloniser.

Treasure Island.

By 1840, when New Zealand had been annexed by Britain and Tahiti placed under protection by the French, the Great Powers tacitly called a temporary halt to the acquisition of further Pacific territory. For the next thirty years, Britain, Germany, and France remained content to protect the personal and economic interests of their subjects by the regular despatch of ships of war on peace-keeping cruises among the islands and in this way avoided the heavy expenses of maintaining local government. This limited intervention was successful only while European settlement remained sparse, but as the number of Europeans and their influence increased, conflicts arose which could not be resolved by the local native governments. Both Samoa and Fiji endured such periods of disorder, and in the case of Fiji, breakdown of the local government there led to its annexation by Britain in 1874. This was not, however, followed by a general scramble for other Pacific territory, for the metropolitan powers still hoped to avoid administration expenses, but it was clear that the mutual non-acquisition agreement was being broken down by a fuller recognition of the growing importance of Pacific trade and the strategic value of some of its islands. The spur which hastened the partition of the Western Pacific was provided by Australian imperialists who ironically had no legal power to acquire territory themselves.

Many Australian colonists on the eastern seaboard looked on New Guinea as their natural dependency, economically, politically, and strategically, and regarded the Western Pacific as their natural sphere of influence. By 1880, Australian trade to the north and east had expanded greatly.

Torres Strait now formed a route for Australia-India mails and the passage for a large volume of steamer traffic to New Guinea as well as a base for *bêche-de-mer* fishing. Australian settlement on the coast of New Guinea was growing and was increasing by an influx of would-be gold miners in the early 1880s. Pearl fishing also was developing and took investment north. Protestant missionaries in New Guinea, who had earlier regarded annexation unfavourably, began to press for some sort of protection, as they found it increasingly difficult to protect their charges from marauding black-birders. Their colleagues in Protestant missionary societies in Australia also displayed jealous concern about the activities of French Catholic missionaries in the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands. The arrival on the coasts of New South Wales and Queensland over some years of some hundreds of escaped French criminals from New Caledonian prisons was a convenient argument for awakening sensitive public fears that more penal colonies could be established in the Pacific or New Guinea by foreign Powers.¹ In any or all of these reasons Australians found sufficient justification for urging the annexation of New Guinea. The need to annex was made more urgent for Australians, for as Australian-New Guinea trade increased so German trade developed in the Bismarck Archipelago and on the northern coast of New Guinea. The Germans, like the British, were at this time more interested in promoting trade and setting up coaling stations than acquiring territorial possessions, but the growth of their trade, and its subsequent reportage in glowing terms in the German press, provided for many Australians concrete evidence of excessive colonial ambitions on the part of Germany.²

Growing anxious that they would be beaten to New Guinea, the Queensland Government cabled the Colonial Office in London in February 1883 for permission to annex the unclaimed parts of New Guinea. The Colonial Secretary, however, did not wait to receive Imperial authority but dispatched a Police Magistrate, Mr H. M. Chester, who took possession of the unclaimed parts of New Guinea between 141° and 155°E longitude on 3 April 1883.³ On 14 April Lord Derby, head of the Colonial Office, cabled the Colonial



PLATE 1 (Above) Nauru chief and family, 1901 (by courtesy of Mr Langdon)

PLATE 2 (Below) Rev. P. A. Delaporte's church and quarters (by courtesy of Mr Langdon)





PLATE 3 Tea on Nauru, 1907 (by courtesy of Mr Langdon)

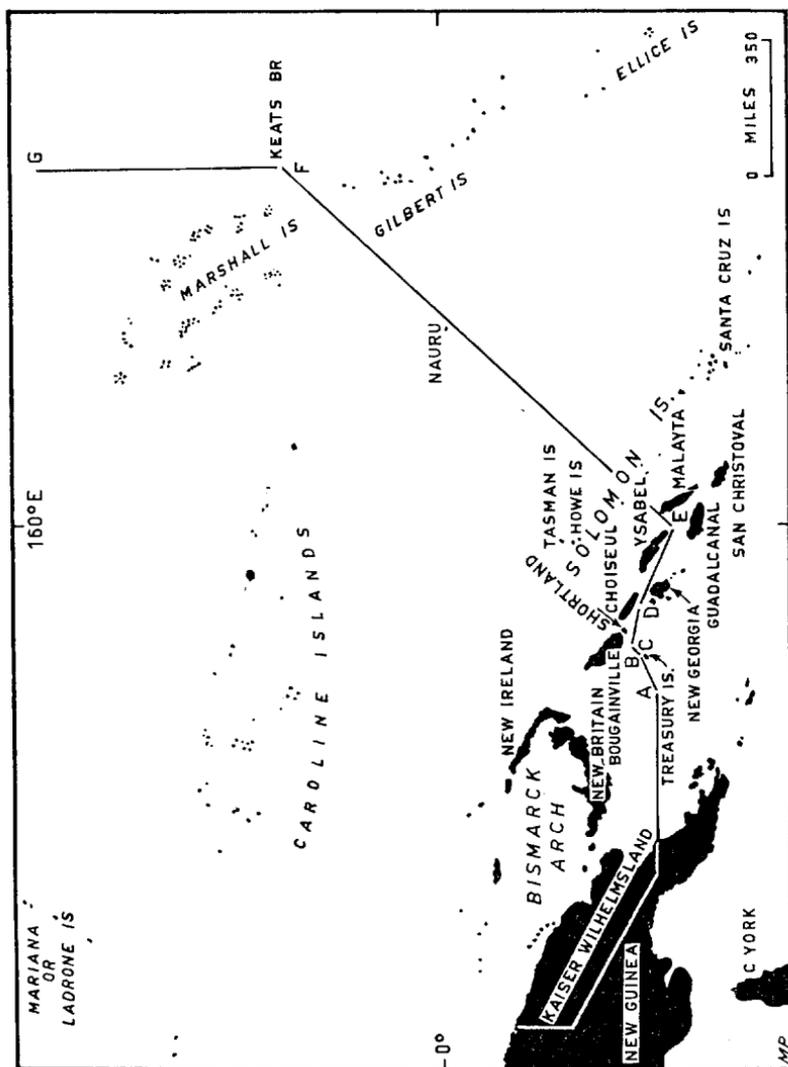
Secretary for an explanation of his precipitate action and although the Australian colonies supported the annexation, he disallowed it on 2 July 1883.⁴ Derby had noted the arguments presented for annexation but he impugned the Queenslanders' motives by pointing out that the principal benefit to be derived from annexation by Queenslanders was the ease with which the coloured labour supply could be expanded for their sugar plantations. But such comments and the lack of official support in Britain did not subdue the Australian would-be imperialists. Lacking the legal power to give effect to their aspirations, they continued to act as a pressure group on the British Government, whose Pacific policy was at best ill-defined and at worst non-existent at this time. The Colonial Office continued to show confidence in other powers' declarations that they would not annex new areas in the Pacific and an increasing irritation with its colonial offspring. At the Australasian Intercolonial Convention held in Sydney in December 1883, which was called to press for further action on New Guinea, the principal resolution was: 'That further acquisition of dominion in the Pacific south of the Equator, by any Foreign Power, would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia and injurious to the interests of the Empire'.⁵ The Convention suggested that the parts of New Guinea and its adjacent islands unclaimed by the Netherlands be incorporated in the British Empire, and that control of the New Hebrides be acquired.

The Convention's resolutions were sent to the Colonial Office and Derby replied that before his government would consider any proposed annexation in the Western Pacific, the Australasian colonies would have to combine and jointly pay for any policy that might be adopted. Faced with this ultimatum the colonial governments reconciled their bickerings on financing the Pacific venture and agreed to pay £15,000 for the first year's administration.⁶ The Colonial Office was forced to take action and from this money it purchased a vessel, placed it under the command of a junior naval officer, and sent it to declare the unclaimed portion of New Guinea to be a British protectorate. Germany objected and declared its intention to proclaim a protectorate in New

Guinea, and only the southern part from 141°E longitude to East Cape was placed under protection by Britain on 11 November 1884.⁷ Both settlement and purchase of land were forbidden there. Not only were the Australian pressure groups displeased with this half loaf, but their protestations were ironically having more effect on the German Government than on the British.

If Derby, when he disallowed Queensland's attempted annexation, did not believe in the threat of other powers, Germany certainly did. The 1883 Convention resolutions had made Bismarck fear Australian territorial ambitions, for German trade could not be expected to prosper under British sovereignty. After the British protectorate of New Guinea was declared, Bismarck informed the British Government in December 1884 that the German flag had been hoisted in northern New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, and Sable Land.⁸ This German action, and the displeasure of the colonials, now forced Great Britain to negotiate with Germany on the partition of the Western Pacific. The resulting agreement, the Anglo-German Convention of 1886, signed at Berlin by the participating governments' foreign secretaries on 6 and 10 April 1886, defined their spheres of influence in the Western Pacific and provided for reciprocal freedom of trade in possessions and protectorates in the area.⁹

The lines of demarcation drawn at the conference placed all land north of the line under German influence and all land south under British, leaving Samoa, Tonga, and Niue neutral (see Map II). Nauru came into the German sphere of influence quite accidentally because the demarcation line, in order to include both the Marshall and the northern Solomon Islands for Germany, passed just east of it. The island's relative poverty had kept it free from alien occupation and its loss by Great Britain passed without notice. The Australian colonies were smugly satisfied to have forced action upon the Great Powers and at the Colonial Conference of 1887 Alfred Deakin, Chief Secretary of Victoria, summed up their view of Australia's new role in the Imperial-Colonial relationship: 'We hope', he said, 'that from this time forward, Colonial policy will be considered Imperial policy, that Colonial interests will be considered and felt to be



Map II Anglo-German demarcation, 1886. Reproduced by permission of P. van der Veur.

Imperial interests, that they will be carefully studied, and that when once they are understood, they will be most determinedly upheld'.¹⁰ When Deakin's hopes for an alliance of British-Australian policy were fulfilled, that alliance became a determining factor in the future of the then unregarded island of Nauru.

After the signing of the Anglo-German Convention of 1886 the German Government showed no intention of immediately taking possession of Nauru. Nearly a year later, in May 1887, the white traders on Nauru, who represented the two German and two English firms trading from the island, asked the German Consul in Jaluit in the Marshall Islands whether Nauru could be placed under protection because of the continuing civil war. In transmitting this request to Bismarck, the Consul pointed out that Nauru produced about one million pounds of copra annually—half of the total production from all the Marshall Islands—and could therefore become a valuable asset to German trade, while on the other hand the reported long-standing tribal conflict and large number of firearms on the island could make annexation prolonged and difficult.¹¹ The German firms operating Nauru's trade supported the traders and an official request by the Deutsche Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee for the incorporation of Nauru into the Protectorate of the Marshall Islands was approved by the Reichs Chancellor on 21 October 1887.¹² It was envisaged that a newly formed subsidiary company of the great Hamburg Godeffroy combine, the Jaluit Gesellschaft, would administer the island. On 16 April 1888 the German Emperor proclaimed the inclusion and prohibited the possession of firearms and ammunition on the island. The port of Jaluit in the Marshall Islands was made the sole port of entry for Nauru.

It was not until 1 October 1888 that the gunboat *Eber* could be diverted to land men on Nauru. The Imperial Commissioner from Jaluit, Mr Sonnenschein, and Deputy Commander Emsmann landed on the island and marched around it with a small force. They found that the island looked like a battlefield and that there was a population of only 900 to 1,000 Nauruans, 1,000 fewer than they had

expected, and ten white residents. No proper census was taken at the time and when this was done a year later it was clear that Sonnenschein had underestimated the number of Nauruans. In 1889 there were 1,294 Nauruans of whom 1,008 were adults and only 286 were children. Women outnumbered men by 30 per cent.¹³ The Nauruan population had declined, mostly from epidemics and disease, but the number of men killed in the ten-year war contributed to a population imbalance. This explained the preponderance of females and the small number of children and it was clear that the age group gap of young men would have to be filled before any natural increase in population could be expected. Sonnenschein announced that firearms would be prohibited, demanded a complete surrender of all arms and ammunition, and to emphasise the point arrested all twelve chiefs and had them placed under guard in the copra shed of Robert Rasch, a German trader. The people were told that if the disarming was not complete the chiefs would be sent off to Jaluit. In the next two days 765 weapons were surrendered and the chiefs were released.¹⁴

On 2 October the flag was raised and proclamations forbidding the importation of firearms and alcohol were read. The reaction of the Nauruans to the ceremony was insignificant enough to remain unrecorded. Robert Rasch was appointed provisional official in charge of administration until an official from Germany could be sent out. Sonnenschein reported to the German Government that he feared the greatest difficulty in administration would be to keep the white community under control, for he believed it to contain men of the worst character. Apart from this he predicted a healthy future for the island, based on copra exports in good years, and finding the Nauruans a strong and intelligent people of 'extremely jolly disposition' he believed that they could be persuaded, when the island eventually became too small for them with an expected increase in the birth rate, to leave Nauru to work on other islands.¹⁵

Tribal warfare did not break out again after annexation and the prohibition of firearms and alcohol proved effective. Old hatreds died slowly but Rasch was able to curb the Nauruans with the help of the chiefs, who were made respon-

sible for their clansmen's behaviour. In May 1889 Christian Johannson took over the administration from Rasch but an event that took place on 30 July of that year showed that pacification of the Nauruans still had a deal further to go. On that day a large Gilbertese canoe containing six people was sighted off Nauru. The canoe was in danger of drifting past the island because of a strong westerly current so some Nauruans set out in canoes to help. The Gilbertese transferred to the Nauruan canoes which, however, also began to drift rapidly away from the island. The Nauruans desperately fought the current but, finding the exhausted Gilbertese a burden in this task, they threw them overboard and eventually gained the island. Later the same day a party of twenty-three Nauruans and three traders, which included William Harris, found themselves in a similar predicament. They had gone out to trade with a passing ship, the *Mangaribien*, and on their return found themselves drifting west on a strong current. The white men and some of the Nauruans died on the voyage and the survivors were cast up on to Tattan, one of the Gardiner Islands. All except one girl were massacred by the island's inhabitants, and she remained on the island.¹⁶

The murderers of the Gilbertese were later banished to Jaluit for some years and this was the last occurrence to substantiate the Nauruans' violent reputation in the nineteenth century. By 1890 Johannson reported that the island was quiet and well under control and that the drinking of sour toddy had been reduced. Nauru was divided into fourteen districts on the traditional lines and the chiefs were made responsible for the enforcement of the Administrator's laws and the collection of taxes.

The promise of a flourishing copra trade from Nauru was, however, not fulfilled in the 1890s. Intermittent and prolonged droughts so reduced the crops that the traders on the island petitioned for reductions in the taxes due to the Marshall Islands' administration. The situation was made worse by the failure of the Jaluit Gesellschaft to maintain regular communications with the island. In one year no ship landed on Nauru for eight months and it became impossible for the traders to operate and all were deeply in

debt. In this situation the Nauruans refused to make any more copra than was needed to pay their taxes. From 1895 to 1897 Mr Jung was the resident official but, on his retirement, a trader for the Jaluit Gesellschaft took over the administration.

The evangelisation of the Pacific, which had begun with the London Missionary Society's endeavours in Tahiti in 1797, left Nauru untouched until the late 1880s. Perhaps the small isolated Nauru was left until richer pastures were tilled, but whatever the reason it was left to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a Protestant body based in Boston, to send the Word with three Gilbert Islands teachers, who landed on the island in 1887. Ernest Stephen described how they 'found very willing converts among the natives. But they did not behave themselves long, and after the Germans had had the island for a while, all three were sent back to the Gilberts'.¹⁷ The Nauruans told Albert Ellis in 1900 that the mission schooner *Morning Star* had landed one Gilbertese native pastor about 1888, Tabuia of Tarawa, who took charge of the mission until 1899.¹⁸ No active resistance to the new religion was recorded, indeed rather the opposite, and this was not surprising for the lack of strong original organised religion in Nauru and the indifference to any religion shown by the beachcombers had made any real resistance unlikely.

In November 1899, the Reverend P. A. Delaporte and his family were sent to Nauru by the Central Union Church of Honolulu under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.¹⁹ Delaporte came from Hawaii via Kusaie in the Caroline Islands. Here he met William Harris's son William, who accompanied the Delportes to Nauru where he helped them to set up a mission in a thatched house in Yaren district. With Harris's support and a small nucleus of Nauruans converted by the Gilbertese missionaries, Delaporte soon made progress in his evangelism and was aided by the natural curiosity of most of the Nauruans. Some of the old witchcraft women naturally remained hostile to his efforts but they were left with little following when Delaporte showed one up to be a fraud. He was encouraged by the Nauruans to question one fortune-

teller and he asked her when the next ship would arrive. Her answer that a ship would come in three days turned out to be correct, and Delaporte was somewhat disconcerted to find that the Nauruans considered her to be genuine. He then asked her whether there would be a letter from his mother. After long meditation under a mat she replied that there would be. Delaporte then delivered his *coup de grâce*—his mother had been dead twelve years—and the Nauruans' confidence in their fortune-teller was destroyed.²⁰ By 1901 Delaporte knew the Nauruan language well and had begun a school. At first instruction was in Nauruan and young and old people attended. As the school progressed German was taught and a few Nauruans learned the language. Delaporte's school taught the three R's, singing, and Bible history.

Delaporte was well liked by the Nauruans, who appreciated his medical work among them for there was no doctor on the island and epidemics were frequent. His work in the school and in tending the sick gave him strong influence among the Nauruans and this, coupled with their natural curiosity and willingness to please him, made it possible for Delaporte to convert a great many. With this initial step achieved, pressure for other changes followed. The wearing of the *ridi* was discouraged and the ubiquitous Mother Hubbard, the singlet and *lava lava* were introduced. They were later apportioned some of the blame for the rise of tuberculosis among the Nauruans, because they deterred them from rubbing coconut oil on their bodies, which had been their traditional method of insulation from temperature changes. Polygyny was no longer permitted. Transition rites were severely curtailed and the puberty dance and other purely Nauruan dances disappeared quickly, for when Albert Ellis revisited the island some five years later, the Nauruans had adopted the *ruoia*, a Gilbert and Ellice Islands chant with hand clapping. Mrs Philip Delaporte recalled in 1920: 'On Nauru immoral or even suggestive dances are not tolerated. Formerly they were in vogue to quite an extent but the government, backed by the growing influence of the missionaries, put a stop to them and the morals of the people have been greatly strengthened',²¹ yet Ernest Stephen, as an assimilated beachcomber, evinced some cynicism on the

success of the missions, remarking that: 'Their [the Nauruans'] religion is only skin deep and is cast aside whenever the occasion requires'.²²

In 1902 the first resident Roman Catholic missionary, Father Grundl, came to Nauru from Germany but the foundation for the Roman Catholic Church on Nauru was laid by Father Kayser, an Alsatian of the Order of the Sacred Heart, who arrived in 1903. Kayser immediately gained support in the district of Yaren where his mission and a school were first set up.²³ There was a great deal of bad feeling between the missionaries. Delaporte regarded the whole of the Nauruan people as his special province and said: 'It is sad that the Church of Rome seems to make it her business to destroy the Master's work on the isles of the sea . . . she has tried to destroy the work at Nauru'.²⁴ Father Kayser, in his own Order's magazine, *Anthropos*, was just as tart about the Protestants, charging the Delportes with destroying Nauruan culture. In the rivalry between the missions the Administrator sided with Father Kayser, while Delaporte found himself in a difficult position because, although he was born in Germany, he was an American citizen. To complicate matters the Administrator imprisoned some Protestant chiefs and people while Delaporte was away from Nauru visiting Kusaie. On his return, Delaporte complained directly to the German Imperial Government and in 1905 a new Administrator, K. Geppert, was appointed. Overt religious conflict abated under his persuasion but the written warfare between Delaporte and Kayser continued.

A significant contribution was made by the missions in preserving the vitality of the Nauruan language. In the eight years to 1907 Delaporte translated into Nauruan and printed on the Nauru mission press the New Testament, stories of the Old Testament, a catechism, a Nauru hymn book, a German hymn book, a school text, a short Nauru-German dictionary, and a history of the Christian Church. These books, together with Kayser's lexicographical work published in *Anthropos* and Paul Hambruch's dictionary in *Nauru*, provided the first concentrated and successful attempt to write down the Nauruan language.²⁵

The German administration generally left the Nauruans undisturbed except for tax collection, so that the missionaries had the most immediate impact on Nauruan life. Yet if the missionaries could claim that between them every Nauruan except the very old had been converted, it was doubtful if their influence was as strong as they believed. The feud between the missions caused suspicion and mistrust and the Nauruans, as Stephen suggested, overtly took the line of least resistance to cultural innovations while covertly they quietly went their own way.

The beginning of more dramatic change on the island came innocuously enough in 1900 when Albert Ellis discovered deposits of phosphate on Nauru and Ocean Island.

In 1890 two young New Zealanders, Albert Ellis and his brother, employed by the London firm of J. T. Arundel and Company, were working phosphate and guano deposits in the Pacific. Towards the end of the 1890s the fortunes of the company steadily deteriorated as its phosphate operations were restricted to the shipment of tailings from former works. In an attempt to improve their situation, Arundel and Company was absorbed by the Pacific Islands Company, which dealt in copra and pearl fishing. In 1900, when Ellis temporarily replaced his father as geologist in the Sydney office, the Pacific Islands Company was also in trouble financially because of the low price of copra and insufficient supplies of phosphate. While at work Ellis's attention was attracted by a piece of 'fossilized wood' used as a doorstep. He made inquiries and found that it had been brought from Nauru by the manager of the Sydney office. Months passed but eventually Ellis, still intrigued by the doorstep, examined the piece geologically and found it to be almost pure tricalcic phosphate. He then rightly assumed that Ocean Island, which was of the same geological formation as Nauru, could also contain phosphate.²⁶

The London Board of the company was advised and it immediately began negotiations with the Colonial Office regarding Ocean Island, which had fallen into the British sphere of influence by the 1886 partition agreement, but which had not yet been formally annexed. Overtures were also made to the Jaluit Gesellschaft which held the mineral and trading rights in the Marshall Islands Protectorate.

In April 1900 the Colonial Office gave the Pacific Islands Company an exclusive licence to mine Ocean Island's phosphate although it had no legal right to do so as the island still had not been annexed. Meanwhile Ellis was on his way to the island and on his arrival he raised the flag and persuaded two Banaban chiefs to sign an agreement to allow the company to mine for 999 years for the princely royalty of £50 per annum.²⁷ Having set the Banabans to gathering phosphate, which was lying in slabs on the ground, Ellis continued on to Nauru and confirmed that there was very high quality phosphate in large quantities on the island. By October 1900, 76 Gilbertese labourers were gathering and loading phosphate on Ocean Island and the first shipment to Sydney went on its way. It was not until the end of 1901 that Ocean Island was formally annexed by Britain and by this time 13,350 tons of phosphate had been exported.

In May 1901 Ellis and Arundel, representing the Pacific Islands Company, and Mr Antonie Brandeis, the District Governor of the Caroline and Marshall Islands, visited Nauru and met the chiefs representing each clan. Ellis said:

They were told it had been found that the rocks and soil on the high portion of the island were useful to the white men, and that the company whom we represented would pay them for the phosphate at a stated rate. The chiefs were gravely interested; one of them thought it was hardly the thing for the white men to have to pay for rocks, and another suggested that when they were being removed, we might leave behind sufficient for them to make the special stone sinkers they use for their fishing-lines. He must have had some prophetic insight into the white man's thoroughness.²⁸

The Nauruans found Ellis's testing of the rock hilarious and christened him 'the stoneman'. Mining was not begun on Nauru, for the Pacific Islands Company was still negotiating with the German Government about the deposits. In 1902 the Pacific Islands Company was wound up and the Pacific Phosphate Company was formed. Most of the former company's trading stations and coconut plantations were disposed of because the new company now concentrated its interests in the phosphates of Ocean Island and Nauru.

By 1905 the phosphate industry on Ocean Island was flourishing. Nine hundred Gilbert and Ellice Islanders, fifty Europeans and some Japanese were engaged in the work and despite the difficulties of loading, which was done

through the surf in small boats to vessels lying to in the open sea, 107,950 tons were shipped in that year. There was great demand for the high quality Ocean Island phosphate and Australia consumed all the island could produce. This increase in demand and the frequent congestion of tonnage due to bad weather, which raised freight charges, made it desirable for the Pacific Phosphate Company to begin operations on Nauru.²⁹

The concession for the exclusive right to exploit mineral deposits in the Marshall Islands Protectorate had been granted to the Jaluit Gesellschaft in 1888 and was continued by an agreement between the Gesellschaft and the Imperial German Chancellor on 21 November 1905.³⁰ The concession was granted for ninety-four years from 1 April 1906 under the following conditions: the Imperial Treasury was to receive an annual licence fee of 25,000 marks plus a royalty of 50 pfennigs for every ton of phosphate shipped in excess of 50,000 tons. In return the Jaluit Gesellschaft was to be free of other taxes and custom duties on materials and machinery required for mining and provisions for employees. The right of cancellation of the agreement was retained by the Imperial Chancellor should the said dues fail to be paid or exploitation not begin in 20 years or be allowed to lapse for longer than ten years. Clause 10 stated: 'The Jaluit Gesellschaft may with the consent of the Imperial Chancellor without prejudice to its continued responsibility for the duties imposed on it by this concession transfer the exercise of its rights to third parties'.

This concession was undoubtedly drawn up because the Pacific Phosphate Company wanted to begin mining Nauru and had no legal right to do so. On 12 December 1905 the Imperial Chancellor consented to the transfer of the Jaluit Gesellschaft's right to exploit phosphate in the Marshall Islands to the Pacific Phosphate Company.³¹

The first and main agreement between the Jaluit Gesellschaft and the Pacific Phosphate Company was signed in Hamburg on 22 January 1906 and transferred the exclusive right to exploitation of phosphate in the Marshall Islands to the latter company.³² Clauses 2, 3, and 4 obliged the Pacific Phosphate Company to fulfil all the duties to the

Imperial Government on behalf of the Gesellschaft. Clauses 5 and 8 set out rights accruing solely to the Gesellschaft: £12,500 of shares in the Pacific Phosphate Company on which the Gesellschaft had previously only held conditional rights of disposal were now retained as free property. The Gesellschaft was to receive £2,000 on the signing of the agreement. A scheme was also devised for the equalisation of shareholders' dividends between the two companies in which the company which paid the larger dividend had also to pay the other company an amount equal to one-fifth of the excess. The Pacific Phosphate Company agreed to make up any deficiency up to £50,000 in the years 1906 to 1915 in these payments. A Gesellschaft nominee was also reserved a seat on the Board of Directors of the company.

Clauses 9 to 12 dealt with rights of termination of the agreement and Clause 13 stated that the company was free to import and export trade goods on islands where it mined phosphate but agreed to abstain from trading in copra or other produce.

The remaining clauses dealt with the settlement of disputes between the parties and termination of the agreement, and the final clause stated that the Pacific Phosphate Company could only transfer its right to third parties with the consent of the Gesellschaft.

The Pacific Phosphate Company and the Jaluit Gesellschaft made two amending agreements to this first contract and one new agreement on trade. The first amending agreement of 21 February 1906 cancelled the clause that provided for the equalising of shareholders' dividends and substituted a royalty of 1s. to be paid to the Jaluit Gesellschaft for every ton of phosphate shipped, not only from Nauru and any other Marshall Island but also from Ocean Island. This royalty was guaranteed to amount to £50,000 for 1906 to 1915 inclusive, even if the agreement should be terminated before the latter date.³³ In the second amending agreement of 10 August 1909, the seat on the Board of Directors of the company was to be reserved for a Gesellschaft nominee as long as the latter company held shares worth £16,250 in the Pacific Phosphate Company.³⁴

The third agreement, made at Melbourne on 6 November

1907, confirmed the Jaluit Gesellschaft's monopoly of trade on Nauru. Goods would be charged to the Trading Account at cost price plus 15 per cent c.i.f. at point of final shipment, and Nauru Island and Ocean Island prices were to be as uniform as possible.³⁵ Goods would be sold to the white staff at 20 per cent over invoice price at the port of final shipment and to the Chinese 'the prices of goods . . . to be as far as possible those which have hitherto been in force on Nauru which are based on from 100 to 120 per cent on Sydney or Hong Kong invoice prices'.³⁶ No alcohol was permitted for sale, except a bottle of beer a day for traders. Profits were to be divided in the ratio one-third for the Jaluit Gesellschaft and two-thirds for the Pacific Phosphate Company.

A survey of the quantity and quality of Nauru's phosphate had been made on the company's behalf by a geologist, F. Danvers Power, in 1901. He found the phosphate to be of extremely high quality and conservatively estimated its volume at 41 million tons.³⁷ The German administration and the Jaluit Gesellschaft knew the results of Power's survey before the concession was transferred but transferred its rights in spite of the immense value of the deposits. The Gesellschaft was not interested in developing the industry itself, partly because a lack of confidence in colonial ventures in Germany made it difficult to raise the necessary capital. Also, the Gesellschaft's interests in the Pacific centred on copra, a high priced easily marketable commodity at this time, and the Pacific Phosphate Company's withdrawal from the copra trade meant more profit for the Germans. If the Gesellschaft had begun mining, the freight charges for shipment to Europe would have been very much heavier than those to Australia or New Zealand. Germany's demand was less than Australia's or New Zealand's because basic slag from her industry provided an on-the-spot source of phosphatic fertiliser. In any case the Jaluit Gesellschaft had a share in the Pacific Phosphate Company, for besides the Imperial dues paid by the company the Gesellschaft held stock in the company at least to the face value of £12,500 and was to receive a royalty of £50,000 or 1s. for every ton of phosphate mined by the company on Nauru, Ocean Island,

or anywhere else. The Gesellschaft also held the lucrative trading monopolies although its share of profits on Nauru was only one-third. The Pacific Phosphate Company hoped to profit greatly from Nauru's phosphate and after Power's survey it seemed clear that, although the island had to satisfy the demands of the German Government and the Jaluit Gesellschaft, the company's stockholders would be well rewarded for their investment in the island.

Originally it was believed that the phosphate was formed from guano but more recently it has been generally accepted that it is the result of the decomposition of marine organisms on coral reefs. Shallow submerged reefs were ideal platforms for these deposits and when the reefs were exposed, either by emergence of the island or subsidence of the coast line, some phosphate remained on the surface while other, more soluble, phosphates drained down into the softer underlying coral to be converted into tricalcic phosphate.³⁸ Nauru phosphate is, next to Ocean Island's, the richest in the world, containing 38.9 per cent of phosphorus pentoxide with few undesirable impurities.³⁹

The Pacific Phosphate Company fields were close to growing markets—Japan, New Zealand, and Australia—and these could consume all the phosphate it produced. The company began its operation on Nauru in 1907 with a German manager and a part British, part German staff. Ellis reported: 'Every assistance was rendered by the German district officer, and sufficiently large areas of land, both for settlement purposes and for phosphate working, were immediately available. No direct negotiations with the Nauruans were necessary, as far as the Company's manager was concerned'.⁴⁰ The company regarded the land taken over as freehold after this, and in spite of Ellis's reference in 1901 to negotiations with the chiefs for phosphate taken, the Germans controlled the sale and lease of land. The phosphate plateau, like all land, was, in spite of its low value, individually owned by Nauruans but there was no further mention of negotiations with landowners. Some Chinese labourers were brought directly from China and a large gang of Caroline islanders was engaged as labourers.

Ocean Island served as a model for Nauru's phosphate exploitation. Because there was no harbour, equipment had to be landed through the surf. The treacherous reef made a safe anchorage impossible and deep sea moorings were of the first importance. These were constructed by using a buoy (21 feet by 12 feet) which was shackled to two points on the shore reef by hawsers. Even with Ocean Island experience the position of the buoys had to be adjusted to suit the steamers and to allow quick unloosing of the boats should the weather deteriorate. Moorings also had to be laid in a boat harbour for the surf boats which carried the phosphate from the long steel jetties to the steamers at the ocean moorings. Machines to dry the phosphate and railway tracks for phosphate trucks and hoppers were installed. Many practical difficulties had to be overcome and a great deal of the phosphate still had to be sun-dried. Staff quarters, labour barracks, and machine houses were all constructed and the shipment of phosphate began.

The German manager was replaced by a Pacific Phosphate Company captain named Theet after some dissension in the management. The first shipment of phosphate of 1,917 tons left Nauru on the S.S. *Fido* on 6 July 1907 but it was an inauspicious start, for the *Fido* was subsequently wrecked off the New South Wales coast. By the end of 1907, 11,630 tons were shipped to Australia. In that year also the company took a large financial interest in the Compagnie Française des Phosphates de l'Océanie which had been formed to exploit the newly discovered Makatea phosphate deposits in French Polynesia.⁴¹ The company now had control over, or an interest in, all the major phosphate deposits of the Pacific area.

In the agreements between the German Government, the Jaluit Gesellschaft, and the Pacific Phosphate Company, only two clauses referred to the inhabitants of the island; one made it necessary for the mining company to give notice of commencement of operations so as to allow 'the necessary measures required in the interests of the natives' to be taken. The other allowed the Gesellschaft to assist the company in 'any claims by the natives of the Island against the Company'. Concern for the Nauruans was marked by its paucity

emphasising that the phosphate concession was based, if not on conquest, then on the island's occupation.

Although the company's manager did not negotiate directly with the Nauruans, a royalty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton of phosphate shipped was paid by the company to individual landowners and further sums were paid for the lease of land mined and in compensation for trees destroyed.⁴² In the six years from 1908 to 1913, when approximately 630,000 tons were shipped, Nauruan landowners received less than £1,320 on a commodity which was worth about 30s. per ton—a total of £945,000.⁴³ The payment of royalty had an interesting side effect, for land on the plateau, formerly considered almost worthless, became the subject of argument between individual landowners. The disputes over ownership arose because of the looseness of inheritance rules and were further complicated because the administration had ordered the return of land seized in the ten-years' war to its rightful owners. These disputes were settled by surveys in which E. M. H. Stephen acted as government interpreter.

Unlike the Banabans of Ocean Island, who were granted a form of local government, the *Kaubure*, in 1905 on the pattern of other islands in the Gilbert and Ellice Protectorate, the Nauruans did not have any political rights. Socially, too, the Nauruan adaptation to phosphate mining differed from the Banabans' reactions. Whereas the Banabans had gathered phosphate since Ellis's first visit to Ocean Island, Nauruan participation in the industry was brief. In 1906 one hundred Nauruans contracted to mine for phosphate at 14s. a month for labourers and 18s. a month for boatmen for a year but they did not renew, nor did any Nauruan show any interest in working in the mines after 1907. A contemporary observer thought that 'they got fed up digging'.⁴⁴ A few Nauruans continued to work as boatmen, this being a vocation more natural to their traditional skills. In 1907 Ellis said of the Banabans that 'Working for the Company was popular with the younger men . . . What with their earnings, and payments made by the Company in respect of phosphate from their lands, and leases, they became a well-to-do native community'.⁴⁵ Contemporary European observers attributed the Nauruans' dislike of mining to their

natural indolence and dislike for sustained labour but there were other, more forceful, reasons for their refusal to labour in the industry. Generally throughout the Pacific, and especially in Fiji and Hawaii, planting, mining, and trading companies avoided employing local labour. Originally this was because the Pacific islander's concept of work was not the rational, economic approach of industrial Europe. He worked to live; he did not live to work. This generated unwillingness on both sides of the labour market, but it was only a temporary phase because the need for a cash income grew with the desire for trade goods. The planters and miners, however, still preferred to import their workers, who were then relatively easy to control, and with little opportunity for repatriation until contracts were fulfilled stability of labour was ensured.

On both Nauru and Ocean Island the local work force was too small for the scale of operations. Gilbert and Ellice islanders were imported for Ocean Island (there were 900 there in 1905) but when the time came to import labour for Nauru the company had to look elsewhere because the supply from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands was becoming depleted. Men from the German Caroline Islands were employed and Ellis noted that 'the kanakas were invaluable for shipping operations, but not so suitable for some of the land work, being naturally slap-dash in their methods, and sustained labour did not appeal to them'.⁴⁶ This led to the importation of Chinese labour. The Chinese were preferred because they were in abundant supply, they indentured for three years and were willing to stay on the island, they were cheap and they were better labourers than the Nauruans. The Caroline islanders came for shorter periods. They left their poor, drought-stricken islands to work for enough money and trade goods to begin small stores at home, but although their main motives were economic they also won prestige and felt an element of adventure in going to work on Nauru.

By 1914, besides the white administration and staff personnel, a large alien population was living on the island. The Nauruans disliked the Chinese and had little social intercourse with them except for the barter of pigs, fruit, and

vegetables. This mutual isolation was encouraged by the Administration and the company and no Nauruan-Chinese marriages were contracted. The Chinese were shipped from Hong Kong although they were mostly country men from mainland China. Quarantine was not rigidly enforced by the German officials on their arrival at Nauru. This resulted in a dysentery epidemic in 1907 in which 150 Nauruans died and an infantile paralysis epidemic in 1910 in which 50 Nauruans died. From 1905 to 1910 the Nauruan population fell from 1,550 to 1,250.⁴⁷ Tuberculosis was also introduced at this time. Thus Nauru followed the pattern of other Pacific islands with recurrent population losses. The 1913 census showed that there were only 1,310 Nauruans, about one hundred less than in 1840 when Commander Simpson visited the island, and only sixteen more in the twenty-five years since the first German census was taken in 1889. Epidemic diseases, chiefly dysentery, infantile paralysis, and venereal disease, had been mainly responsible but Dr Kretzschmar, who surveyed the population in 1913, felt cause for hope for a future increase in population when he found that the number of children had increased by 221 or 77 per cent since 1889.⁴⁸

The Caroline islanders were rather more welcome than the Chinese because ethnically they were closer to the Nauruans and some intermarriage occurred. The islanders taught the Nauruans their chants and dances and a spirit of friendly rivalry grew up in sports, fishing, and boat work. Yet like the Chinese they brought sickness with them. Framboesia (yaws) made an appearance but it was stamped out. A Gilbert Islands leper who came to Nauru in 1910 brought this more sinister disease but it lay dormant until 1920. As the Nauruans had no natural resistance to these new diseases they came to depend increasingly on European medicines and doctors.

The whole pattern of Nauruan life was changing. Instead of laughing because the white man fished when he was not hungry, the Nauruans now did some fishing for sale to the alien population. Some gardening was also done for this purpose. The copra trade continued to fluctuate. Three hundred tons had been exported the year before the phos-

phate trade began and, in spite of droughts, some copra was still made. Although barter continued, money became the basis of the Nauruans' economy as the new trade stores with their array of goods encouraged them to acquire money. Education and training in Christianity went hand in hand as the missions conducted the schools. Old crafts such as mat making began to be forgotten as woven materials became available. Rites and customs were debased. Faced on all sides by the white man's attempt to dominate their environment and the disintegration of their culture, the Nauruans sought a new orientation for their lives. They could no longer follow the old ways completely and so settled for a combination of the basic elements of the old culture, clinging strongly to their family life, and some of the advantages of Western civilisation. They were able to achieve this because, although royalties were low—only about £230 per annum at this time for the whole population—this money, together with land rents and some return from copra, freed them from the necessity of working on the phosphate fields to pay their taxes. Administration expenses were paid for by phosphate so the Nauruans were also freed from taxation for these. Extra income was available from the sale of produce and most families were able to opt out of the phosphate works and retreat from the close proximity of white civilisation. They were far less affected by the establishment of an industry on their island than most other Pacific islanders.

To Australia in this pre-war time, Nauru phosphate was becoming increasingly important. Ocean Island exported more phosphate to Australia than did Nauru before 1914 but Nauru's output was rapidly gaining on Ocean Island's. As new land in Australia became scarce and land in use became impoverished, Australian farmers were being forced to abandon their dislike of manuring. This coincided with the introduction of artificial manure and as it was soon realised that soil in wheat-growing areas was deficient in phosphate, there was a great upsurge in the use of superphosphate. In South Australia alone the proportion of the area manured to the total area cropped rose from 27 per cent to 81 per cent between 1900-1 and 1910-11.⁴⁹ By 1914-15 Australia was importing over 173,000 tons of phosphate

per annum of which 10 per cent came from Nauru.⁵⁰ Australian farmers were beginning to realise that a great deal of the future prosperity of their wheat industry could depend on Pacific phosphate, but they seemed assured of reasonably priced supplies for many years to come from Ocean Island and Nauru.

The Prize of the Pacific

After Great Britain declared war on Germany the German Administrator on Nauru ordered all British subjects to be deported to Ocean Island on 5 September 1914. Only four days later, on 9 September, H.M.A.S. *Melbourne* visited Nauru and included it with German New Guinea in the capitulation of Herbertshöhe.¹ The wireless station, an important link in German cross-Pacific communication, was put out of action, but the island was not formally occupied on this visit because of the difficulty of maintaining control over the Chinese and Caroline workers. The German community on Nauru celebrated the departure of the *Melbourne* by re-hoisting the German flag.

On 14 October 1914 the Governor-General of Australia telegraphed the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific at Ocean Island to suggest that the *Messina*, a Pacific Phosphate Company steamer, *en route* for Ocean Island, should be instructed to occupy Nauru but it was not until an escort could be obtained from Rabaul that the *Messina* picked up the British deportees from Ocean Island and continued on to Nauru. The German Administrator formally surrendered on 6 November 1914 and was deported to Sydney together with the other Germans, about a third of the Pacific Phosphate Company's staff, who had remained on the island.² The deportation was an indication of Australia's intention to gain permanent control of the island for, when other German possessions were occupied by the Australians, most German nationals were not deported but were allowed to continue their businesses. If the deportation of the Germans revealed Australia's territorial ambitions, those

of Japan, which before the war purchased about half of Nauru's phosphate, were made equally clear when a Japanese cruiser and a troopship appeared off the island after the Japanese occupation of the Caroline and Marshall Islands. The Australians, however, had beaten the Japanese to the island.

An Australian military officer, Captain Norrie, administered Nauru until a deputy commissioner for the Western Pacific, Mr C. Workman, took over. In December 1917 Mr G. B. Smith-Rewse, a former official in the British Colonial Service, became Administrator and held that position until June 1921. At first the Nauruans disliked the Australians, who treated them as enemies and shot their pigs, but as the garrison settled down relations improved. The loading of phosphate was begun immediately the island was re-occupied and in spite of a much reduced staff due to enlistments, over half a million tons were shipped from 1914 to mid-1920. The European market for phosphate was cut off by the lack of shipping and the Japanese began to mine Angaur in the Carolines, but Australian shipping was made available so that Australian and New Zealand farmers continued to receive exceptionally cheap supplies of superphosphate during the war period, as compared with other countries where prices increased by 150 to 200 per cent.³ Nauru phosphate prices only rose by 25 per cent to 40s. per ton.⁴

In 1915 shares held by German subjects in the Pacific Phosphate Company were vested in the Public Trustee by the British Board of Trade. The capital of the company was then £1,200,000, of which £975,000 had been issued to 1915.⁵ The German stock was sold by public auction in July 1917 to a large British shipping firm, Elder, Dempster and Company, for £600,000.⁶ All the German rights of royalty and the right of transfer of the mining concession were to all intents abrogated by the war, and the Pacific Phosphate Company's rights to the phosphate were now based on the British conquest and occupation of the island.

The only noticeable change in the operation of the phosphate works on Nauru was that an all-British staff was now employed and the 1916 Royal Commission on British and Australian trade in the South Pacific understood that:

'Though under German control, the practical ownership of Nauru was, and is, British'.⁷ The Pacific Phosphate Company's practice of paying the royalty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton first to the Colonial Government, which then distributed it to individual landowners through their chiefs, continued. The company also paid a royalty of 6d. per ton to the Administration as an export duty and invested £1,000 towards the upkeep of police. The capitation tax first introduced by the Germans was continued at 15s. per year for adult male Nauruans but the copra export tax of 10s. per ton was scarcely relevant because the manufacture of copra had dropped from a peak export of 277 tons in 1916 to 10 tons in 1918 due to a severe and prolonged drought.⁸

By the end of the war the Australian military occupation had the administration well in hand and phosphate mining continued as before. In anticipation of receiving control of Nauru at the end of the war the Australian Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes, pressed Australia's claims at the Peace Conference. Great Britain wanted the mandate because Nauru had been leased to a British company, it was valuable, and it was close to the area under the administration of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.⁹ New Zealand, already informally allocated the mandate for Samoa, needed phosphate for her agriculture. Hughes, lacking any argument on grounds of defence or natural safety, which he had used successfully in gaining the mandate for New Guinea, fell back on the claim that Australia had occupied Nauru at the outbreak of war, had administered it and had fed, maintained, and paid the garrison ever since. The Secretary to the Australian Peace Delegation, Mr P. E. Deane, explained that: 'unless we get Nauru or some share of it, we would hold an outpost of Empire at our own expense, whilst others, sharing in the general safety, would reap the profits of Nauru'.¹⁰

W. A. Watt, Treasurer and acting Prime Minister in Hughes's absence, cabled Hughes in London in May 1919:

If the cost of war is not to be included in reparation bill, Australia's hope of getting anything substantial in relief of its crushing war debt is slender. Nauru is the one island whose receipts exceed its expenditure. Its phosphate deposit marks it of considerable value, not only as a purely commercial proposition but because the future productivity of our continent absolutely depends on such a fertilizer.¹¹

Even after protracted negotiations Hughes felt that he would be unable to get the mandate for Nauru, but, adamant that Australia deserved it, he cabled the Australian Cabinet that he would refuse to sign the Peace Treaty or accept the mandate for New Guinea unless the Nauru mandate was given to Australia.¹² Watt advised against such incautious action and told Hughes that Australia should force Britain to accede to their demands in subsequent negotiations.

The mandate for Nauru was informally granted to His Britannic Majesty and the fight for the island's wealth continued privately. Lord Milner, Secretary of State for Colonies, arranged for representation of Australia and New Zealand in a conference to settle the demands for Nauru phosphate amicably. This conference resulted in the Nauru Island Agreement, signed on 2 July 1919 between His Majesty's Government in London, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Dominion of New Zealand. Its preamble claimed that a mandate for the administration of the island had been conferred by the Allied Powers upon the British Empire but it was not until seventeen months later, on 17 December 1920, that the mandate was officially granted to the British Empire.¹³

The Nauru Island Agreement provided for the exercise of the mandate 'and for the mining of the phosphate deposits'. The three governments agreed that the island be administered by an Administrator to be appointed by the Australian Government for five years in the first instance, after which the three governments would reconsider the appointment. The Administrator was to have the power to 'make ordinances for the peace, order and good government of the island *subject to the terms of this agreement*' (author's italics), and as this was the only article which referred to the exercise of the mandate it was clear that the phosphate mining was to take precedence over any niceties of government.

The agreement went on to set up a Board of Commissioners in whom all title to the deposits was vested. The Board consisted of three members appointed by their respective governments to hold office during their governments' pleasure. The Commissioners would, upon payment of

compensation to the Pacific Phosphate Company for their rights, land, building, and plant, manage the working of the deposits and control the sale of phosphate to the three partner governments. The phosphate was to be distributed for home consumption in the proportion that the participating governments paid compensation to the Pacific Phosphate Company: that is, Great Britain 42 per cent, Australia 42 per cent, and New Zealand 16 per cent. Provision was made for readjustment of this allotment, for the redistribution of phosphate not required by any government, and the sale of any surplus at the best price obtainable. The Commissioners were also to fix the f.o.b. price at which each country would buy the phosphate. This price was to cover mining expenses, management expenses, the island's administration expenses and other charges including interest on capital and a sinking fund for the redemption of capital. Thus Nauru phosphate would confer a sizeable cost benefit on its users, for its price included no profit margin for the Commissioners.

Freedom from the undesirable possibility of political interference in the operations of the Commissioners was also guaranteed in the agreement by article 13 in which each of the governments bound itself not to act inconsistently with the terms of the agreement. After the Nauru Island Agreement was ratified in the parliaments of the three partners, a Purchase Agreement was drawn up and signed on 25 June 1920 between King George V, represented by the High Commissioners for Australia and New Zealand and Lord Milner, and the Pacific Phosphate Company. The partner governments agreed to acquire on 1 July 1920 the whole of the undertakings and assets of the Pacific Phosphate Company on both Nauru and Ocean Island and acquire 'all the right title and interest of the Company in the guano phosphate deposits in and upon the said islands' including all the benefits of the British Government-granted Ocean Island Concession and the German Government-granted Marshall Islands Concession relating to Nauru until year 2000.¹⁴

The governments indemnified the Pacific Phosphate Company against claims for royalties alleged to be payable since 4 August 1914 to the German Government, or by

reason of the transferral of the Concession. The three governments paid the Pacific Phosphate Company £3,500,000 sterling, and agreed to employ all the company's staff except senior officials, who were to receive compensation for loss of office. A sum of £531,500 was later allocated for compensation for these officials and for redundant equipment. In the Nauru Island Agreement of 1919 the title to the phosphate deposits had been vested in the Board of Commissioners but by this Purchase Agreement the power of the Commissioners was eroded, for the deposits were purchased by the governments, who acquired the title, paid the price, and indemnified the company against actions against it. Although the three governments had been at pains to ensure that the British Phosphate Commissioners were regarded as a private company holding a monopoly, the 1920 agreement made it clear that Nauru phosphate was a government-owned monopoly.

A third indenture supplemented the two previous agreements. Made on 31 December 1920 between the Pacific Phosphate Company and King George V, represented by the High Commissioners for Australia and New Zealand and the Secretary of State for Colonies, the three Phosphate Commissioners, A. R. Dickinson (Great Britain), J. R. Collins (Australia), and A. F. Ellis (New Zealand), were also party to the indenture.¹⁵ The indenture confirmed the sale of the Pacific Phosphate Company and its concessions to the governments, and enjoined the Commissioners to work the deposits according to the Phosphate Deposits Agreement of 1919 (that is the Nauru Island Agreement). The governments released the company from paying any royalties in accordance with the Ocean Island Concession after 1 July 1920 but no mention was made of releasing the company from paying royalties to Nauruans. In fact not one of the three agreements mentioned the Nauruans at all.

Clause 9 of the indenture stated that:

such statutory covenants [as the transfer of the Jaluit Gesellschaft mineral rights to the Pacific Phosphate Company] shall not . . . be deemed to imply that the Company has power to assign to the Governments the full benefit of the Marshall Islands Concession and the German Agreements so far as the same are purported to be assigned without the consent of the said Jaluit Gesellschaft of Hamburg.

This was the only reference made to clause 17 of the agreement between the Jaluit Gesellschaft and the Pacific Phosphate Company of 22 January 1906 which stated that transfer of the concession to third parties could be made only with the consent of the Gesellschaft, but whether the insertion of this clause in the 1920 Indenture made the transfer of the concession legal was a nice point.

It was indicative of the motives of the partner governments that these three agreements of 1919 and 1920 provided primarily for the working and marketing of the phosphate and only incidentally provided an Administrator to govern the Nauruans.

Australian interest in Nauru was stimulated by its acquisition but it centred naturally on Nauru's 100,000,000 tons of phosphate. H. B. Pope, British Phosphate Commissioner for Australia in 1922, was confident that 'The Australian farmer . . . has no need to be anxious about his supplies of superphosphate. Whatever may happen in less fortunate countries, his supplies are assured for the next four or five generations at any rate'.¹⁶ P. E. Deane, who had been Secretary to the Australian Delegation at the Peace Conference and thus involved in the fight for Nauru, made it clear that he felt that Australia's phosphate supply problem was solved:

If we take a conservative figure and value the total deposits at £4,000,000,000—Australia's share on the basis of allotment already agreed to is no less than £168,000,000 . . . It is impossible . . . to estimate the enormous value of the island to Australia . . . It not only ensures to the farmer, free of all outside interference and control, his full requirements of phosphates—but does so at cost price.¹⁷

The President of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society calculated that the cost price saving to Australia would probably be about £1 a ton or £200,000 in 1920,¹⁸ and these benefits to Australian farmers increased as phosphate exports rose and costs were pruned by the British Phosphate Commissioners.

It was left to the League of Nations to take an interest in the Nauruans' welfare while the partner governments secured their winnings. In the mandate for Nauru the most important provision, in article 2, was that: 'The mandatory shall promote to the utmost the material and moral well-

being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the territory subject to the present mandate'.¹⁹ Nauru was made a 'C' mandate and article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant set out the qualifications by which a mandate came under the 'C' provision:

owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilization, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, [these areas] can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory subject to the safeguards . . . in the interests of the indigenous population.²⁰

But it was not so much what the mandate itself provided for, but rather what it failed to guard against that was important. In the divisions of mandates, the 'A' type expressly forbade the exploitation of a mandate's resources by the mandatory power. In 'B' mandates equal opportunities for trade and commerce of all other members of the League of Nations were to be allowed. But in 'C' mandates, except for the obligations to promote the material well-being of the inhabitants, the mandatory power's economic obligations were not specified. In this way the 'C' mandate for Nauru, by default of specifying the mandatory's obligations, confirmed the monopoly of the British Phosphate Commissioners.

This mandate, the purchase of the phosphate deposits by the three governments, and the powers of the Administrator under the Nauru Island Agreement all came under considerable criticism. Edith Sandhaus, in a discussion of 'C' mandates in the British Empire, pointed out that all mandates had been conferred on individual governments, except for Nauru's mandate, which had been given to the British Empire (in the person of His Britannic Majesty),²¹ and a later observer stated that Australia was the *de facto* mandatory under the Nauru Island Agreement.²² The League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission had also realised this by 1922 and complained that the League of Nations had not been notified of the 1919 Agreement and the 1920 Acts as was provided in its Covenant.²³ Thus Nauru was an early example of how the ideals and effectiveness of the mandate system could be subverted by rapacious powers.

The problem of who really held the mandate and was therefore responsible for the island was complicated by the joint ownership of the phosphate deposits. The Permanent Mandates Commission asked in 1922 with no great conviction

whether the establishment by the three Governments concerned of a State Organization [the British Phosphate Commissioners] enjoying the sole rights of development of the only national resources of the area is fully in keeping—although no formal provision under the Regulations for C Mandates forbids it—with the disinterested spirit which should characterize the mission of a Mandatory State.²⁴

Australia's representative neatly evaded the question and replied that 'The Governments have done no more than take over the existing monopoly, which they have in no way extended'.²⁵ Although Australia claimed that the title to the phosphate was vested in the Board of Commissioners, Australia's representative, Sir Joseph Cook, later told the Permanent Mandates Commission that: 'The Governments themselves held and exploited the Concession . . . There was no Phosphate Company apart from the Governments'.²⁶

The Administration set up by the Nauru Island Agreement was criticised by the Permanent Mandates Commission,²⁷ the British Parliament,²⁸ and even the British Phosphate Commissioners.²⁹ These all complained that the Administrator was not bound to consult any local legislative body or to submit his legislation to any of the three governments. This anomaly was rectified when the Nauru Island Agreement was revised in 1923, placing full responsibility on the Administrator for his actions and necessitating the submission of all legislation to at least one of the participating governments.³⁰

The replacement of German administration by an Australian administration under mandate was to make at least some difference to the Nauruan people because for the first time their material and moral well-being was a direct responsibility of an outside body, the League of Nations. The Permanent Mandates Commission moreover took a particular interest in Nauru because of the peculiar circumstances of the mandate. Compared to the Banabans of Ocean Island, who were now included in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony as a possession of Great Britain with no independent

third party to appeal to, the Nauruans, under a mandate, at least had the opportunity of developing some kind of independent attitude towards their new masters. The Nauruans had, in their by now usual fashion, overtly accepted their new administration and appeared to be happy with it, for in 1918 their chiefs asked that Australia should rule the island forever and a plebiscite returned the same result.³¹ Mr G. B. Smith-Rewse, who administered the island until mid-1921, was a British Phosphate Commissioners (B.P.C.) employee and the fact that the B.P.C. headquarters were in Australia, that Albert Ellis continued on as British Phosphate Commissioner for New Zealand, and that most of the Pacific Phosphate Company staff were retained, made the change in ownership and administration pass smoothly. General T. Griffiths took over the administration of the island in mid-1921.

The Australian Government was sensitive to criticisms of the Nauru mandate voiced by the Permanent Mandates Commission and others, and in 1922 a ministerial statement claimed that:

The working of the phosphate deposits is in no way prejudicial to the interests of the natives, who, on the contrary, have never been so well off as they are under the present Administration. Formerly a royalty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a ton was paid to individual landowners for all phosphate removed. This has been increased since the Commissioners took control to 2d. per ton, and in addition a fund has been established by a contribution of 1d. per ton, made by the Commissioners, which is to be used exclusively for the benefit of the natives as a whole. Besides the royalty, £20 per acre is paid in advance to the native landowner upon his phosphate land being taken over.³²

Should this specimen of enlightenment give the impression that the B.P.C. was beginning a generous allocation of royalties then this must be dispelled, for the Nauruans had no idea how much they should receive from the resource whose value was unknown to them, and it was only when General Griffiths told them of its value and demanded an increase from the B.P.C. on their behalf that the rise was given. Griffiths, who was liked and respected by the Nauruans, in this way declared his independence of the pervasive influence of the B.P.C. and went further in overseeing the Nauruans' interests, for it was a practice of his to take a

Sunday morning stroll around the phosphate fields to ensure that the phosphate was being worked systematically. Indeed Griffiths was the first of a few, but not all, Administrators who were often prepared to put the interests of the Nauruans before those of the B.P.C. and the consumers of cheap Nauruan phosphate. Still the B.P.C.'s operations expanded greatly and in 1922, the first full year of their operations, the B.P.C. shipped 182,170 tons of phosphate which was valued at £823,045 or £4.52 per ton. Royalties paid to Nauruans in this year totalled only £2,277, of which £1,518 was paid directly to landowners and £759 was placed in trust for the whole community.³³

Opinions on the amount of Nauruan royalties varied greatly. While Nauruan ownership of the land had been acknowledged in the Administration's 1921 report to the League of Nations, which described the 'natives' as the owners of the land,³⁴ royalty rates were not discussed on this rational level but rather seen as amounts that were either 'good' or 'bad' for the Nauruans. A. H. Charteris, sometime Challis Professor of International Law at Sydney University and a man of liberal persuasion, felt that 'the remuneration . . . is not small to a child of nature who lives on cocoa-nuts and fish and sunshine'.³⁵ Edith Sandhaus judged similarly: 'It must be noted that, if, in the eyes of civilized men, the remuneration given to proprietors would seem to be insignificant in comparison with the immense value that the phosphate represents in the Commonwealth, it is nevertheless sufficient for the indigenes'.³⁶

Charteris's and Sandhaus's arguments were typical of European attitudes towards royalties at this time, but the Nauruans themselves began to complain after 1921 that the royalty was not adequate and insisted that the B.P.C. hear their demands. When the new 1921 royalty became effective, the Administration believed that 'This decision has given great satisfaction to the Nauruans, who are keenly appreciative of the generous treatment they have received'.³⁷ The royalty rate was to remain in force until 1927 but already by 1923 the Administration found that Nauruans were again complaining about inadequate royalties.

These complaints stemmed from two causes. First, the



PLATE 4 (Above) Nauru Co-operative Store (by courtesy of Department of Territories)

PLATE 5 (Below) No. 2 cantilever (by courtesy of Department of Territories)

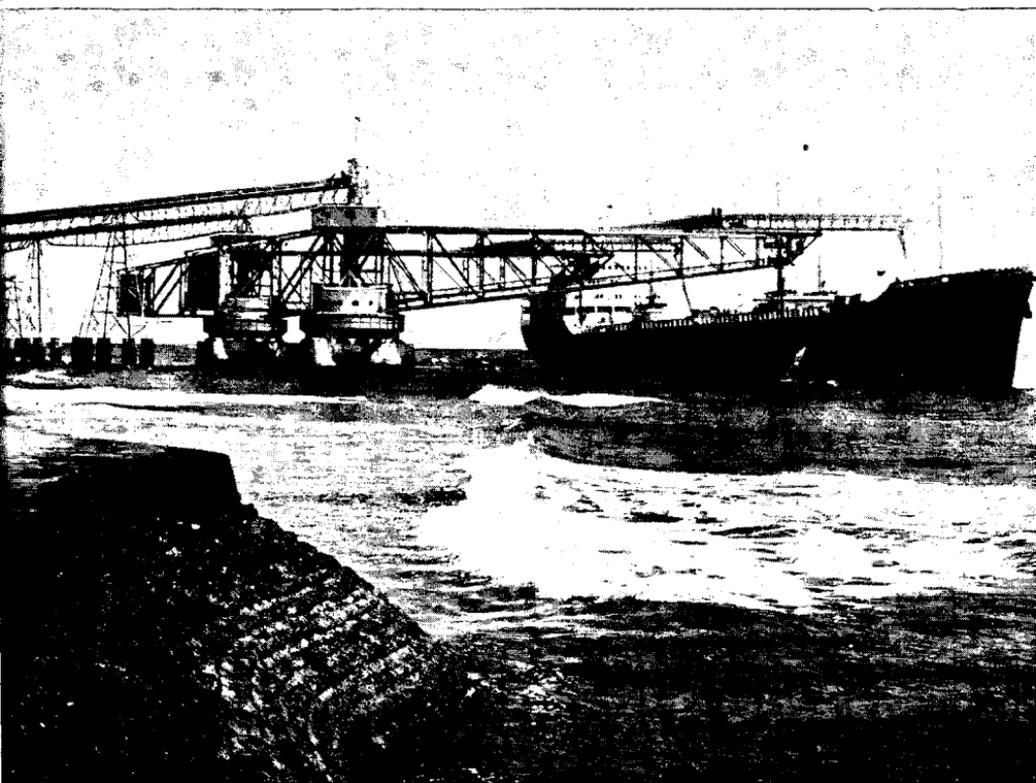




PLATE 6 (Above) Cleaning out the pinnacles (by courtesy of Department of Territories)

PLATE 7 (Below) The Nauru Local Government Council (by courtesy of Department of Territories)



Nauruans knew that royalties would only be increased by the effect of their continued agitation and second, they felt they wanted a larger share of the goods available on the island. An increasingly wide range of Western goods and foods was now available and an awareness of the high standard of living of the Europeans on the island pointed their desires. These had been partly satisfied, for by 1922 the old foods had increasingly given way to polished rice, sugar, and condensed milk, while bicycles had become a status symbol. Yet their cash income was restricted, for while the royalty paid their taxes and gave some cash in hand for buying goods, their only other income was from the sale of fish, vegetables, and a little copra, for as a rule Nauruans did not work in the phosphate industry. The Administration explained this to the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1922:

The recruiting of Nauruan native labour is not practised . . . The Nauruan natives, generally speaking, do not care for this or any other kind of sustained work, although some few of them are, from time to time, casually employed in work connected with the shipping of phosphates.³⁸

and at least one member of the Permanent Mandates Commission felt that:

It was gratifying to find that one island remained which might be kept as a remnant of happiness in the South Sea Islands, as an earthly paradise for the natives.³⁹

Whether the increasing area of bare coral pinnacles constituted an earthly paradise or not it was clear that their share of the proceeds from the phosphate did not satisfy the Nauruans.

One interesting side effect of this concern with royalties was to make the Nauruans more aware of the value of money. The Administration, believing the Nauruans to be an improvident race, opened a branch of the Commonwealth Savings Bank on the island. Within one year Nauruans had deposited over £2,000, although individual Nauruans had received only a total of £1,517 in royalties to the end of 1922 plus £140 for seven acres leased for mining, making £1,657. Only 93 tons of copra were exported in 1922.⁴⁰ Unless the Nauruans were great money hoarders they were

in fact extraordinarily provident in 1922, and perhaps this provided a basis for their later nickname: 'The Scots of the Pacific'.

A comparison of Nauruan royalties with Banaban royalties was instructive. Ocean Island had been mined since 1900 by the Pacific Phosphate Company and it had been taken over by the British Phosphate Commissioners in 1920. While the Nauruans received $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton from 1907 to mid-1921, the Pacific Phosphate Company paid British colonial revenue £50 per annum to 1915 and 6d. a ton royalty, the Banaban landowners receiving £20 per acre purchased to 1913. In a new agreement made in 1913, because of the intense dissatisfaction of Banabans with their payments, land was purchased at from £40-£60 an acre, compensation for the destruction of food trees was paid and a new royalty of 6d. a ton was invested in a Banaban Fund the interest from which after 1914 was distributed to Banaban landowners. The British Government took a half share of the payments and Banaban custom was observed for the rest, nearly all the money going into the funds for the benefit of the whole community.⁴¹ This agreement was in force until 1927 and the Banabans, with a smaller population than the Nauruans and a higher tonnage of phosphate exported, received a greater cash return for their land and a long-term outlook which seemed at this stage more financially secure.

The Administration was eager to have the Nauruans gainfully employed, probably regarding it more as a moral desirability than a financial one, and so encouraged them to produce copra. The severe drought of 1917-18 had killed many thousands of coconut trees, but the Administration established a model copra dryer and tried to have the coconut groves thinned. But the Nauruans, with cash in hand, were not to be drawn into an industry that was at the mercy of the weather and required much hard work for a small return, and so the scheme, like many which are proposed for the wrong reasons, failed completely.

Nauruan children continued to be educated in the Mission Schools. The London Missionary Society had taken over from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1917, for it was felt that the mission on

an island under British administration would thrive better with British missionaries. In 1922 a school for European children was established under an Australian teacher who acted as supervisor of the Nauruan schools conducted both by the London Mission Society and the Sacred Heart Mission and who also trained Nauruan teachers. A subsidy was paid to the church schools on the basis of attendance and progress and the Administration asked the B.P.C. to apprentice suitable youths leaving school. These steps inaugurated an educational system in which compulsory attendance was a complete success, unlike any other Pacific island.

The hopes expressed by the German administration's medical officer, Dr E. Kretzschmar, in 1913, that the Nauruans would regain their population balance and increase rapidly after the epidemic of 1905 were completely dashed when in 1920 an influenza epidemic killed 230 Nauruans and 99 other Pacific islanders.⁴² This epidemic reduced the Nauruan population by 18 per cent to only 1,068 and the Administration held fears for the Nauruans' continuing survival. As well as the terrifying decrease in numbers, the epidemic had a number of serious long-term effects, for nearly all Nauruans were left severely debilitated and thus an easy prey to leprosy and tuberculosis.

Ten cases of leprosy were discovered in 1921 and by the end of 1922 there were 139 patients segregated in a leper station with perhaps 100 more needing segregation in the opinion of the government medical officer.⁴³ Only Nauruans were affected by the disease at this stage because of their racial susceptibility. Tuberculosis had also made an appearance by 1924 when three Nauruans were hospitalised with the disease.

The Nauruans and the Administration found room for hope in 1922 when the Nauruan birth rate was the highest on record, 53 per 1,000 of mean population, but the infantile death rate (infants under 1 year) was also high—101.7 per 1,000 live births.⁴⁴ The Administration showed humanity, skill, and a clear sense of responsibility in dealing with these urgent medical problems. The B.P.C. conducted a hospital for the Europeans and the Administration had a separate one for the Nauruans. The practice of using the B.P.C.'s

doctor for the Nauruans was discontinued in favour of a government medical officer, who showed considerable concern to check the high infantile death rate.

In 1921 the Administration granted the Nauruans restricted powers of self-government which would be extended as they proved their fitness.⁴⁵ Using the German-introduced district consolidation of Nauruan life, the Administration gave each chief of the fourteen districts the power to deal with minor offences by fines not exceeding 5s. These chiefs, who held their position partly by hereditary right and partly by election, elected a head chief who was empowered to fine up to 20s. Offences more serious than these were dealt with by the Administrator as Chief Magistrate. The introduction of this new system changed the old ways very little, for the chiefs had always dealt with such offences and this was symptomatic of the continued turning inwards of the Nauruan community with a consequent separation from the other communities on the island. This was reinforced by the paternalism of the Administration whose court generally charged Nauruans under civil ordinances and not with criminal offences.

Strong paternalism in other areas of Nauruan life soon became evident. The Administration controlled the sale and lease of land by Nauruans but was later persuaded to allow the compulsory leasing of land to the British Phosphate Commissioners. This did not affect Nauruans greatly for nearly all phosphate land was uninhabited. Yet the dichotomy in the Administration's motives was clear. The Administrator also negotiated for the Nauruans for compensation for destroying fruit-bearing trees. He controlled right of movement on the island by the 1921 Movements of Natives Ordinance—the term 'natives' to include any Pacific islander, Malaysian, or half-caste, and Chinese.⁴⁶ 'Natives' were forbidden to be in European settlements between sunset and sunrise and all B.P.C. employees were to be confined to their compounds between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. Nauruans, unless carrying a special pass, had to be in their own districts between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Nauruans who lived according to European custom, and had a certificate from the Administrator to prove their supposed superiority, were exempted.

The Administrator became concerned with the decline of Nauruan culture and to arrest this he instituted a museum of Nauru handcrafts under the supervision of the European schoolteacher, and an annual competition for the best Nauruan-style house was enjoyed by the Nauruans, for competitions had been a feature of their life in the past. This well-meaning but belated concern with the crafts of the Nauruans was to have little success. The Nauruans believed such Western goods as woven cloth and china plates to be clearly superior to their old *ridis* and coconut shell utensils, and the strong influence of the missionaries on forms of dress and social behaviour had led them to regard many of their old crafts and ways as inferior. At this time the Nauruans were struggling for their very existence as a community and perhaps only when this determination to survive was successful would pride be taken in their old culture.

From 1921 on the three communities, European, Nauruan, and Chinese, lived isolated and self-contained existences reinforced by the ordinances of the Administrator. The B.P.C. and Administration staff—all Europeans—naturally shared the same social life. By this time the Nauruan population was about equal to the number of immigrants employed by the B.P.C. and Administration, but the Nauruans avoided the Chinese and Europeans and only fraternised with other Pacific islanders. They were also becoming increasingly alienated in their physical and psychological relations to their island as the phosphate was removed and more land on the coastal rim was taken over for buildings and plant.

The B.P.C. extended and greatly improved facilities for mining and shipping phosphate on Nauru. Dust precipitators successfully reduced the pall of phosphate dust previously ejected by the mechanical driers. Phosphate was still carried to moored vessels by surf lighters from a jetty but by 1926 the B.P.C. had almost doubled pre-war exports, shipping nearly 275,000 tons in 1926. This increase in production was stimulated by increased demand from Australia and it sparked off a competition between Nauru and Ocean Island for the highest daily loading. From 1920 to 1927 nearly three million tons were shipped.

Labour was reorganised to cope with increased shipments.

In 1914 half of the immigrant work force of 1,000 were Caroline islanders and the remainder recently imported Chinese. The recruitment of Caroline islanders ceased when the B.P.C. took over. Ellis's reason was 'through force of circumstances' but these men, together with Japanese employed on Ocean Island, were repatriated because the Japanese were mining Angaur in the Caroline Islands and needed their labour; moreover, relations between Great Britain and Japan had not been cordial since the Peace Conference. In 1921 a trial force of about 120 New Guinea labourers was brought to Nauru, the only labour permitted to be recruited from New Guinea.⁴⁷ H. B. Pope, British Phosphate Commissioner for Australia, wrote in 1922: "These "boys" [New Guineans], and the second contingent recruited towards the end of the year, speedily settled down and are doing well',⁴⁸ but all of these labourers were repatriated by 1924 because many of them had died from epidemic diseases and tuberculosis. Ellis explained that: 'they were not a success, their health suffering on account of the comparative scarcity of native vegetable foods',⁴⁹ and photographs of these men wearing nose bones and feather headdresses indicate that they were still in a tribal state. The 1924 session of the Permanent Mandates Commission strongly criticised the recruitment of New Guineans and members were assured by Australia's representative that this had now ceased.⁵⁰

From 1924 the B.P.C. relied entirely on Chinese labour for the phosphate works. The Permanent Mandates Commission was greatly concerned that the 1919 Nauru Island Agreement did not provide for Administration control over labour and that the relevant resolutions of the International Labour Organization had not been implemented.⁵¹ Australia's representative replied that:

Freedom of the Commissioners from governmental control in the business of working, shipping and selling of the phosphates is not interpreted by the Governments concerned to include freedom of control in regard to conditions of labour . . .⁵²

Administration control of labour was enacted in the 1922 Chinese and Native Labour Ordinances which provided for a nine-hour day, six days a week, overtime for Sundays and holidays, regular inspection of barracks and penalties for

indolence, breaches of the peace, and for opium offences.⁵³

The Chinese were recruited in Hong Kong by professional labour recruiting agents acting for the British Phosphate Commissioners. Because of this method of recruiting the Administration was not able to oversee the health of the incoming labourers and as the Hong Kong medical examination was at best perfunctory many unfit Chinese reached Nauru and had to be immediately repatriated if discovered by the government medical officer. Chinese with venereal disease, beri beri, tuberculosis, and leprosy were brought to Nauru.⁵⁴ Although their death rate remained stable at about 5 per 1,000, of 145 Chinese repatriated in mid-1924, 67 were medically unfit for service.⁵⁵ The Administration, alarmed by this and sensitive to Permanent Mandates Commission criticism, insisted on a longer quarantine period and a stricter medical examination of Chinese by the government medical officer on arrival.

The official indenture agreements were interpreted by a Chinese liaison officer appointed by the Government of Hong Kong but they were not signed by the Chinese until they reached Nauru. These provided for a contract of three years, with free transport to and from China, accommodation in barracks free of charge, free food and clothing and free medical care in a separate hospital.⁵⁶ Wages at this time were £5 to £6.10s. a month for mechanics, £2.16s. a month for boatmen and £1.12s. a month for 18 months and thereafter £1.16s. a month for labourers. The Administration found the Chinese well-behaved, clean, and industrious, and they displayed the reputed providence of their race, for 70 per cent of Chinese wages were remitted to China in 1922.

The indenture agreement between a Chinese coolie and the B.P.C. was a contract that could be enforced by penal sanctions in a criminal process before the Administrator sitting as a judge, and J. A. Decker, an academic observer, pointed out with a great deal of justification that

the social situation existing on such a small island, throws the head of the government and the local managers for the Phosphate Commission into intimate daily contact with each other and creates a situation in which they are able to harmonize their policies without resorting to the

litigation provided for by the ordinances. The Chinese workmen enjoy no such protected position.⁵⁷

The Permanent Mandates Commission was fully aware of this anomaly and in criticising the penal sanctions in the indenture agreement commented:

Men certified medically unfit for further work as the result of accident at work were repatriated to China . . . with a maximum sum of £19. Did the Administration consider this to be adequate?⁵⁸

The Commission could have added that this represented one year's pay for a labourer and that the labourer was fortunate to receive it, for if he became sick when away from the job he only received his passage home. The Commission did, however, find it pertinent that the fine for not performing work properly was £20 and that 'From this it would appear that there was one standard for compensation and another for fines'.⁵⁹ Some minor changes were made in the 1928 Overseas Workers Ordinance but the basic situation remained the same. In practice, fining for indolence rarely arose and only one or two cases were brought before the Administrator, who cautioned the offender. Chinese offences were mainly opium smoking or being in possession of opium or a pipe.⁶⁰ A Chinese theatre and Chinese newspapers were provided and as a fifth of Chinese labourers applied for renewal of their contracts each year many were apparently satisfied with their lot.

The Administration did not allow Chinese to become permanently resident on Nauru although contracts were frequently renewed. Unlike the Gilbert and Ellice labourers on Ocean Island, the Chinese on Nauru could not bring their families and their movements were restricted to the workings and to their compounds. This policy led to some abuses but the purpose of it—the protection of the Nauruans — was achieved for the only occasion for Nauruan-Chinese contact was in the barter of produce. The Nauruans did not like the Chinese but they did not riot against their presence as the Banabans did on Ocean Island about this time.⁶¹

The presence of the coolies enabled the Nauruans to accustom themselves gradually to western economic ways, for no sustained labour was required of them, but some

observers felt that Nauru was becoming a 'well-appointed nursery'.⁶² D. L. Oliver, an American observer, wrote:

Nauruans did not have to work very hard to satisfy the new needs, and adaptation to western individualistic economy was easier for them because of their own native concepts of individual property ownership. But, as favored wards, they became increasingly parasitic upon the mandate administration and the phosphate industry, with the inevitable loss of vitality of their old institutions.⁶³

The paternalism of the Administration did confer a 'favored ward' status upon the Nauruans and their continuing to opt out of the phosphate industry confirmed their social separation. This in turn meant a reliance on community life which kept alive the most important part of their old culture—their identity as Nauruans and their family and clan life. But it is wrong to blame the loss of vitality of the old institutions on the phosphate industry, for the main destroyers of Nauruan culture had been the beachcombers and the missionaries. Indeed a case could be made, supported by hindsight evidence, that the social separation of the Nauruans which was engendered by the imposition of a dominant alien culture, confirmed by withdrawal from an all-pervading industry, and reinforced by a paternalistic administration, was not at this time disadvantageous to the Nauruans as a people.

Colonial Life

After five years of Australian administration the Nauruan people had settled down to a routine existence under their new masters. In 1926 the Administration told the Permanent Mandates Commission with some pride that:

Under the new regime the people have been much more prosperous, and increased prosperity has brought in its train a higher standard of living, greater cleanliness, a better standard of health and an intelligent interest in Island affairs. The people are being taught to think for themselves and to initiate schemes for their own advancement.

The Nauruans are a gentle, law-abiding, and pleasant-mannered people. It is a pleasure to help them and it requires but little imagination to foresee, as the rising generation reach maturity, a happy, contented, prosperous and self-reliant community.¹

This optimism about the future was echoed by the Nauruan chiefs in a letter to the Australian Government in January 1927:

As you know the Nauruan people have twice petitioned His Majesty the King that they shall forever remain under Australian Administration. Our visit [to Australia] has strongly intensified this view and our fondest hope is that our wishes will be realized in the very near future.

Australian rule has been a 'godsend' to Nauru and we should like some prominent Australian man or men to visit the Island and see what has been done to make our Island one of the best and our people contented and happy by the broadminded control of the Australian Government.²

Nauru was a 'godsend' to Australian farmers rather than the other way about but such mutual hopes for the future at least augured well for the new Administration's relations with the Nauruans.

In 1925 the Administration set up an advisory council of two Administration-appointed Europeans and two elected Nauruans to advise the Administrator and to act as a channel

for Nauruan grievances and complaints. This council was unsuccessful because the Nauruans were dominated by the Europeans in the exchange of views.³ Another attempt to facilitate communication between Nauruans and their highly centralised and European dominated Administration was made when the council was reconstituted in 1927 as a wholly Nauruan body made up of the fourteen district chiefs who elected a head chief and a deputy head chief. Again this council acted only in an advisory capacity and had no voice in the policy of the Administration, in the handling of administration funds derived from duties on phosphate, nor in the use of royalties invested in the Nauruan Royalty Trust Fund, and this lack of power did not make for a true exchange of views with the Administration. The Council of Chiefs did, however, administer a Trust Fund which from 1929 was financed by the remittance of the capitation tax paid by Nauruans to the Administration. This fund was used to build a *Domaneab*, or meeting place of the people, in 1932 and this fulfilled a need for a 'Nauruans-only' social centre.

In 1922 the Nauruan people began their first business venture, the establishment of the Nauru Co-operative Store. When the Boston Board of Missions Church on Nauru was taken over by the London Missionary Society in early 1917 the Reverend P. A. Delaporte returned to the U.S.A., taking with him a young Nauruan, Timothy Detudamo, to help him complete his Nauruan translations. After four years in America Detudamo returned to Nauru. Impressed by the example of American free enterprise he urged Nauruans to start their own store so that the British Phosphate Commissioners' trading monopoly would be broken and goods would become cheaper.⁴ The Administrator, Mr Smith-Rewse, and the B.P.C. found the Nauruans' intention to found a store unbelievable and intolerable. When the Nauruans insisted, Detudamo was charged with disturbing the peace and was gaoled for two years. Other chiefs were also charged in court. General Griffiths, the new Administrator, resolved this farcical situation on his arrival on the island by giving the Nauruans permission to establish a store. Nauruans subscribed £800 and the Nauruan Co-operative Society was

formed in 1922.⁵ Its trademark, a picture of the lady in the moon, not only referred to an old Nauruan legend but to a scoffer's gibe that the lady in the moon would come down to earth if and when the Society's store was founded. The Administration appointed an official to act as an adviser in business management and as a liaison officer but the store was a Nauruan concern and it began to be a training ground and source of employment for Nauruans. In 1924, when 283 tons of copra were exported, Nauruans wanted the 10s. a ton export duty remitted. The Administration refused, stating that the traders and not the growers would benefit by such a remittance but the Nauru Co-operative Store, unlike other traders, pursued a policy of absorbing market price falls and passing on market price increases. In 1927, when the Council of Chiefs took over as Board of Directors of the store, its turnover was £8,000 in that year, from which £600 was added to capital.

In the 1920s the Administration tried to fill all the minor administration posts with Nauruans and frequently expressed the opinion that as educational facilities improved all of the public service appointments would eventually be held by Nauruans.⁶ Apart from Administration employment only a few Nauruans worked casually as boatmen for the B.P.C. The Administration displayed a protective attitude to Nauruan employment, for Nauruans were not allowed to sign contracts without the permission of the Administrator and their pay was set at a minimum of 3s. per day, which was 2s. more than Chinese labourers received. It was difficult to tell how many Nauruans were self-employed in making copra and fishing or how many were unemployed but when the drought of 1930-1 reduced opportunities for private employment the Administration complained that the behaviour of Nauruans had deteriorated because of their lack of constant employment.⁷

The employment situation did not improve. In 1934, when the Administration made a list of thirty-five 'comparatively important posts held by natives', fifteen of these were held by the Head Chief and the District Chiefs. These were of course traditional and honorary positions. For the rest, twenty Nauruans were employed in the Secretariat, as non-

commissioned police officers, medical assistants, wireless operators, draftsmen, and teachers.⁸ In 1933, after a lapse of 32 years, the Nauruan population again reached 1,500, but of some 500 men only about 35 were employed by the Administration and only a few more by the B.P.C. No other employment except the Nauru Co-operative Store was open, so most Nauruan men did not find regular paid employment but relied on traditional ways of life. Employers were still reluctant to engage them and they were equally reluctant to take the employment available. Nauruans were not unintelligent and there had been fifteen years of education in English on the island, but this had not adequately fitted them for the more important Administration posts for which Europeans were recruited from Australia. There was also reluctance on the part of the Administration and the B.P.C. to employ and train large numbers of Nauruans, for they found that many lacked the required motivation for clerical work. However, the impression that some observers gained that all Nauruans were 'parasitical' and that Nauru was a 'nursery' cannot be attributed entirely to the Nauruans themselves for some took pride in working for the B.P.C. or Administration if they were able to do so. In the twenty years of Australian administration to World War II little improvement occurred in the number of Nauruans employed in responsible positions.

In 1923 the Nauruan education system was reorganised. The missions had conducted schools subsidised by the Administration, teaching in Nauruan with English as an obligatory subject. The Administration decided that while the missions should be praised for educating Nauruan children, education could be improved and made more efficient if it was controlled by the Administration.⁹ The first step was to build six new district schools. The European teacher continued to train the Nauruans but in 1923 two Nauruan youths were sent to Australia to train as teachers. Attendance at school was made compulsory from five to fifteen years of age and in 1925 the Administration added a year to schooling for technical training. This was done partly to provide training for positions with the B.P.C. and the Administration but also to keep Nauruan boys and girls occupied at school

because there were few employment openings. This policy also discouraged marriage at an early age. In 1925 parent-school committees were set up and the Nauruans, realising the importance of education, insisted on the attendance of their children and gave the schools their support. Instruction was given in the English language and Nauruan in junior classes, while Pacific History, particularly relating to Nauru, some facts on Australia, handcrafts, homemaking, and moral values were taught.

The schools became increasingly important in the lives of Nauruans. Each school had an active parents' committee and the schools, of Nauruan design, were built and owned by the people, not the Administration. All education expenses were covered by the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund. The Permanent Mandates Commission praised this system of education but noted in 1927 that the expenditure for the European schools was about half that expended on all Nauruan schools although there was only one European pupil to thirty Nauruans. Sir Joseph Cook, on behalf of the Australian Government, replied that: 'Costs incurred on behalf of the Nauruan teachers were, for example charged to the European school'.¹⁰ Cook was misinformed, for except for instruction of Nauruan teachers by the European master, all school expenses except great capital charges were borne by the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund.¹¹

The separate school for European children continued, as did the practice of sending European twelve-year-olds overseas for post-primary education.

In 1937 the education system was again reorganised. Mr W. Groves, an Australian teacher seconded from the Victorian Department of Education to be the Director of Education on Nauru, came to the island. Mr Groves, who was experienced in education in Papua and New Guinea, revised the primary curriculum so that the English language and European culture were not taught to the detriment of Nauruan culture. Groves later observed that:

There were no school truants in Nauru; it was perfectly normal to go to school—for young adults as well as children, because school was linked in all its activities with the normal interests of the people. Real-life activities like canoe-building, net making, fishing, making equipment for

native games such as Itsibweb balls of woven pandanus; learning and reciting Nauruan culture-hero stories and their translation into English; 'cats' cradles' with their associated folk stories—all of these had a real place in the routine school programme . . . Education in Nauru, in short, provided the necessary preparation for Nauruan life.¹²

The work course in the primary schools was reduced and boys and girls graduated to technical schools to learn old and new skills. Successful Nauruan students were sent to train at the Suva Medical School as Native Medical Practitioners or to Australia for courses in dentistry, radio telegraphy, motor mechanics, and accountancy.

Groves, in introducing this practical bias in studies to replace some parts of the Victorian curriculum which were unrelated to life on Nauru, succeeded in two things. He provided a necessary bridge from the culture of old Nauru to the culture of the European which the young Nauruans were eager to adopt, while preserving the values of the old culture. The practical applications of his courses were designed to provide the Nauruan community eventually with their own professionals and technicians. But the future success of the program was in doubt, for Groves left Nauru before the outbreak of war and, whether through changed circumstances or the failure of his successors to grasp his ideals fully, the promise of the scheme remained unfulfilled.

Health continued to be an urgent problem. The number of Nauruan patients segregated in the leper station rose sharply from four in 1920 to 188 in 1924 when a quarter of the Nauruan population was infected.¹³ The government medical officer felt that the fact that almost every family had at least one leper among its members had caused the extremely rapid spread of the disease.¹⁴ Leprosy surveys were conducted by the government medical officer, Dr Grant, by Dr Morgan of the Australian Department of Health and a full survey was done by Dr Dew in 1924.¹⁵ These surveys resulted in recommendations for a monthly survey of all Nauruans and for those found to be infected to be placed in segregation and attended by a Nauruan orderly who was also a leper. The traditional treatment for leprosy, chaulmoogra oil injections, was continued and by 1926 a drop in the incidence was noted.

Another acute health problem was infantile mortality. The government medical officer attributed the high infantile mortality rate of 257 per 1,000 live births in 1923 to an outbreak of gastro-enteritis and broncho-pneumonia.¹⁶ In 1924 and 1925 the number of deaths increased still further but by 1925 the government medical officer felt that he had found the cause of this persistent problem. Insufficiency of vitamin B in the diets of both mothers and children was the main factor and he deplored the refusal of mothers to drink sufficient toddy from the coconut palm, which was the only natural source of this vitamin on the island.¹⁷ A prophylactic emulsion for infantile and pre-natal beri beri, prepared from fresh yeast and cod liver oil or coconut toddy, was distributed to Nauruan mothers at clinics in 1926. This almost immediately reduced the death rate. Distribution of 'Vegetemite'¹⁸ was begun and the Administration, as a measure towards the improvement of the health of the whole Nauruan population, ordered that toddy production be increased, that undermilled rice (a source of vitamin B) replace white rice in the stores and that sugar be rationed to one pound per head per week. These measures were successful, for general health improved and by 1927 the infantile mortality rate had fallen sharply.

Tuberculosis also figured in the Nauruan death rate. From 1923 to 1927 only a few deaths occurred but the number of cases was growing and in 1927 there were ten cases and four deaths from the disease.

In the 1930s the leprosy problem was under control with only 72 lepers segregated out of the Nauruan population of 1,500 in 1932 and in 1935 only one new case of leprosy was detected. However, a drought which lasted from 1932 to 1934 again caused a decline in the general standard of Nauruans' health and tuberculosis became the greatest killer, being responsible for seven deaths in 1935. A sanatorium for the isolation of infective cases was built on the plateau and compulsory chest surveys of the entire population were begun. In 1936 the Mantoux test for tuberculosis was introduced.

The infantile death rate also rose in the years 1935 to 1938 to the high level of the 1920s. This was again attributed to

the failure of pregnant mothers to eat suitable foods containing vitamin B1 and also to a prejudice against breast feeding. Another drought in 1938-9 also contributed. With the end of the drought in 1939 the infantile death rate fell to 131.6 per 1,000 live births. This was a great improvement but in comparison the 1938 infantile death rate in Australia was only 40 per 1,000 live births for European children.¹⁹

An attempt to establish experimental food plants supplied by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.) on Nauru was begun in the mid-1930s but the main plant, pineapple, failed completely in the drought, which would not even support the indigenous pandanus. Ocean fishing became easier with outboard motors, but when Professor J. Dakin of Sydney University was invited to investigate methods of improving farming of *ibija* fish, local customs proved too strong. While Nauruans' food habits retained the fish and the coconut as a basis, all other food needs were imported.

In the year 1932-3 the 1,500th Nauruan was born. This was an achievement of great importance to the Nauruan community, for at last they had regained what they believed to be a normal population and they celebrated this day every year thereafter. The Administration had tackled the health problems of leprosy, tuberculosis, and the high infantile death rate with great determination, humanity, and skill and although the long-term health problems needed years to be overcome, it was to their credit that such an effort had been successful.

Exports of phosphate from Nauru continued to increase and in 1927 318,185 tons, valued at £780,070 were shipped, of which Australia took 70 per cent and New Zealand 30 per cent. High freight costs made shipments to Great Britain uneconomic. This tonnage was about double that exported in 1922. Many minor improvements had been made in methods of extraction and transport but phosphate still had to be carried in baskets by surf boats to the moored ships, and this limited the amount which could be exported. The Australian demand for phosphate was rising and it could not be satisfied by present imports from Nauru and Ocean Island.²⁰ Improvements in loading were, however, delayed

by dissension and friction among the three Board members which became so severe that in June 1926 the Australian Government set up a Royal Commission to inquire into 'the alleged inharmonious relations existing between the Australian Phosphate Commissioner on the one hand and the British and New Zealand Phosphate Commissioners on the other'.²¹

The brief report of the Commission found that H. B. Pope, the Australian Commissioner, had clashed with A. F. Ellis, the New Zealand Commissioner, and A. Dickinson, the Commissioner for Great Britain, on a number of B.P.C. policy decisions and specifically on a decision involving sales to other countries in which Pope was outvoted by Ellis and Dickinson. Arthur Robinson, the Royal Commissioner, did not attempt to unravel the quarrel and was content to conclude that: 'Harmony between the Commissioners representing the three partner countries cannot, in my opinion, be established so long as Mr Pope remains as Australian Commissioner',²² and Pope was accordingly relieved of office in August 1926. Mr P. Deane held office temporarily until 1927 when Mr C. Macpherson took over.

In the years from 1927 to 1930 phosphate exports remained at a steady annual level of just over 300,000 tons. In 1927, after many months of consideration, erection of a cantilever loading device began, to replace the slow and often unsafe lightering of phosphate to moored vessels. Standard cantilever equipment had to be adapted to the island's reef and lack of anchorage. Several engineering firms were consulted and Messrs Henry Simon Ltd of Manchester installed the cantilever, which was completed in September 1930. Two moorings were laid just beyond the reef and attached to the land by hawsers and ships were able to lie tied to the moorings in comparative safety. The cantilever itself consisted of two swinging arms, 200 feet long, each of which could project to the deep water of the moorings. These arms were attached to massive concrete pillars set inside the reef. On the arms were 3-foot-wide rubber belt conveyors and these brought the phosphate from the storage hoppers along the cantilever arms to be passed simultaneously into the forward and after holds of the ship. To Ellis, who had pioneered surf loading on Ocean Island it was

quite an experience to stand on the outer end of the extension boom high up over the vessel, and see the phosphate streaming along and dropping into her holds at the rate of 1,000 tons per hour; the line of the surf comparatively close and the submerged rampart of coral-reef showing up plainly in the clear water not far distant.²³

In the first three years of operation of the cantilever, phosphate shipments rose by a third to over 400,000 tons annually and after 1933, when demand was renewed in Australia and New Zealand after the depression, they rose again rapidly to half a million tons per annum.²⁴ Methods of phosphate mining were improved by the use of mechanical shovels and electric cableways, contributing to better yields so that conveyor belts had to be extended to take the increased load mined. The introduction of a telephone service between Ocean Island and Nauru and frequent meetings of both general managers streamlined administration. Because of all these factors the price of Nauru phosphate delivered in Australia fell by more than 50 per cent between 1920 and 1935.²⁵ The improvements also made possible a reduction in the number of Chinese employed, which fell in 1932 by a quarter to 696. Work in the mines was now easier and some Chinese were employed as houseboys and in the hospital. Living quarters improved and improvements in sanitation and diet meant that the Chinese of the 1930s were healthier than previous labourers.²⁶

From 1933 to 1939, 4.3 million tons of phosphate were exported and nearly one million tons were shipped in the peak year of 1939 alone, about 60 per cent of which went to Australia. Nauru's exports made up about an eighth of the annual world production of eight million tons in 1933, most of which was produced in Africa and the U.S.A.²⁷

Administration hopes that the Nauruans would be satisfied with the 1921 Agreement on royalty rates were not fulfilled, for in 1924 they asked for an annual rental for phosphate lands instead of a lump sum and that the royalty be increased to meet more adequately the commercial value of the phosphate. By 1925, although the 1921 royalty agreement was not to expire until 30 June 1927, the Nauruan landowners were pressing their carefully thought out demands. They wanted an annual rental of £3 an acre (with a minimum of £1 for fractions of an acre) for all land leased

whether phosphate bearing or not; increased compensation for food trees; and they proposed a cash royalty of 1s. per ton of which 1½d. a ton would be held in trust by the Administration for the benefit of all Nauruans. Other conditions proposed by the Nauruans showed that they were becoming aware of a need to protect their interests; they wanted the Administrator to appoint some qualified person to watch over the rights of the owners, to check the amount of phosphate raised, to prevent skimming (which only removed the easily accessible top layer of phosphate), and to ensure the systematic working of the phosphate. The owners also asked, since the B.P.C. held so much land at this time, that no further land be leased and that something be done about unworked lands held by the B.P.C.²⁸

On 1 August 1927, a new agreement was made between the Nauruans and the British Phosphate Commissioners. Land was to be leased at a lump sum of £40 an acre; a royalty of 4d. a ton was to be paid to landowners, 1½d. a ton was to be paid to the Administration in the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund for the benefit of Nauruans and 2d. a ton was to be held in trust for landowners, making a total royalty of 7½d. a ton. Non-phosphate land was to be leased at £3 an acre and compensation for destruction of fruit trees was increased to a maximum of 25s. per tree.²⁹ In 1927 Nauruan landowners received £2,652 in cash from a total royalty payment of £4,053.³⁰ The Nauruans seemed well pleased with these results and thanked the British Phosphate Commissioners and Administration for safeguarding their interests. By 1927 the Nauruans had a partial conception of the value of the phosphate but they felt no great sense of urgency in claiming their share. Like the Administration, they thought that the phosphate would last 300 years.³¹

The 1927 Agreement did not clarify the problem of ownership of surface rights and mineral rights. The B.P.C.'s position was that it held title to all the phosphate by the Nauru Island Agreement of 1919 and that the Nauruans, as owners of the land, leased the surface rights to the B.P.C.³² The Nauruans believed, however, that the mineral rights were theirs, for they claimed that royalties should bear some

relation to the value of the phosphate extracted.³³ The ownership of the mineral rights was never legally examined but under German, British, and Australian law (which included colonies) mineral rights were vested in the crown by right of conquest and the discoverer had first right of exploitation. This may not have always been the rule, but it applied to Ocean Island. A new Banaban Agreement was also made in 1927. This allowed compulsory acquisition of land, provided that British colonial revenue be paid 2s.6d. per acre per annum, and that the Resident Commissioner be paid 8½d. per ton to be held in trust for Banabans generally. A new Banaban Provident Fund was set up to be financed at 2d. a ton, and compensation for destruction of fruit trees and a payment of £150 an acre as compensation for owners' surface rights was to be paid directly to Banaban owners. The Banabans were unhappy with this comparatively small cash return but were told that

with regard to land it was the rule generally that the surface belongs to the owner and any minerals under the land belong to the Government, which can do what it pleases with them. The surface owners did not plant the minerals nor were they responsible for them, therefore they belonged to the Crown.³⁴

The B.P.C. and the three mandatory governments used this argument in regard to Nauru but they failed to acknowledge the implications of the difference in status between Ocean Island, a Crown Colony of Great Britain, and Nauru, a mandate of the League of Nations whose Mandatory Power was under an obligation to safeguard the material interests of the island's indigenous inhabitants.

The 1927 Nauruan Royalty Agreement contained a clause which provided that for every 1s. rise or fall in the f.o.b. price of phosphate, to be reviewed five-yearly, the landowner's royalty of 4d. a ton should correspondingly rise or fall by ¼d.³⁵ In 1933 the landowner's royalty rose to 4¾d. per ton by this adjustment, but by June 1937 the f.o.b. price of Nauru phosphate had fallen to 14s. a ton from a peak of 23s. a ton in 1927, partly because of a general fall in world prices but mainly because mechanisation and large scale production had reduced costs sharply.³⁶ This made the 1927 Agree-

ment ineffective and so the Administrator, the chiefs representing the landowners, and the British Phosphate Commissioners in 1938 made what were virtually two new agreements.

The first was an interim agreement to run for the rest of the 1927 Agreement period to 1947. The total royalty was increased to 8d. a ton of which 4d. was to be paid to landowners. This sum was to be adjusted with the price of phosphate but was not to rise above 6d. a ton. The Administrator was paid 2½d. per ton to be held in trust for the landowners for twenty years at compound interest. The Nauru Royalty Trust Fund contribution continued at 1½d. a ton. The second agreement was to run for twenty years from 1947. The conditions for the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund and the Landowners' Trust Fund remained the same, landowners' royalty was to be raised to 5d. a ton with provision for variation according to f.o.b. price and a new sum of £45 an acre for the lease of phosphate land was to be paid. The royalty rates were to be open for review every five years.³⁷

In the nineteen years in which the B.P.C. worked the phosphate up to World War II Nauruan royalties rose from ½d. per ton in 1920 to 8d. per ton in 1939. Of this 8d. a ton, half was a cash payment, one-quarter was spent on works and education for the Nauruan community and one-quarter was held in trust for landowners. The total royalty paid to Nauruans in 1939 was 5·1 per cent of the f.o.b. price of Nauru phosphate. Another 4·1 per cent of the value of the phosphate was paid by the B.P.C. for Administration costs and about half of this was spent solely for Nauruans.³⁸ The Nauru Royalty Trust Fund continued to receive about £4,000 or £5,000 each year, practically all of which was spent on Nauruan education.

The new agreement reflected the beginnings of a concern for the future by the Nauruan people. As the extraction rate increased to nearly a million tons in 1939, it was now realised that the deposits would not last as long as had been anticipated and perhaps could be exhausted in sixty or seventy years. Nauruans began to discuss rehabilitation of mined land, but the Administration told both the Nauruans and the Permanent Mandates Commission that the areas mined

were uninhabited and unused by the Nauruans and that it would be impracticable to restore the worked-out fields for agricultural purposes. In any case the British Phosphate Commissioners made it clear that they felt no obligation to return the mined lands to their owners in a cultivable state.³⁹

When phosphate is removed the bare, sharp coralline or limestone pinnacles which remain darken with age so that a worked-out phosphate field resembles an immense graveyard. The pinnacles can also be seen on the shores of Nauru, especially at Anibare Bay where the tides have washed away the phosphate. After extraction of the phosphate some secondary vegetation of a creeper type grows after some time but it is of no agricultural use. The *tomano* trees of the plateau had always been used for canoes but the few coconuts did not thrive and the population had always lived on the coastal fringe. The porosity of the soil also made any rehabilitation of the land extremely difficult. In spite of these disadvantages the Nauruans were beginning to regard the plateau as possible future living space for their growing population. In 1937 a survey of Nauru established that its area was 5,263 acres (less area than previously believed) of which 3,542 acres or some 67 per cent were phosphate bearing.⁴⁰ In 1939 a total population of 3,460 lived on the remaining 1,721 acres.

The B.P.C. continued to meet most of the Administration costs of Nauru by the 6d. a ton royalty. The contribution rose from £4,488 in 1923 to £25,066 in 1939—a rise from 1.2 per cent to 4.1 per cent of the value of phosphate exported. Additional revenue was collected by the Administration from duties on imported goods, export duty on copra, and from capitation taxes. These charges usually increased revenue by up to another 50 per cent. Administration expenditure approximated revenue annually but of the total annual Administration expenditure only one-quarter to one-third was spent solely for Nauruans.⁴¹ This amount included Nauruan housing but not Nauruan education, which was paid for from the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund. The rest of Administration revenue was spent on upkeep of hospitals and the wireless station (from which the Nauruans of course benefited), on salaries of Administration staff and on the

administration of B.P.C. employees.⁴² It is clear that the Administration gave the Nauruans no 'favoured ward' status in public expenditure, for while Nauruans made up more than half of the population, only about a third of the budget was spent on their facilities.

The Permanent Mandates Commission, after an initial blaze of criticism in the early 1920s which centred on the circumstances of the mandate and the British Phosphate Commissioners, settled down for the rest of the pre-war period to a more or less benign appraisal of the Administration's reports on Nauru, its main concern being with the rights of the individual. The Commission commended the Administration for its efforts in the fields of health and education but in 1927 it questioned Australia on the separation of the judiciary from the executive. In Nauru courts the Administrator acted as president of both the District Court and the Central Court, which was also a Court of Appeal, so that an appeal from the District Court to the Court of Appeal was an appeal from the Administrator to the Administrator. Australia's representative replied that there were two other magistrates, but because offences were generally minor on the island, no appeals occurred.⁴³

The Commission also took an interest in the religious rights of the Nauruans. It pointed out that a statement in the 1926 Report that attendance at religious instruction was obligatory and the cautioning in court of three Nauruans for the continual absence of their children from religious instruction was not in accordance with ideals of religious freedom.⁴⁴ After this criticism no further Nauruans were prosecuted for this offence. The Commission's concern with the natural rights of the Nauruans did not extend to any deep interest in their economic rights.

Father Kayser continued to conduct the Sacred Heart Mission but the London Missionary Society had no resident European missionary in spite of Administration offers to subsidise his salary. From 1917 to 1927 a Nauruan pastor, Jacob Aroi, who had been a pupil at Delaporte's school, ran the mission assisted by some of the chiefs and this tended to make it a Nauruan church. The Old Testament was favoured and the church had a strong evangelical bias. In

1928 the Reverend Hannah and his wife took over the mission and the Administration began a subsidy of £500 per annum for the incumbent's salary. Figures of religious adherence given in the 1925 *Report on Nauru* showed that of a total 1925 population of 1,239 Nauruans, 365 were Roman Catholics and 775 were Protestants, making a total of 1,140 Christian adherents. Of the total population, 540 were children, who were presumably all classed as adherents. Out of 699 adults, 14 per cent were non-adherents. This figure may have indicated a falling off in the Christian religion compared to pre-war times, although statistics of religious adherence were in Nauru, as elsewhere, notoriously suspect. In any case the churches continued to provide a social focus for Nauruans that made up for some of their isolation.

In 1932, an eminent Australian anthropologist, Camilla Wedgwood, visited Nauru for a stay of four months to make a study of the Nauruan people. Although she stayed with the Administrator and the expected length of her visit was cut short, she managed to make contact among Nauruans in their own homes. The Nauruans liked her and were unusually frank with her, although, as was customary with them by now with people who were interested in their culture and history, they tended to pull her leg a little. Her habit of rolling her own cigarettes endeared her to them and she overcame their natural shyness very effectively. She made the first attempt to gauge the effects of phosphate mining and Australian administration on Nauruan culture and she found that:

it is predominantly the material side of European culture in which the young Nauruans are interested; of the aesthetic and spiritual side (in the widest sense of the term spiritual) they are almost wholly ignorant because it is too culturally alien to them to be comprehensible. The modern young Nauruan is an imitator; a person without roots; and with but little sense of social responsibility. The greatest need in Nauru to-day seems . . . to be a means of linking the past with the present.⁴⁵

Apart from the Christian religion the aesthetic and spiritual side of European culture on Nauru was so nearly non-existent that it could scarcely have been noticed by the Nauruans, while the material side of European culture had been their constant example for nearly thirty years, European culture was certainly quite alien to them and imita-

tion was a kind of acceptance of its values. This was partly forced upon the Nauruan people by the pervasive influence of their colonisers: scouts and guides, the brass band, films, and motorcars gave Nauruans a superficial European gloss that did not sit well on them in Miss Wedgwood's eyes. The social responsibility was there in the support of the schools, church, and the Nauru Co-operative Society but its development was blocked by the Administration in its failure to provide the chiefs with any real power or the people with worthwhile jobs. This was clearly a time of transition in which Nauruans searched for an identity. Miss Wedgwood believed that the solution was to link the imported European culture with the remnants of Nauruan culture so that the resulting hybrid would derive vitality from each source and there were some signs that this was already occurring.⁴⁶

The Administration was apparently impressed by Miss Wedgwood's research for in 1936 it showed the first signs of concern with the Nauruans' 'play instinct' and 'the impact of civilization' on it.⁴⁷ The Nauruans were no doubt surprised by this after fifty years of German and Australian exhortations to participate in the virtues of sustained manual labour. It was unlikely that the problems of a declining culture could be solved by teaching Nauruans Morris dancing, but a more positive contribution came with the visit of Mrs H. Maude in 1937. She sparked off a renewal of interest in string figures and other forms of old Nauruan culture, but because Nauruan games required a great deal of preparation and the composition of special chants, the more difficult games which required a high degree of skill were already so infrequently played that they were half forgotten.⁴⁸ Still, a belated interest in Nauruan culture by the Administration was better than no interest at all and it probably inspired gratitude if not confidence in the Nauruans, who had hitherto regarded their old life as in many ways inferior to the new example set by their masters.

World War II

The first year of World War II brought little change to Nauru. On 6 December 1940, ships chartered by the British Phosphate Commissioners were standing to off Nauru waiting for the stormy weather to abate so that they could tie up at the moorings and be loaded. Two German raiders found them an easy target and sank four vessels including the B.P.C. ships *Triona* and *Triaster* and damaged the *Triadic* so that it had to be abandoned. Three weeks later, on 27 December, a lone German raider again approached the island, and shelled the shore installations of the phosphate works heavily, buckling the storage bins but leaving the cantilever workable.¹ A siren warned the people of the raid and they retreated hurriedly inland but when William Harris, son of William Harris the beachcomber, who was 98 years old and the father of nine children, jumped on his motorcycle to flee with the rest, he suffered a fatal heart attack.

For almost a year after this Nauru was left in peace and phosphate continued to be shipped although in reduced quantities because of the scarcity of vessels. Then on 22 and 23 December 1941 Japanese aircraft bombed the wireless station without, however, inflicting vital damage.²

It was clear after these raids that Japan had a vital interest in the island, for with its occupation she could deny phosphate to Australia and New Zealand while using it for her own agriculture. Nauru was also important to Japan as a cross-Pacific radio link and could be a valuable strategic base.

The European population of Nauru set up the Nauru

Volunteer Defence Force to assist the small A.I.F. garrison on the island but after the Japanese raids the Australian Government told the volunteers that it could not supply them with arms or support. The force was then disbanded at its own request and plans for the evacuation were made, for it was clear that Australia could not defend Nauru. It was not, however, until 23 February 1942 that the Free French destroyer *Le Triomphant* was able to break the Japanese blockade and take off most of the Europeans and Chinese.

Seven Europeans remained on Nauru: the Administrator, Lieutenant-Colonel J. R. Chalmers, the two Catholic priests, Fathers Kayser and Clivas, Dr Quin and three other Europeans who felt that their guidance was necessary to the Nauruans. One hundred and eight-four Chinese, many of them medically unfit, remained, together with about 50 other Pacific islanders. As for the Nauruans, Ellis felt with excessive optimism that 'with their genial natures and friendly manners [they] would not suffer at the hands of the Japanese'.³ Before evacuation B.P.C. employees disabled the works as far as possible by the removal and burial of vital parts of machinery.

Six months after the evacuation, on 23 August 1942, the Japanese attacked. Nine Japanese planes and two Japanese cruisers bombarded the island and the next day Lt-Colonel Chalmers surrendered. The Japanese officially occupied Nauru on 26 August and the day after nearly 300 Japanese marines were landed.⁴ All Europeans were placed under house arrest. On 29 August seventy-two Japanese of the South Sea Development Company landed on the island to investigate the state of the phosphate workings. They recovered some of the missing machinery parts and some Chinese were put to work raising phosphate, but they were unable to ship any in 1942.⁵

The strategic importance of Nauru was demonstrated by further troop concentrations. Another 300 Marines, making 600 altogether, and 700 Japanese and Korean labourers were brought to Nauru. With the aid of about 300 Nauruans these began to build an airstrip in December 1942.⁶

By the end of 1942 life had changed drastically for the

Nauruan people. They now had to do hard forced labour under a discipline that bore no resemblance to the paternal Australian administration. For food, each Nauruan was allowed 2 pounds of rice per day together with one-tenth of a pound of beef, the same as the Japanese labourers received, while the Chinese received smaller rations.⁷

Executions of Chinese, Gilbertese, and Japanese who had disobeyed Japanese orders soon convinced the Nauruans that to survive they must obey Head Chief Detudamo who was appointed Governor of the Nauruans, with the mandate 'that those who disobey the chief's orders will be skinned and treated as pigs'.⁸ Nauruans were not as harshly treated as the Chinese and although punishment for offences was severe, the Japanese held them in somewhat the same regard as did former administrations—as pleasant people as long as they did not misbehave. This was evident when a Japanese school was set up for the Nauruan children, church services were allowed, and some Nauruans continued in their former employment.

By the end of January 1943 the airstrip was completed and the first Japanese bombers arrived. Allied reconnaissance planes immediately appeared and on 21 February 1943 fifteen Japanese fighter and bomber planes were destroyed by Allied raiders.⁹

Nai Fai Ma, who had been Chinese interpreter for the British Phosphate Commissioners, reported in his diary the day after this raid that five of the Europeans were executed and Patrick Cook noted in his diary for 27 February 1943: 'It was rumoured that the five European prisoners were killed'. The Japanese claimed that the Europeans were killed in the bombings and later cremated but the Nauruans believed they were executed as a reprisal.¹⁰ There were no eye-witness reports but the Europeans were seen no more. As for the priests, Fathers Kayser and Clivas, they were dragged from their beds in the night and driven around the island in a truck until daybreak. In this way they escaped execution with their fellow Europeans but they did not understand why they had been spared.¹¹

By March 1943 another 800 Japanese labourers and 800 Marines arrived and 300 Nauruans were conscripted into

labour battalions to construct fortifications around the island. At the beginning of June the South Sea Development Company employees were ordered to leave because of friction with the Japanese marines and it is doubtful whether even one ton of phosphate was shipped.¹² The strategic importance of Nauru, with its strong fortifications and large military force, was now paramount. The airstrips were the focus for Allied bombing which continued regularly, occasionally as often as daily, and kept the number of Japanese planes down to a minimum, although Patrick Cook noted in his diary that he found the raids useful 'for giving us fish when they dropped a few bombs into the sea.'

At 1 June 1943 the population was approximately as follows¹³

Japanese: Marines	1,388
South Sea Development Company employees labourers (including Koreans)	72 1,500
	<hr/> 2,960
Europeans	2
Nauruans	1,848
Chinese	184
Other Pacific Islanders	193
	<hr/> 5,187

This number of just over 5,000 was nearly 2,000 more than the population in 1940 and Patrick Cook claimed that in June 1943 another 1,000 Japanese arrived. By the end of June, with a population of about 6,000 and outside supply routes drastically cut by Allied bombing, the food situation had become serious and the Japanese decided to deport some Nauruans.

Six hundred Nauruans and seven Chinese under a Japanese official, Head Chief Detudamo, and Joseph Harris, another son of the first William Harris and a Native Medical Practitioner, were sent to an atoll in the Truk group about 1,000 miles north-west of Nauru on 30 June 1943. The Nauruan families that were deported were selected because they needed help to feed themselves, and they were told that

they were being evacuated to an island where there would be plenty of food.¹⁴ Some Nauruans suspected that the Japanese were deporting the landowners so as to ease any friction in disposal of their properties, but the Japanese as masters were able to move families from their land anyway and the removal of the owner of the land in Nauru only complicated its disposal. The month following the deportation of these 600 Nauruans, the Japanese brought 659 Ocean Islanders to Nauru. This influx, together with the arrival of another 1,200 Japanese marines in August 1943, made another Nauruan deportation necessary. This time 601 Nauruans with Fathers Kayser and Clivas were deported to Truk on 16 August 1943.¹⁵

The Japanese navy thus ferried 1,200 Nauruans 1,000 miles to Truk, 700 Banabans to Nauru and at least 3,000 Japanese marines to and from Nauru in one year of occupation in spite of daily Allied sorties in the area and the blockade of supply routes to the island. These forced migrations seem incomprehensible if not cruelly ludicrous.¹⁶

After a leprosy survey by the Japanese in mid-1943, the forty-nine inmates of the leprosy station were loaded into a boat, towed out to sea and sunk by shelling from a Japanese ship.¹⁷ As far as the Japanese were concerned this solved the leper problem.

As 1943 passed into 1944 conditions became steadily worse on Nauru. In September 1943, two Japanese freighters bringing supplies to Nauru were torpedoed. Air raids by Allied planes became heavier and by February 1944 the Allied blockade had its desired effect. The airstrips were almost unused and the Japanese air defence ineffective. Casual labourers such as the Nauruans ceased work because of lack of food. Patrick Cook reported in his diary in February 1944 that 'The Allied blockade forced the soldiers to eat creepers and natives to eat weeds. Copra rationing finishes because no copra left'. By this stage coconut trees were rationed, three for Japanese, two for islanders and one for Chinese but this system was very much abused. Large pumpkin plantations nurtured by human manure were established. Rice rations were further reduced.

All through 1944 the situation deteriorated. Allied bomb-

ing became heavier and the blockade was breached only once in the whole year by a submarine which brought a small cargo of supplies.

On 12 May 1944 the Japanese took a census:¹⁸

Japanese: marines	2,867
labourers (including Koreans)	1,311
Pacific Islanders (including Nauruans)	1,463
Chinese	179
	<hr/> 5,820

There were now again 2,000 more inhabitants on Nauru than before the war without an imported food supply. The Chinese suffered most, being held in the least regard by the Japanese, who robbed them of what little food and other possessions they found. Nai Fai Ma recorded that from about the end of 1944 many Chinese died from starvation. The Nauruans fared better than the Chinese, receiving about 6 pounds of pumpkin daily and because many of them were allowed to fish for the Japanese they presumably also fished for themselves. The measure of the importance of this fishing is that the year 1945 is mainly memorable in Patrick Cook's diary for a daily account of fish caught. The Japanese followed a policy of self-sufficiency in food and attempted to grow what they were unable to import. The Japanese had an extra 2 pounds of pumpkin per day but their Korean labourers were treated as harshly as the Chinese. This diet produced dysentery and beri beri among all inhabitants but widespread malnutrition was avoided. Offences of food stealing were treated harshly. Early in 1945, the Japanese officers established 'clubs' in which young Nauruan girls were forced to serve.

Life on Nauru went on in complete isolation from the world's events until the Japanese commander on the island raised the white flag on 21 August 1945, one day after the peace between Japan and the U.S.A. was announced.¹⁹

On 13 September 1945 an Australian occupation force under Brigadier J. R. Stevenson arrived off Nauru in the warship H.M.A.S. *Diamantina*.²⁰ The next day the Japanese Commander of both Nauru and Ocean Island, Hisanyuki Soeda, surrendered unconditionally to Stevenson and an

instrument of surrender was signed on the quarter-deck of the *Diamantina*, witnessed by the ship's officers and Sir Albert Ellis as official representative of the Government of New Zealand. The Australian Commander, taking a census on arrival, found there were nearly 5,200 people of whom only 591 were Nauruans.²¹

Stevenson told the Chief of Staff he believed that with their great concentration of troops and the strong fortifications, the Japanese would have been capable of fighting indefinitely. The Australians had expected that as the last cargo of food supplies had been brought to Nauru in September 1944, the Japanese would have been demoralised but they found that most of the troops looked fit and well turned out and one Australian soldier laconically remarked: 'They're the best starved blokes I've ever seen'.²²

After the raising of the Union Jack on 14 September 1945, two Australian transports, *River Burdekin* and *River Glenelg* began to transport all Japanese to Torokina on Bougainville Island in the Solomon Islands and this operation was completed by the end of the month. The Korean labourers remained on Nauru. As the last contingent of Japanese were leaving the Chinese attacked them with sticks and stones and Australian troops were forced to protect the Japanese.²³ On their arrival on Bougainville Island the Japanese were force-marched to a camp at Torokina and some died on the way.

With the removal of the Japanese, the Australian troops turned to the rehabilitation of the island. They were appalled by the overpowering stench from the pumpkin plots so the troops evacuated all Japanese areas, dismantled the arms and systematically set the place on fire. All fit male Nauruans, together with the Koreans, were given daily duties of cleaning up and rebuilding. Army doctors examined everybody and found that many Chinese suffered from malnutrition while a severe vitamin deficiency was common among the Nauruans.

Sir Albert Ellis was dismayed by the sight of the phosphate workings. The moorings were gone, the cantilever was out of action, the storage tanks were wrecked, the conveyor belts were unusable, there were no buildings; the

destruction was almost total.²⁴ Plans for reconstruction were begun immediately and B.P.C. employees were brought to Nauru and given the use of Korean labour for rebuilding.²⁵

Before civil administration was reintroduced on 1 November 1945 a thorough investigation was made of the Japanese occupation. Before the Japanese were deported they had been exhaustively examined on the fate of the five Europeans but as no confession or eye-witness report was obtained the matter was passed to the War Crimes Tribunal in Bougainville, New Guinea.²⁶ The disappearance of the lepers was also investigated but no additional information was found. The Commanding Officer named two Nauruans as Japanese collaborators and dismissed them from their jobs.²⁷

The deportations to Truk were also investigated. It was found that 1,201 Nauruans, seven Chinese and the priests had been deported to Truk and that the Japanese had meant to deport the rest of the Nauruans but the ship intended for the task was torpedoed on 1 September 1944.²⁸

The first group of deportees had been landed on an atoll in the Truk Islands.²⁹ On the arrival of the second group, the first group was moved to a neighbouring atoll. There were no houses, no medical attention for the young, old, or sick and the Truk islanders were hostile to the Nauruans because there were not enough pandanus, coconuts, or fish for all. The fit Nauruan men were put to work building an airstrip, which had to be literally cut out of the side of the high peak of the island. Apart from gathering natural foods, only a small rice ration, about the size of a golf ball, was allowed the Nauruans. The Nauruans built huts for shelter and made canoes for fishing. When the second group arrived the food situation became even more difficult and it grew worse as natural foods failed and supplies of Japanese rice were reduced. In 1944 and 1945, 463 Nauruans, more than a third of all Nauruans on Truk, died. Every family lost at least one member. Children under four, people over sixty, and the sick died. Father Kayser died in October 1944 as a result of ill-treatment and malnutrition. Some Nauruans were killed and injured in air raids by Allied planes operating from Tarawa, which became increasingly frequent in 1945. After July 1945 the Japanese realised that the war in

their part of the world was lost and they built houses and a school and stopped forced labour by Nauruans. When the Americans landed in September 1945 they deported the Japanese almost immediately and were unimpressed by their belated attempts to make a good impression. The Nauruans were treated kindly by the Americans and were given medical treatment. They eagerly sought news of Nauru and sent a letter to Australia to find out what had happened on the island but it was not until five months later, in January 1946, that shipping could be diverted to repatriate them.

At the beginning of November 1945 the army left Nauru, after appointing seven new district chiefs of whom three were Nauruan and four Gilbertese. One platoon remained to keep discipline among the Koreans and the island reverted to Australian civilian administration.³⁰

In November and December 1945 the B.P.C. ship *Trienza* made a voyage collecting Banabans and Gilbertese from Nauru, Tarawa, and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. The Banabans, together with about a thousand Gilbertese who were half Banaban or married to Banabans, were taken to the island of Rabi in the Fiji group. This island had been purchased by the Government of Great Britain with Banaban funds in March 1942 as a new homeland for the Banaban people, and the dispersal of the Banabans by the Japanese made the move to Rabi convenient at this time. Rabi, a well-watered island of 27 square miles and 3,000 acres of coconut plantations, worked by the Unilever Company on lease since 1942, was enthusiastically received by the Banabans at the end of 1945.³¹ The remaining Truk Nauruans returned home on 31 January 1946. Their joy at being reunited with their people and home was marred by the news of the many deaths and the total destruction of their homes.

The Japanese had destroyed the Nauruans' homes, schools, and churches, placed them on a semi-starvation level and destroyed much of what was left of their old way of life. The deportation of two-thirds of the Nauruans and the death of nearly 500, mostly the old and the young, left the society after the war with a gap in generations and a disruption of family life. Again the Nauruan population had fallen well

below the 1,500 level which the Nauruans themselves regarded as a minimum for survival. The pattern of forced labour both on Nauru and Truk made for a complete reorientation of their views of work. Whereas it had been possible to live without working regularly before the war, within three years the habits of generations had been changed. On his twentieth birthday, in February 1945, Patrick Cook wrote in his diary wryly, and with some surprise: 'I found myself a man who has to work hard for life'. The practice of a favoured ward relationship between the Australian administrator and the Nauruans had been replaced by the harshest discipline the Nauruans had ever experienced and yet they realised that the Japanese had treated them better than they had treated the Chinese.

The remaining Nauruans greeted the return of the Australian administration with joy, and yet this was a turning point for them. For half a century, secure in their social separation, they had endured German and British occupation with a kind of indifference but the wartime upheaval in their economic and social life forced them for the first time to look outwards as a people. Their great interest in the Banabans' resettlement of Rabi was already a symptom of this and the problem of their own future on a worked-out phosphate rock became important in their relations with the Australian Government.

The B.P.C. had accumulated stocks of phosphate in Australian and New Zealand ports in 1939, but from 1942 they found they had to buy more than 300,000 tons of phosphate per annum, worth over £400,000, from Africa, Egypt, Makatea, and the U.S.A. for Australian consumption.³² Superphosphate was rationed and both governments had to give farmers liberal subsidies to maintain the price much the same as it had been before the war. The effect on Australia of this rationing was not as bad as the Japanese had hoped. From a pre-war figure of one million tons, sales of superphosphate in Australia dropped to 979,000 tons in 1940-1 and to 477,000 tons in 1942-3. By 1943-4, sales rose slightly to 524,000 tons and again to 827,000 tons in 1944-5, but previous fertilising and good rainfall to a great extent mitigated the effect of insufficient manuring.³³ The B.P.C. were

temporarily out of business in 1945 as their ships were repatriating islanders without charge among the Carolines, Gilbert and Ellice, Nauru, Ocean, and Rabi islands.³⁴ The year 1946 saw the return of many demobilised B.P.C. employees and the task of laying moorings, constructing storage tanks, and repairing the cantilever were begun although no phosphate was shipped to Australia in 1946 from Nauru and the B.P.C. continued to buy phosphate for their own needs from Makatea.

Reconstruction and Reorientation

Sir Albert Ellis's dismay at the almost total destruction of the phosphate works on Nauru during the war was well founded,¹ for it proved to be a huge task to reconstruct all the installations and buildings and repair the badly damaged cantilever. By June 1948, 1,400 Chinese and 125 Europeans had been brought in to rehabilitate the industry and in 1947-8 over 263,500 tons, one-third of the 1940 output, was shipped by loading in buckets and lightering to the vessels. The moorings had been relaid but it was not until 1949 that the cantilever began to work again. A new survey of the island to re-establish the boundary markers which had been removed by the Japanese was begun in 1948. Of the total area of Nauru, 3,055 acres were unworked phosphate land, 459 acres (9 per cent of the island) had been worked out, and the remainder was lagoon, coconut, or unworkable land. Except for 117 acres owned by the Administration, the British Phosphate Commissioners, and the Missions, all other land was owned by Nauruans. With complete rehabilitation of the industry the B.P.C. began to look forward to the resumption of an assured and high output for many years.

On 23 May 1947 a new royalty agreement was made, and, just as before the war, the chiefs asked for increases and the B.P.C. told them what the new rates would be. Phosphate land was to be leased at £45 an acre per annum and £3 an acre per annum was to be paid for non-phosphate land. The total royalty was raised to 1s.1d. per ton of which 6d. per ton was a direct payment to landowners, 3d. per ton was invested by the Administration in the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund, 2d. per ton was to be held by the Administration in

trust for landowners in the Landowners Royalty Trust Fund for 20 years at compound interest, after which the interest was to be paid to the investors and 2d. per ton was to be held by the Administration in trust for the Nauruan community and invested until the year 2000 at compound interest. The new royalty rate was a total increase of 5d. on the 1940 rates, but only 2d. per ton was a cash increase.² The new fund, the Nauru Community Long Term Investment Fund, was intended to provide an income for the Nauruan people when royalties from phosphate ceased. It was proposed by the Nauruans themselves and was evidence of their new concern with the future—a future whose problems little concerned the Administering Authority which was absorbed in re-creating a pre-war Nauru. Here, for the first time, the Nauruans took the lead in pressing for future policy.

The disastrous fall in the Nauruan population from 1,848 in 1942 to 1,369 in 1946 was gradually being made up by an increasing birth rate. By 1948 there were 696 Nauruans under sixteen years of whom nearly a quarter had been born in 1947–8. Between the ages of sixteen and sixty there were 737 Nauruans but there were only fifteen over sixty years.³ The increased birth rate could only begin to fill the under sixteen age group gap while the middle, and to a much greater extent the aged group, remained seriously depleted. The male population over sixteen was only 411 and the employment distribution of these showed an interesting change from pre-war habits. Forty-seven were invalids, senile, unemployed, or privately employed (as fishermen). Of the remaining 364, 209 were employed by the Administration, 116 by the British Phosphate Commissioners and 39 by the Nauru Co-operative Store,⁴ so that the Administration was able to announce with some pride that there was virtual full employment at 30 June 1948. The cessation of phosphate royalties from 1942 to 1947, the fact that only a third to a half of the pre-war output of phosphate was shipped in 1948 with a consequent reduction in cash royalties, added to wartime experiences, pushed Nauruans into seeking permanent work. The Administration felt that its encouragement and teaching and congenial working conditions helped,⁵ but the main reason for the change was clearly a

shortage of money. Nauruans showed a strong preference for Administration work and although they were mostly employed in minor clerical positions or as student teachers they felt there were possibilities of advancement and promotion. The B.P.C. employed Nauruans only as skilled and semi-skilled workmen and all administrative positions were held by Europeans, so that Nauruans had little hope of promotion in the industry.

The Administration governed the Nauruans as it had before the war. Policy decisions on their future were made in Australia by the Department of External Territories (later the Department of Territories) by civil servants who had little or no knowledge or experience of Nauruan life. The Public Service on Nauru was controlled by the Public Service Board in Australia and every position of executive importance was filled by an expatriate, usually an Australian who served only a two- or three-year term on the island. These often found life on the island an unrewarding experience in spite of financial gains from the lack of income tax and the territorial allowances, and frequently blundered along through ignorance, in their dealings with the Nauruans. Some, especially teachers, felt they had a mission to the Nauruans to bring them up to scratch in European ways of life, but many became disillusioned by their 'ingratitude'. Separate living localities and superior facilities for Europeans did not endear their presence to the Nauruans and a professed or tacit superior attitude held by many European civil servants led to Nauruan-European relationships being reduced at best to strained politeness.

By 1948 restoration of the phosphate industry, housing for B.P.C. employees, and full employment for Nauruans had been achieved but the Nauruan people went on living in huts hastily built from war salvage material and their schools and hospitals were neither adequate nor suitable. The British Phosphate Commissioners continued to finance the Administration with a 6d. per ton export duty on phosphate and advanced the Administration £200,000 to 30 June 1950 to provide for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the island. It was not until May 1949, when building materials became available, that a project to build 250 houses for Nauruans

was begun. A year later 69 houses were built, but by June 1951 when the project was completed, these houses, which cost £850 each, were insufficient in size and number for the rapidly increasing Nauruan population. The Nauruans began a fund financed from copra making, to manufacture furniture in the Nauru Co-operative Store workshop. A prolonged drought dried up the fund, but £15,000 eventually paid by the Administration as war compensation went into the fund. Education was in a similar state of disorder. Six district primary schools were erected from salvage materials, and the school in the leper station and a school for European children were reopened.⁶ The Sacred Heart Mission school was not reopened until March 1949. The Nauruan schools were staffed by twenty-two Nauruan teachers, none of whom held professional qualifications. There were two European teachers employed: one as Supervisor of Native Education and the other in charge of the European school. In 1948 there were 382 Nauruan, 33 European, and 2 Chinese children at the schools.⁷ The education level of many Nauruan children was retarded by the gap in studies caused by the war, and neither the secondary school nor the technical schools had been re-established. There were only two post-primary students in Australia and two pursuing Native Medical Practitioner courses at Suva.

Nauruans' health remained poor for some years after the war. The Administration maintained a 20-bed general hospital in a temporary structure, a leper hospital, and a tuberculosis sanatorium, and employed one European doctor as government medical officer. As before the war tuberculosis and leprosy were the greatest problems. Fifteen out of twenty-one Nauruan tuberculosis patients died in 1948 and there were fourteen Chinese tuberculosis patients. Despite the Japanese 'solution' to leprosy on the island there were ten lepers in segregation and another seventy-five suspected cases.⁸ Yaws, venereal disease, and beri beri were prevalent. Quarterly inspections were made of the whole population for tuberculosis and leprosy, and these methods controlled the spread of both diseases. Vitamin supplements continued to control infantile mortality. By 1956, when a new Administration hospital was built, only three lepers remained

segregated and because the disease had become curable since the war it was possible to envisage a leprosy-free Nauru. To keep tuberculosis under control, on the other hand, the constant vigilance of X-rays and tests was required.

While the Administration and the British Phosphate Commissioners continued to act as though the methods of 1940 would suit 1948, the post-war reorientation of thought on the rights of colonial peoples had focused on the United Nations. Australia on her own behalf and representing the governments of New Zealand and Great Britain duly placed its mandate of Nauru before the General Assembly of the United Nations. Like New Guinea, Nauru was made a Trust Territory under the protection of the Trusteeship Council and again Australia, on behalf of the other two governments, was designated the Administering Authority.⁹ In accepting Nauru, Australia was bound by the relevant articles of the United Nations Charter which provided that the interests of the inhabitants should be of paramount importance and that the Administering Authority accept as 'a sacred trust' the development of self-government of the people of the Trust Territory.

The General Assembly set up the Trusteeship Council to ensure that Administering Authorities carried out these responsibilities. This body replaced the paternalism of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations with a strong desire for the rapid, if feasible, achievement of self-government for Trust Territories. The Trusteeship Council's official functions were to consider reports from Administering Authorities based on Trusteeship Council questionnaires; to accept and examine petitions; provide for periodic Visiting Missions to Trust Territories, assist the Security Council in its functions and report on its discussions and resolutions to the General Assembly.¹⁰ Yet like the Permanent Mandates Commission its powers were severely limited, because it could only 'discuss, enquire and recommend' and it had no right to force its decisions upon Administering Authorities. It was clear from the beginning of Trusteeship Council deliberations that its influence was to be greatest through the publication of abuses and lack of advances in Trust Territories, for most western countries

were now sensitive to public charges of neo-colonialism and imperialism and no longer ignored them. The Trusteeship Council also acted as a forum for the grievances of nationals of Trust Territories.

The clashes of opinion between individual members of the council lent colour but little substance to its proceedings. Membership consisted of representatives of Administering Authorities, permanent members of the Security Council who were not representing Administering Authorities (i.e. the Republic of Taiwan and the U.S.S.R.), together with sufficient other members of the General Assembly to equal the number of Administering Authority members. At first there were six Administering Authorities: Australia, Belgium, France, New Zealand, Great Britain, and the United States of America, and ten territories (later eleven) came under their supervision.¹¹

It was soon evident in the discussions of the Trusteeship Council that the Administering Authorities found mutual support among themselves against the attacks of the non-Administering Authority members. The U.S.S.R. was frequently their most bitter critic while developing countries supported the U.S.S.R. in a more restrained manner. The Republic of Taiwan often spoke up for the Administering Authorities while the U.S.A. lent tacit support to Australia and New Zealand. In all there were sufficient clashes of opinion to dispel any remnants of the club-like atmosphere of the Permanent Mandates Commission and to provide occasional headlines.

Even in its first debate on Nauru, the Trusteeship Council showed some disquiet and recommended that a larger degree of self-government could be achieved for the Nauruans by their taking over key positions in the Administration. At this time only one position of importance was held by a Nauruan—that of Native Affairs Officer, held by Head Chief Detudamo. The Trusteeship Council, fearing that it might be too late, asked Australia to ensure in its policy of advancement for the Nauruans that their needs would take precedence over the expansion of the phosphate industry.¹²

World views on government may have changed but the Nauruan Council of Chiefs continued to function as it had

in 1928. The chiefs were elected and held life tenure of office unless removed by the council. The council could only advise the Administrator on Nauruan matters; and the Administrator was not obliged to take its advice. The Nauruans, with their new desire for advancement, were very dissatisfied with their lack of political power and in an unusually sophisticated way embroiled the Trusteeship Council in their dissatisfaction. By-passing the Administering Authority the Council of Chiefs petitioned the 1948-9 Session of the Trusteeship Council to claim that

despite the high degree of literacy which the population of Nauru had achieved in the last twenty-five years, the Native inhabitants still had no voice in the formulation of general administration policies or in the control of the finances of the island. [They] requested that a representative of the United Nations should be sent to Nauru to inquire fully into the whole matter.¹³

Such a petition, sent by the authority of the Council of Chiefs under Head Chief Detudamo, who had been a chief since the 1920s, threw Australia off balance. The Australian Acting Minister for External Territories, Mr Cyril Chambers, was dispatched to Nauru where he was successful in persuading the Council of Chiefs to withdraw the petition. This withdrawal proved to be a vital setback for the Nauruans' new and indeed revolutionary hopes for rapid political advancement. Whether the withdrawal was achieved by political pressure on the Nauruans or yielded by the Nauruans themselves through respect for their masters, its effect was clear—their political naivete had lost them the challenge and any immediate opportunity for bargaining for more power. The Australian representative at the Trusteeship Council, Mr Halligan, was subsequently questioned on the withdrawal of this petition and uneasily echoed the conservatism of his government, answering that;

Although unable to say specifically that the indigenous population would participate in the legislative, executive and judicial organs of the Territory . . . [he] could make the general statement that the Nauruans would be given a greater share in the administration of their island.¹⁴

The issue was not allowed to lie, for Australia's *status quo* policy was criticised by many members. The representative of Iraq expressed

concern at the slowness of political advancement in a Territory where

there were no great administrative or budgetary problems, where almost everybody was literate in English, and where the inhabitants had obviously proved themselves intelligent and capable of discussing serious matters.¹⁵

and the Philippines representative suggested that the Council of Chiefs' should be reconstructed as an organ of self-government, and pointed out that:

unless the indigenous population was actually given participation in such matters, it could not be expected to gain the necessary experience in self-government. The question whether or not they were capable of self-government would therefore remain purely theoretical until they were given a share in the administration, particularly in legislative and budgetary matters.¹⁶

From 1948 to 1951 the Trusteeship Council in this way supported the Nauruans' claim for political advancement. The Australian Government found this agitation scarcely comprehensible and continued to remind the Trusteeship Council that while discussions would take place it must be remembered that:

They [the Nauruans] were, however, a very much less standardized or developed people than the Polynesians, and with rare exceptions, they were hardly to be compared with them in natural gifts. They were not un-intelligent people and they were a happy people. But they were also a very indolent people . . . Twentyfive per cent of the Nauruans had lost their lives [in the war]. That twentyfive per cent were the flower and youth of the island. Those who were left were the old men, by Nauruan standards, and generally tired old men, or, on the other hand, the very young still not ripe for taking part in councils.¹⁷

Leaving aside the gratuitous and insulting comparison with the Polynesians (which Polynesians?), which displayed Australia's ignorance of its wards, it was evident that the reasons put forward for Australia's reluctance to pursue political advancement for the Nauruans were nonsensical: it was precisely because those between twenty and fifty years of age had experienced and survived the war that they were demanding a council in which they could control their own future rather than the Chiefs' Council of conservative old men.

Several Trusteeship Council members also criticised the double standard which the Administration used in its dealings with Nauruans and Europeans. Mr Soldatov of the U.S.S.R. complained that the Administration's wage policy

was discriminatory and deduced that 'an unskilled Nauru labourer with a wife and three children would have between eightpence and ninepence a day for each member of his family, with which to provide food, housing and clothing . . . for ninepence it was possible to buy one pound of carrots or half a pound of tinned tomatoes, or two eggs'.¹⁸ Other members complained rightly that Nauruan housing ran a bad second to housing for the immigrant population and asked whether double censorship of films for Nauruan viewing was necessary. The Australian representative, Mr Halligan, attempting to justify the Administration's idiosyncratic paternalism, stated that 'he could not specify what films might do harm to the morale of Nauruans but would apparently not affect the European population in the same way. Nevertheless, such films existed . . .'.¹⁹

The first of the regular triennial United Nations Visiting Missions to inspect Nauru arrived in late April 1950 for a ten-day visit. It recommended to the Trusteeship Council that the Council of Chiefs should be given increased responsibility, especially in legislation and in power to vote appropriations from the budget and the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund but not to deal with legislation affecting the Chinese and European communities on the island. A Trusteeship Council recommendation to this effect was accepted in part by the Administering Authority, and as a result on 20 August 1951 the Nauru Local Government Council Ordinance was enacted which gave local government powers to a new Local Government Council.²⁰

For both the Nauruans and the Trusteeship Council the question of political advancement was linked closely with the graduation of Nauruans into senior Administration positions. The Trusteeship Council remarked on the lack of Nauruans in important positions and the Council of Chiefs, concerned at the position, presented a petition to the 1950 Visiting Mission expressing dissatisfaction with the rate of progress in educating Nauruans to occupy key positions.²¹ Many Trusteeship Council delegates shared the views of Thailand's representative who:

failed to understand why a people of whom 90 per cent could read and write many years before the introduction of compulsory education should

now be faced with so serious a shortage of capable men for their own requirements . . . There was much room for thought in the view of the Council of Chiefs that the slowness of educational progress had been due to reasons other than lack of favourable materials, conditions or circumstances.²²

The Nauruans had become very discontented with the education available to them after the war. The first problem was one of organisation. Until 1951, when a temporary secondary school was established, the Administration aimed to provide a primary education that was complete in itself, for comparatively few Nauruan children progressed to secondary school. The curriculum included English, poetry, arithmetic, manual training, geography, history, and civics. Those children who were able to overcome the wartime gap in their studies and who rated a secondary education were sent to schools in Australia. In 1950-1 there were eighteen students overseas, all in Australia except for two at the Central Medical School in Fiji. These found the going hard, separated from their families in an alien land and when it became clear that with a burgeoning school population many Nauruan children would need further education on the island the secondary school was opened. Although this was a step in the right direction to raise Nauruan educational standards two things retarded this considerably. The first was the bilingual situation. Although English was used for all important transactions on the island Nauruan children knew very little before going to school, and were then taught English with Nauruan used explanatorily. On release from school they immediately fell back into the vernacular so that very few children ever achieved the standard of English needed to cope with a curriculum that was English oriented.

The second retarding factor was the quality of the teaching. In 1951 there were four Europeans engaged in education: the Director of Education supervised all education; one teacher taught at the school for European children, which remained segregated because the European children were more advanced; one teacher supervised the teaching of Nauruan infants and one the teaching of the twenty-four Nauruan teachers in the district primary schools. No trained European teacher actually taught Nauruan children, and as

no Nauruan teacher had professional qualifications the children received a second class education.

Of the two problems which set Nauruan education back that of language was the most difficult to solve for it involved the maintenance of a cultural inheritance that was important to all Nauruans. But the employment of a far greater number of European teachers would have solved the second problem until Nauruan teachers could be trained properly. It is not clear why this course was not pursued, for the Nauruans continued to pay for their own education from the Nauruan Royalty Trust Fund and finance was no problem. Probably the Administration failed to recognise the urgent need to educate the Nauruans for self-government which the Administration saw as being achieved in the time of the never-never.

The Trusteeship Council, unlike the Permanent Mandates Commission, was concerned with phosphate royalties. While refusing to comment or make recommendations on the 1947 royalty rates without having information on the separate Nauru operations, it did, however, recommend that the investment of long-term royalty funds should not be restricted to Australian Government securities and asked that the Administration try to have the royalties more widely distributed among the Nauruans.²³ The Nauruans, on the other hand, resisted all attempts to change their system of individual ownership and the returns from this system. Because land was so valuable rights to it were jealously guarded and many protracted disputes over ownership plagued the British Phosphate Commissioners.²⁴ Since direct cash payments to landowners constituted only a temporary income, the richest men on the island were not always the same, and those who owned unmined land could command credit on its strength.

Representatives of developing and socialist countries on the Trusteeship Council also attacked royalties. The Philippines representative pointed out that whereas the value of phosphate exported had risen by 200 per cent without a comparable increase in costs since 1940, royalties had only increased by 50 per cent and he stated that a monopoly such as the three administering governments enjoyed was incom-

patible with the United Nations Charter and that their title, based on the 1919 Agreement, suffered from all the original defects of the German title.²⁵ The representative of New Zealand, supported by Australia and Great Britain, retorted that the three governments had unassailable legal and moral rights and further remarked that

it had been greatly to the advantage of the Nauruans that they [the three governments] had done so [purchased the concession]. It might well be that the Nauruans were not getting a fair proportion of the proceeds; but he was convinced that the three Governments were both morally and legally entitled to do what they had done, and that if in decency, in justice and in generosity to the Nauruans they should do more, they would do it.²⁶

This statement demonstrated the growing sensitivity of the partner governments to charges that they were robbing the Nauruans and such criticism probably aided the Nauruans in obtaining royalty increases.

The 1947 royalty rates for Nauruans remained in force until 1 July 1950 when the royalty was increased from 1s.1d. to 1s.4d. per ton, the extra 3d. going to the new Long Term Investment Fund in accordance with the recommendation of the Trusteeship Council.²⁷ Nauruans received £55,268 in royalty in 1950-1 and of this sum only £16,288 was a cash payment. Nauruans received in cash and in their funds 4 per cent of the value of phosphate and Administration costs absorbed 5.6 per cent of the value. As only about one-quarter of administration revenue was spent solely for Nauruans in 1950-1 they received less than 6 per cent of the total value of phosphate, and this provided ammunition for their champions in the Trusteeship Council.²⁸

The Trusteeship Council as a body still felt unable to comment fully on royalty rates. The 1950 Visiting Mission asked the Nauru manager of the B.P.C. to obtain data concerning the finances of the phosphate industry, in particular costs of phosphates landed in Australia and New Zealand from various sources. The Mission was told that

it was unlikely the Commissioners would supply the phosphate costs requested . . . The Commissioners' view was that payments to Nauruans should be governed by present and future needs and not by any fluctuations in the price of phosphate, for which there was no world standard mainly on account of geographical considerations.²⁹

The Trusteeship Council felt itself severely handicapped by this attitude in its appraisal of the economic future of the Nauruans. When it repeated its request for information the Australian representative refused, replying that 'too inquisitorial an attitude might have an adverse effect on industrial concerns necessary to the economic development of the area'.³⁰ The Visiting Mission had noted that 'the British Phosphate Commissioners occupied so commanding a position in the economy of the island that their administrative independence was virtually complete, and that the position of the Administrator in his relations with them appeared to be a difficult one',³¹ and it was clear that an Administrator who took the responsibility for placing the Nauruans' interests first seriously could not fail to have difficulty with the B.P.C. on Nauru.

Increases in wages for both Nauruans and Chinese followed the United Nations Mission's visit. Increases of £17 per annum in 1950 and £26 per annum in 1951 brought the basic wage for adult male Nauruans up to £126 per annum. Some small allowances and margins were also paid. The Administration refused to grant the uniform 40-hour working week claimed by Nauruans in spite of Trusteeship Council support. Chinese workers received pay increases from £8 to £16 a month and worked a 44-hour week.

Nauruan-Chinese relations had always been poor but in 1948 the first major overt clash occurred. On 7 June there was a riot among Chinese indentured workers.³² The dispute began when Chinese who were to be repatriated alleged that the Chinese interpreters who controlled the Chinese community funds would not pay out their share of contributions. The police attempted to arrest a Chinese who had threatened a Chinese interpreter and beaten up a messenger from the Administration, whereupon the Chinese barricaded themselves in their compound and forbade any non-Chinese to enter. The Administration, believing that there were 200 or 300 Chinese armed with knives and other weapons in the compound, declared a state of emergency. A riot squad of forty-four Nauruan constables and sixteen volunteer Europeans, all armed, went to the settlement to quell the riot. In the ensuing fight, two Chinese were killed

and sixteen wounded. Forty-nine other Chinese were arrested and taken to gaol where two were bayoneted to death by a Nauruan constable 'while attempting to escape'. The Coroner found that 'excessive force' had been used by the guard, who was committed for trial on two charges of unlawful killing.

The Judge of the Supreme Court of Papua and New Guinea and legal counsel from Australia were brought to Nauru for the trial, where evidence was given that only a few Chinese were armed and that only a small minority had begun the disturbance. The constable was acquitted on both charges. The forty-seven Chinese were variously convicted of extortion and rioting but because gaol accommodation was inadequate, their sentences were commuted to deportation.

The Trusteeship Council, disturbed by the riot, attempted a full review of the conditions of the Chinese on Nauru. It recommended the removal of discriminatory provisions of the Movements of Natives Ordinance in which Chinese were confined to their settlement if not working; the abolition of the penal provisions of the Chinese and Native Labour Ordinance in which a Chinese could be prosecuted criminally for indolence, and it asked the Administering Authority to find a humane solution to the problems that accompanied importation of Chinese workers without their families.³³ The Administration no longer invoked its pre-war policy of prohibition of Chinese families, but because no married accommodation was made available this effectively stopped the immigration of Chinese families. The Nauruans strongly opposed the reform of the Movements Ordinance, for although its restriction on Nauruans was now only nominal, they wanted to keep the Chinese in their compounds. They also did not want Chinese families to be allowed to accompany workers, not because they wished to deny the Chinese workers family life but because they wanted as few aliens on their small island as possible. The Nauruans knew that imported labour was needed to mine phosphate but although phosphate brought them prosperity, they resented the influence of the other communities and feared permanent settlement by them, so that they resisted extension of the foreign population whether it was in their economic interests or not.

The Chinese explained their grievances fully to the 1950 Visiting Mission. They urged again that they should be allowed to bring their families to Nauru. Both the Trusteeship Council and the Visiting Mission supported them but Australia replied with a classic example of buck-passing that:

The admission of Chinese wives and families would necessitate additional accommodation and housing, the provision of which would entail considerable practical difficulties, especially the acquisition of land from Nauruan owners . . . the Head Chief, on behalf of the Nauruans, has expressed the view that there should be no further encroachment upon the already limited land available for the Nauruans.³⁴

He also pointed out that the one-year contract was only half the length of contract for workers unaccompanied by their families recommended by the International Labour Organization.

The Visiting Mission investigated Chinese complaints of the Movements of Natives Ordinance. It found

that the three communities on the island lived in conditions of fairly complete segregation and that there were important differences in the way in which they were treated by the Administration and the British Phosphate Commissioners. While the Mission was aware that the doctrinaire application at this time of a complete policy of non-segregation and non-discrimination to a small island like Nauru having a temporary immigrant community of Chinese as large as the indigenous population might create difficulties, it considered that present restrictions were far too stringent and that the provisions of the Movement of Natives Ordinance should be liberalized.³⁵

The Trusteeship Council agreed but predictably Australia replied that the Ordinance was interpreted liberally and needed no revision. Finally the Chinese had no satisfaction and continued in their situation without rights while Nauruan-Chinese relations deteriorated still further.

In the first Trusteeship Council debate on Nauru in 1948, the French representative, who was no doubt aware of the imminent exhaustion of the Makatea phosphate deposits, referred to the future of the Nauruan people as the Territory's most important problem and his view was supported by all the Council.³⁶ This concern was underlined by B.P.C. plans to raise the Nauru extraction rate to one million tons a year and the fact that for the first time in Nauru's history over one million tons was shipped in 1949-50. Australia claimed that it was alive to the possibility that Nauru might

not provide sufficient space or opportunity to support the Nauruan people after the deposits were exhausted, and in view of the fact that reclamation was impracticable, it realised that resettlement of the people could become necessary.³⁷ The Visiting Mission concurred with the idea of resettlement unless some alternative means of livelihood could be found and the Trusteeship Council asked the Administering Authority to pursue studies on this and on the question of rehabilitation of the worked-out lands.³⁸ In reply to charges by some members that nothing concrete was being done about the future of the Nauruans, the representative of Great Britain told the Trusteeship Council that the Nauruans were amply provided for and the New Zealand representative stated that 'at worst each individual Nauruan was going to have an income of £50 a year. It should be understood also that these people did not live on a money economy, bountiful nature provided a good deal of all they ate or wore'.³⁹ The optimistic ghosts of the Permanent Mandates Commission were again abroad in the Trusteeship Council. But these cosy reassuring statements convinced neither the Nauruans nor members of the Visiting Mission, who anticipated further rises in the rate of extraction with consequent reductions of the expected seventy-year life of the deposits. Thus it was on the all-important question of their future that the Nauruans began to unite with the Trusteeship Council to breach Australia's well-intentioned apathy.

'Democracy' Comes to Nauru

The Nauru Local Government Council Ordinance failed to provide Nauruans with any real political power, for its omissions were more notable than its provisions. These allowed the council to appoint district constables to keep the peace among the Nauruan people, to enter into contracts and businesses, and to provide social and public services for Nauruans, which would be financed from a new fund, the Nauru Local Government Council Fund whose revenue would be derived from service charges and from the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund. Under the ordinance the council was empowered to advise the Administrator on Nauruan matters but he had no obligation to accept such advice, to give reasons for his refusal, nor to approve rules made by the council to carry out its business. Council estimates of revenue and expenditure also required the Administrator's approval. Costs of council employment were met by the Administration but council members worked on an honorary basis.¹ The forcing of this ordinance on the Administering Authority by Nauruan and Trusteeship Council pressure was a hollow victory, for the Administrator still controlled the new council completely, but the Nauruans felt that at least it was a step in the right direction and the electoral provisions were an improvement on those for the now abolished Council of Chiefs. A comparison of the political situation in the New Zealand Trust Territory of Western Samoa at this time illuminated the differences between the New Zealand Labour Government's and the Australian Liberal Government's attitudes to preparing their respective territories for ultimate independence. In 1948, the Western Samoan Legis-

lative Council had been replaced by a Council of State and a Legislative Assembly with a majority of unofficial members and the Administrator had been replaced by a High Commissioner. This allowed the Samoan people to have virtual self-government, while the Australian Government would only concede to the Nauruans an emasculated form of local government.

The first elections for the Nauru Local Government Council were held on 15 December 1951. The fourteen traditional districts of Nauru were divided into eight electoral areas of which seven voted for one councillor and one voted for two councillors. Universal suffrage was observed and any voter could become a candidate. Prison sentence was the only bar to voting and elections were to be held four-yearly. There were twenty-one nominations and 655 votes were cast of which only 23 were informal. The results of the election were:

District	Councillor
Aiwo	Raymond Gadabu
Anabar, Ijuw, Anibare	Adeang Deireragea
Anetan and Ewa	Roy Degoregore
Boe	D. Appi (elected unopposed)
Buada	Totouwa Depaune
Denigomodu, Nibok, Uaboe, Baiti	Timothy Detudamo, Austin Bernicke
Menen	J. A. Bop
Yaren	Julius Akubor

The council held its first meeting on 18 December 1951 in the *Domaneab* and Timothy Detudamo was elected Head Chief. Discussions were held in Nauruan but the minutes were kept in English. The council decided to meet weekly, with the Administrator attending a monthly meeting.

The Nauruan councillors complained immediately that the Nauru Local Government Council Ordinance allowed them no more power than the Council of Chiefs had exercised and that control by the Administration by disallowance and by budgetary means was complete. The council was empowered to maintain the peace in the districts, yet this function was still a responsibility of the Police Force

and the business clause conferred no additional power, for the Council of Chiefs had always controlled the Nauru Co-operative Store.

The 1953 Visiting Mission and many members of the Trusteeship Council agreed that the Nauruans' complaints were justified and expressed disappointment that little or no political advancement had been achieved. Australia's representative replied that: 'the Administering Authority had reviewed the Ordinance and was unable to see that any misunderstanding could arise because of its provisions . . . any misunderstandings were due to the lack of capacity of the Nauruans in the understanding of and in the exercise of the powers and functions provided by the Ordinance'.² This excuse that the lack of political progress was due directly to the backwardness of the Nauruans was used frequently by the Administering Authority in answering charges of failing to provide the Nauruans with real power. It was completely unconvincing, however, and laid the Australian Government open to charges that lack of political power for Nauruans aided their economic exploitation. Many Trusteeship Council members hinted at this, but finally Australia's representative, stung by the U.S.S.R. representative's exaggerations, 'repudiated the suggestion of the representative of the U.S.S.R. that there existed some grandiose conspiracy of the Administration and the British Phosphate Commissioners to suppress the Nauruan people in the interests of a ruthless exploitation of the phosphates'.³ A Trusteeship Council recommendation that a legislative body should be progressively developed brought forth the enigmatic statement that the Administration had submitted draft rules for the Local Government Council's consideration.⁴ Every year the Trusteeship Council asked for evidence of political advancement in accordance with Article 76b of the Charter, and every year Australia gave the stock reply that the Nauruans were not using or were incapable of using their present powers to the full.

In April 1953, Head Chief Detudamo died after a long illness and, after a by-election to fill this vacancy, Raymond Gadabu was elected Head Chief. In its first few years, the council was handicapped by the budgetary constraints of the

Ordinance as it groped towards realisation of its powers. In 1954 the council's responsibilities were increased as the whole of the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund was applied for council expenses because the Administration at last agreed to pay for Nauruan education. The council planned to take over the administration of the Nauruan Housing Scheme with its increased revenue and to introduce a plan for social services.

The second Local Government Council elections were held on 10 December 1955. Before the elections candidates addressed meetings in their electorates and sent out circulars in Nauruan explaining their policies. (Apart from the weekly news-sheet put out by the Administration there was no regular local newspaper on Nauru. Immediately after the war a small monthly publication in English called the *Nauru Times*, edited by Europeans, had made a brief appearance, and subsequently Europeans on Nauru made various attempts to bring out a regular newspaper.)⁵ Thirty-nine candidates were nominated for election. Three retiring councillors were re-elected and six new ones were elected. Of the 803 votes cast, fourteen were informal and twenty-nine electors failed to vote.

Hammer DeRoburt, a young schoolteacher, was elected councillor for Boe and immediately elected Head Chief by the council. Born in Nauru in 1923, the new Head Chief was partly of Banaban extraction—his grandmother's photograph ('The Banaban Queen') is the frontispiece to Ellis's *Ocean Island and Nauru*, and he was the grandson of a former Head Chief of Nauru and related by marriage to the ubiquitous Harris family. Educated at first on Nauru and later at the Gordon Institute of Technology in Geelong, Victoria, for some years, his teachers found him a very intelligent boy and remarkable among his fellows for ambition to do well. Returning to Nauru he began to teach and was preparing to make this his vocation when war broke out and he was deported to Truk.

After the war DeRoburt returned to work in the Education Department of the Administration. He was keenly aware of the changes wrought by the war and already saw the future welfare of the Nauruan people as a problem that

must be faced as soon as possible. By the time of the first Local Government Council elections in 1951 he had gained enough support in the district of Boe, the most populous Nauruan area on the island, to stand as a candidate, but because of an irregularity in his nomination he was declared ineligible. A protest by Boe residents and sympathetic Europeans, followed by a petition to the 1953 Visiting Mission,⁶ was fruitless but in the 1956 elections he became the leader of the Nauruan people. Hammer DeRoburt shares the genial nature and pleasant manners of his people but he has a shrewdness and strength of purpose that have enabled him to swing the at times apathetic Nauruans behind him in the struggle with the British Phosphate Commissioners and Administration. His strength as a leader and as a negotiator is based firmly on the Nauruan people's trust.

Head Chief DeRoburt was supported by the council's Secretary, Councillor Austin Bernicke, and the Treasurer, Councillor Raymond Gadabu. Bernicke was re-elected for the lagoon district of Buada and provided a steadying note of conservatism because of his greater age. Gadabu, like DeRoburt a young man, had been Head Chief and, with him, was keen to initiate changes.

In 1956 the council had a staff of thirty full-time employees and paid the eight Nauruan members of the Lands Committee which judged the numerous and lengthy land disputes among Nauruans. The council also maintained the 350 houses of the Nauruan Housing Scheme, cared for the district cemeteries and was responsible for the purchase and transport of water in dry periods. Since 1953-4 council expenditure had more than doubled to £16,447 in 1955-6—90 per cent of which was financed by the Nauru Royalty Trust Fund.⁷

The council told the 1956 Visiting Mission that its reserve of funds was inadequate and because of this, important projects such as the development of fishing, agriculture, and roads had to be abandoned. However the Mission

felt that, even if the amount available to the Council were not inadequate, it would be desirable for the Council to be empowered to levy some rates since, apart from the financial benefit, this would be educative for the Council as well as for the Nauruan people.⁸

The Nauruans would not be drawn into taxing themselves. Too many colonial masters had attempted and were still to attempt to tax, always reasoning that it would be 'good' for them, but the Nauruans firmly believed that all Nauruan works, like those for the immigrant population on the island, should be directly financed from phosphate. Their tenacious stand on this issue did, however, provide the Administering Authority with a kind of reason to refuse them a voice in budgetary matters.

By 1956 the council had begun to fill the usual role of local government in a restricted way. It discussed a scheme whereby the British Phosphate Commissioners would supply electricity to some houses in three districts and it was planned that the ownership of Nauruan homes should be vested in the council. The council also controlled the entry and length of visit of temporary visitors from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Rules on the election of Head Chief and the conduct of council business had been adopted by the council. Rules on pounds and straying pigs, an explosive issue on Nauru, were devised by the Administration and agreed to by the council. While the pigs mainly confined their depredations to the gardens of the Europeans, the rules were a complete failure, for Nauruans made little attempt to pen and feed their pigs and the council would have become unpopular if it had tried to enforce the rules.

The council continued to act as Board of Directors of the Nauru Co-operative Store. In 1952 a new store was opened and the Society operated a bakery, a boot shop, a carpentry shop and made and sold ice-cream. Piggery and fishing operations ceased because they were not successful. In 1954 the store had a turnover of more than £63,000 and a buying agency was established in Melbourne. In 1955 the Administration's Official Secretary spent two months at the store, giving advice in accounting. This advice was apparently not taken for in 1956 the manager of the store resigned and both the accountant and cashier were dismissed. This was doubly unfortunate because a Nauruan who had been appointed postmaster to replace a European in May 1954 was convicted of fraud in 1956 and the position was again filled by a European. It was not clear to what degree breaches of trust

by Nauruans in such positions were due to plain dishonesty or to clan responsibilities, for the situation in which a man expected future benefits from unmined land made it difficult to resist clan demands for credit. In any case the Administration's conservatism in appointing Nauruans to responsible positions was endorsed by these events.

By 1956 the number of Nauruans in important positions was about the same as in 1946 and in 1927. Head Chief Gadabu had been appointed a Magistrate of the Central Court in 1956 but the position of Native Affairs Officer was now held by a European. The Local Government Council complained to the 1953 and 1956 Visiting Missions on the lack of Nauruans graduating to important positions in the Public Service.⁹ The council specified positions that it considered could be filled by Nauruans and it felt that a greater participation by Nauruans in the Administration would give it a stronger voice in royalty negotiations. Both the Visiting Missions and the Trusteeship Council asked the Administering Authority to intensify its efforts to train Nauruans for higher positions,¹⁰ but the Administering Authority continued to reply that 'latent capacity, energy and initiative' were needed, tacitly inferring that these attributes were lacking in Nauruans. A similar lack of advancement applied in the phosphate industry.

The Trusteeship Council went on urging an unresponsive Australia to take action on the future of the Nauruan people. The 1953 Visiting Mission found

that the solution offering the greatest possibility of success would be to educate and train the Nauruans up to a standard where they could find avenues of employment, either in groups or individually, anywhere in the Pacific . . . The Mission doubted whether, after the termination of the phosphate industry, Nauru would be habitable for a people who by that time might be expected to have achieved a relatively high level of advancement . . . [it] saw no alternative to resettlement of the population elsewhere . . . the question of the transfer of the Nauruans, individually or collectively, to another place or places agreeable to them should not be held in abeyance until the termination of the phosphate industry but that a plan for gradual resettlement, which might provide for the purchase of land at an early date, should be agreed upon as soon as possible.¹¹

The Mission stressed that at this stage the Nauruan people were only a small community and could not be

regarded in any way as a potential state. The Mission believed the primary responsibility of the phosphate industry was to provide for the future welfare of the Nauruans after the mining of the phosphate had apparently made necessary their resettlement elsewhere.¹²

and the Trusteeship Council recommended that such plans be formulated.¹³ Australia's representative strongly attacked the Mission's statement that the phosphate mining had made resettlement necessary:

He felt that it was contact with European enterprise, and the adoption by Nauruans of European ways and standards, which were mostly making the resettlement necessary. The phosphate land in its original state would not support many, if any, Nauruans in the conditions to which they had now become accustomed; consequently the mining of that land was only a minor direct contributing factor to the need for resettlement.¹⁴

The convoluted logic or illogic of this statement failed to inspire any unity of suggestion among Trusteeship Council members: Belgium's representative urged the Administering Authority to acquire land immediately, and the representative of France suggested the employment of Nauruans in the administration of New Guinea. India's representative flatly opposed such suggestions, rightly pointing out that

the application of the plan [for resettlement] was premature . . . A transfer of population to other places was entirely in contradiction with the provisions of the Charter. The advancement of the inhabitants could not be promoted if they ceased to be the inhabitants of the Trust Territory . . . taking them away or making them cease to be Nauruans was impossible. If they were absorbed into another community they could not be self-governing.¹⁵

and he suggested investigation of rehabilitation of the worked-out lands.

In 1953 Australia told the Trusteeship Council that a survey of Nauruan agricultural land use was to be made by the C.S.I.R.O. The survey would investigate the area and location of agriculturally suitable land, crop and animal production, recommend experimental and research agricultural projects, and investigate the physical and economic possibilities of regenerating the worked-out phosphate land for future agricultural use.¹⁶

The results of the C.S.I.R.O. survey, begun in October 1953, were reported to the Trusteeship Council in 1955. The report, made by Dr E. Phillis and Mr H. A. Haantjens, began by describing the coconut and pandanus as exhibiting

extraordinary lack of care and attention and by remarking on the depredations of the unpenned pigs. It went on:

There are no soils on the island in the popularly accepted sense of the term. There are only gravelly sands . . . The two sands can only be described as 'infertile' . . . The Nauruan climate is eminently suited for agriculture in all respects except one—and that is the unpredictability of rainfall and the occurrence of droughts.¹⁷

It was suggested that a fresh water survey be carried out as soon as possible for in irrigation lay the only hope for any Nauruan agriculture. It was found that any high degree of mechanisation of agriculture would be impossible. The plateau area was described as very limited for agriculture, but better hopes were held for the coastal flats where coconuts could be intensively cultivated and gardens established. It was estimated that of the total area of Nauru of over 5,000 acres only 500 to 600 acres were available for cultivation: half of these should be used for coconuts and half to grow such plants as sweet potato, cassava, yams, bananas, fruit, and vegetables. The introduction of cows and goats was rejected as impracticable and the enclosure of pigs was emphasised. The report concluded its investigation of the future of agriculture:

it is not possible to give any good estimate of the numbers of people who might reasonably be supported on the island. A further consideration of course is the standard of living the islanders will be prepared to accept . . . the island could support at the most and on a somewhat primitive level a total population of 3,000 people . . . this estimate is based on so many speculations that it should not be accepted until much more has been done to confirm these speculations. It could prove to be a gross overestimate.¹⁸

It was also pointed out that Nauruans had very little knowledge of agriculture and this was perhaps their most pressing need. It was suggested that an experimental farm be set up and that a Nauruan should be trained in agricultural extension work. The report went on:

The authors . . . have formed the opinion that the regeneration of this land is a practical impossibility . . . There is no sign of any appreciable weathering on the exposed coral pinnacles, as might well have been anticipated from the presence of protruding coral on the unworked phosphate lands.

It would be possible to level this worked out land with the aid of explosives and heavy crushing equipment, and it would be possible to import soil, e.g., as back-loading from the mainland, but there it

no certainty that the soil would stay on the surface and not be washed down into the crushed coral. Even if the plateau were to be resurfaced and maintained in this manner there would still be the question of an adequate water supply to supplement rainfall. It is believed that any such scheme would be fraught with so much uncertainty as to final success, and would be so expensive that it may be ruled out at once as a practical proposition for the widescale utilization of these lands.¹⁹

The authors' view that topsoil would sink into the coral and their belief that the rehabilitation project would be 'expensive' were accepted by Australia in principle, so that the only action taken was to inform the Trusteeship Council that an experimental farm was being planned and cadetships for agricultural diploma courses would be provided.²⁰ In 1955 surveys were also made of islands off the coast of New Guinea and parts of the New Guinea mainland but none of these areas proved suitable for resettlement. No Nauruans were consulted on these surveys.

It was on the question of resettlement that the Local Government Council first began to show that it could provide leadership for the Nauruan people. Head Chief DeRoburt rallied support for resettlement against considerable conservative opposition and in 1956 the Local Government Council told the Visiting Mission that it

had come to the conclusion that the Nauruans were now more in favour of total resettlement in Australia . . . [it] was opposed to individual gradual or piecemeal resettlement as a solution. It placed on record the following concrete suggestions for the consideration of the Trusteeship Council and the Administering Authority:

- (a) There is a growing tendency among the people to favour resettlement in Australia rather than on an island somewhere in New Guinea or thereabouts, when the occasion for leaving this island arises.
- (b) The Council seriously considers it should now ask the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia . . . to meet the costs of a future home in regard to these aspects:
 - (i) Cost of the new homeland itself;
 - (ii) Cost of erection of villages, administrative centres, and certain other public institutions such as schools and hospitals;
 - (iii) Cost of communication systems or facilities which are necessary and reasonable.²¹

The 1956 Visiting Mission discussed these proposals with the Administrator at Nauru, who pointed out that a great part of Australia was not suitable for Nauruan settlers and

that 'it would be most difficult for Nauruans to maintain their identity in Australia, whose policy towards the aborigines was one of assimilation . . . His own view was that to maintain the identity of Nauruans in Australia would not be acceptable to Australia'.²² The Nauruans had always taken it for granted that any resettlement would be based on the principle that the Nauruans would maintain their identity as a people, but Australia's search for a location for resettlement was based on the uncertain prerequisites that there be a community that would accept the Nauruans and that the Nauruans would willingly mix with the existing people. The Secretary of the Department of Territories pointed out to the Visiting Mission that the Nauruans' wish to retain their identity was not possible and 'he would not be in favour of creating a segregated community in that country [Australia]'.²³ This vital difference over resettlement was, however, not even clarified, let alone resolved, so that planning for the future proceeded on a false basis.

The Visiting Mission also recommended that a time limit and an advanced plan for resettlement be set up and suggested that a joint standing consultative body consisting of Administration and Nauruan representatives, possibly with the assistance of the B.P.C., be organised. Australia replied that these suggestions would be considered and that all funds and assistance for resettlement would be made available as required.²⁴

In its examination of the Administration's 1955-6 Report, the Trusteeship Council asked where was the action taken to solve the problem of the Nauruans' future? The Australian representative replied that the meeting of the Standing Committee on resettlement of the Local Government Council was always attended by the Administrator, so that this constituted a standing body. In replying to the Trusteeship Council's reiteration that target dates for independence be set, Australia's representative stated that no targets had been set because

- (1) . . . it had encountered serious difficulties in effectively stimulating the Nauruans to participate increasingly in the affairs of the Territory, particularly in the political field;
- (2) . . . the economic potential of the Territory, particularly its water supplies, had not yet been finally determined; and

- (3) . . . the question of the possible resettlement of the Nauruan community was still undecided.²⁵

Australia thus continued to accuse the Nauruans of political backwardness after two elections in which there was a nearly 100 per cent vote and after the Local Government Council persistently petitioned for more power in policy and budgetary matters. The pessimistic 1954 C.S.I.R.O. survey of land potential was apparently enough to push the problem of the Nauruans' future aside although no positive steps were taken to implement its recommendations. Finally to the Nauruans' dismay, resettlement and independence were now linked as dependent on each other, and it was clear that each would be made to provide reasons to hold back the achievement of the other.

The Nauruans found their lack of progress in winning more political power and finding a practical future intensely frustrating. The continued shipment of phosphate reminded them of their future, and a new problem arose with the tremendous growth in population. The number of Nauruans had risen by 47 per cent from 1,582 in 1950 to 2,328 in 1960 and in 1954-5 the pre-war population was exceeded.²⁶ A high birth rate and a low mortality rate not only lent urgency to the long-range problem of Nauru's future, but created immediate social problems, especially in education and employment. Given that the Nauruan people wanted education for eventual self-government and at least some secondary education for every child, the Administration found itself in difficulties both with its facilities and in the quality of its teaching. The embryo difficulties of untrained teachers and bilingualism discovered in the first years after the war developed into major problems in the next ten years.

School life for a Nauruan child now began at the age of four to five years in a pre-kindergarten year at one of the six local district schools.²⁷ This preparatory year was designed primarily to give the child its first instruction in English. Up to 1955 the first three years of schooling for Nauruan children took place in the district schools but in that year the first step in a program of integration of schools recommended by the Trusteeship Council took place, when a model kindergarten was built in the Boe district which chil-

dren of all races attended. The Nauruan child then progressed to the primary grades in which Nauruan teachers with no formal teacher's training taught the classes under the supervision of trained Europeans. In the 1950s a policy of consolidating these district primary schools into one central school was introduced and this resulted in improved organisation and efficiency, for now each teacher taught only one or two classes instead of three or four. After primary schooling, pupils went on to the secondary school where subjects taught were English, arithmetic, geography, history, art, mathematics, and elementary science. Courses at all Nauruan schools followed the State of Victoria curriculum with only minor alterations. There was also some instruction in canoe building and handcrafts.

In 1954, when a new secondary school building was opened, the course standard was raised to Victorian Intermediate level. In the four years from 1952 to 1956 the number of children of all races at school on Nauru rose by 50 per cent.²⁸ This rapid increase was met by doubling the number of European teachers employed and a small reduction in the number of untrained Nauruan teachers. Teacher pupil ratios—1:15 in the secondary school where there were now sixty-four children—were described as 'generous'.

European children on the island attended the European primary school staffed by two Europeans and usually went to Australia for secondary education. For this an allowance of £145 per annum was paid in 1955 and the Administration paid the return fares of both European and Nauruan children who returned to Nauru for the long vacation. The B.P.C. provided bursaries for the secondary education of children of its European employees, and had established a school for the children of its indentured Gilbert and Ellice labourers in 1952. This was taken over and staffed by the Administration in 1955 with an enrolment of fifty-five children. Chinese children were placed in schools suited to their standard of English. The Sacred Heart Mission School, staffed by four qualified nuns, taught children up to Victorian Intermediate standard.

The number of Nauruans who pursued secondary education overseas rose steadily. In the early 1950s the Administra-

tion offered two kinds of scholarship at competitive examination: lower age scholarships for those who had successfully completed primary education on Nauru and wished to do the whole of their secondary education overseas and higher age scholarships for those who had completed some secondary schooling on Nauru. In 1954, on the opening of the new secondary school, the Administration decided to restrict scholarships to students at Intermediate Certificate level, because it was found that the practice of sending the cream of students overseas was adversely affecting the standards of the school. The Local Government Council disagreed with this policy and held discussions with the Administration in an attempt to solve the problem.²⁹ After ten years and a variety of compromises the problem remained unsolved.

In 1952 twenty-three Nauruans, most of whom were sponsored by the Administration, were studying secondary courses overseas. By 1956 their number had risen to thirty-two at Australian secondary schools and two at the Suva Medical School in Fiji. Two trained nurses returned to Nauru and one Nauruan returned as an ordained Protestant minister. In 1954 the first Nauruan to gain a Victorian Leaving Certificate since World War II returned to Australia to study accountancy. In 1955 two students gained the Leaving Certificate and six won the Intermediate Certificate in Australia while on Nauru all nine students who sat for the first Intermediate Examination held there failed. The Trusteeship Council was concerned that no Nauruan had completed a university education and urged the Administering Authority to develop secondary education to matriculation standard.³⁰ The Administering Authority replied that the numbers of children did not warrant an extension of schooling to such a standard and pointed out that the results of Nauruan students overseas had improved.

In 1953 the Visiting Mission found that the training of some teachers was still unsatisfactory and it received a petition from the Local Government Council which again expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which education was being handled: 'The Mission observed a scepticism regarding the progress achieved after thirty years of compulsory education'.³¹ The council's petition blamed the Administra-

tion's dilatory way of handling Nauruan education for the lack of Nauruans in key positions and it proposed principles for the correction of this, asking the Mission to place them before the Administering Authority.³² In the Trusteeship Council the U.S.S.R. representative felt that it was the confusion of languages spoken and taught and the lack of properly trained teachers that precluded good results from Nauruan students, while the new Director of Education, Mr Pittman, believed that the high percentage of retarded scholars was due to the interruption of education by the war, the difficulties of re-establishment of education caused by the deaths of experienced teachers in the war, and other Pacific islanders with a relatively lower educational standard entering Nauruan schools.³³ The 1956 Visiting Mission criticised the fact that there had been four changes in the Director of Education's position in the years 1948-54 and that many other expatriate teachers did not serve their full terms, thus disrupting Nauruan education. The Mission was told in reply that many Europeans did not relish the idea of remaining in Nauru too long.

In the years from 1956 to 1964 the number of Nauruan children at schools almost doubled from 550 to 1,020 and a rise from 27 to 44 in the number of teachers employed attempted to keep pace with such a rapid increase. To cope with the increased numbers the program of Administration scholarships for overseas students was expanded and reorganised. While confused statistics make an assessment of the number of Nauruan children who were educated in Australia and the levels they reached extremely difficult, it is clear that a great many children had been to Australia, but that in the main their results were poor.³⁴ From 1954, when the first Nauruan Leaving Certificate was won, one to three Nauruan scholars per year had passed Leaving Certificates. Slightly more Nauruan children gained the Intermediate Certificate and Junior Technical Certificate of Victoria. By 1964 there was only one Nauruan university graduate, a dentist, only two Nauruan teachers trained to Australian standards, two other Nauruans on the way to completing university degrees, and a variety of other qualifications held by Nauruans employed by the Administration.

The Administration felt that adjustment difficulties were great for overseas students and that they failed to acquire adequate study habits. No doubt adjustment difficulties were intense but many students had been in Australia for years and almost all were placed in schools where there already were Nauruans. The main reason for poor performances was the inadequate primary teaching that the children had been given.

The same handicap applied to children who pursued their secondary education at the Nauru secondary school. The competent use of English by pupils continued to be the greatest difficulty, but it was not until 1963-4 that the problem of trained teaching began to be tackled realistically. In this year the trained European staff was increased from sixteen to twenty-six and the guidance system was replaced by a system in which a trained European teacher taught the 'A' class in each grade and supervised the teaching of Nauruan teachers in the other classes.³⁵ Thirty Nauruan teachers were employed of whom only two had Australian qualifications, but by means of a new Teachers' Training College and in-service training the unqualified yet experienced Nauruan teachers now had an opportunity to qualify for a Teachers' Training Certificate. It was expected that this change in policy would produce better results at secondary school level in Nauru and Australia and would eventually provide all the Nauruan teachers with professional qualifications. An improvement was noticed almost immediately: 'The greatest revolution in attitudes and progress is apparent in the middle primary grades and the infant classes. Spoken English here is more fluent and Nauruan pupils are competing successfully with Australian children for top places in the "A" classes of every grade'.³⁶

The picture in the secondary schools was not so hopeful. In addition to the drawbacks of faulty primary training the schools still suffered because the cream of the children were sent to Australia. Problems of discipline became quite severe. Cultural problems, the rapid turnover of staff and the feeling of inferiority engendered by the loss of clever students to Australia contributed. At the Sacred Heart Mission School, however, with close teacher-parent contact, streng-

thened by the personal authority and dedication of Father Clivas and his teaching nuns, some of whom had spent more than ten years on Nauru, few problems of discipline existed. The value of continuity of teaching and interest could not be over-estimated. The mission schools taught about 30 per cent of the Nauruan children with the aid of an annual subsidy from the Administration and the proportional break-up of mission educated children and of those from Administration schools closely resembled the Protestant-Catholic numbers in the Nauruan community. After a change in B.P.C. policy on indentured workers' families, two new schools, built for indentured workers' children in the new locations, were opened in 1965. Extra teachers for the islanders' school and five Hong Kong qualified teachers for the Chinese school were engaged by the Administration.

In May 1958 the Nauru Protestant Church was accepted as a constituent member of the Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand. The Nauru Church had its own ordained minister, the Reverend Ituba Amram who, after taking up a fellowship at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, returned to be pastor to Nauruan Protestants. The church was very active evangelically and sent Nauruan missionaries to Papua and New Guinea. A European and a Gilbert and Ellice minister were also attached to the church to minister to the separate communities. The Roman Catholic Church with Father Clivas as its priest continued to have about one-third of Nauruans as members and had much support from Gilbertese Catholics. Since the Vatican instruction for Mass in the vernacular, Mass on Nauru has been given in both Nauruan and Gilbertese.

The number of Nauruans employed by the Administration remained fairly static at around 250 from 1952 to 1956, while by 1957 the number of Europeans employed by the Administration was beginning to rise slowly.³⁷ In 1953 the establishment of the Public Service was investigated by an Australian official to determine classifications, salaries, and promotions. This resulted in an increase of expatriate employment to a total of twenty-two males and females and a consequent reduction in Nauruan employment.³⁸ The increase in Europeans was mainly in teaching staff and the

Nauruan decrease occurred in the Department of Works when it was decided that the B.P.C. would carry out major construction work for the Administration. At the same time an officer of the Department of Labour and National Service was appointed to carry out an employment survey of Nauru.

The Nauruan Administration employees were pleased neither with the positions they held nor the salaries they received. The Administration raised the basic wage from £100 to £126 per annum in 1952 and to £191 per annum in 1953, but the Nauruans were still far from satisfied. At a minimum of £17 a month salaries were almost the same as the wages of a Chinese boatman who received free housing and rations as well, and the outlook for promotion was poor.

On 18 July 1953 the Nauruan Administration employees petitioned the Administrator for a minimum wage based on the needs of a man, wife and two children with retrospective payment of any increase, and called for a 40-hour week for Public Works' employees, and a 33-hour week for office workers. The Administrator replied that he would not be forced into an early decision on such an important question but at the same time granted an increase of £18 per annum, bringing the basic wage to £209 per annum, and increased dependants' allowances from 7s.6d. a month to 5s. per week. These increases did not satisfy the workers and on 30 July 1953, in the first strike in Nauruan history, 182 Administration employees (including teachers) came out and thirty-three medical employees worked only half time.³⁹ A trade union, the Nauruan Workers' Organization, which aimed generally at the improvement of wages and conditions for all Nauruan employees, was formed. The Local Government Council urged the workers to return to work but they refused.

After almost three months, on 28 October 1953, the strikers returned to work after it was agreed to hold an inquiry. On 23 December 1953 the basic wage was increased to £236.10s.9d. per annum and the increase was made retrospective to May 1953. It was also decided that the basic wage should be adjusted automatically every six months on a cost of living regimen. Dependants' allowances were raised to 10s. a week and were to be adjusted with cost of living

changes. No alterations were made in working hours.

The three-months strike produced severe economic difficulties for many families, although, with the support of other Nauruans, the strikers were able to stay out until their demands were met. Financially the strike was a success for the December judgment nearly doubled the basic wage that had been set in 1951-2. The Administration insisted on having the last word: 'The substantial increases reflect the desire of the Administering Authority to increase Nauruan living standards in accordance with the progressive Europeanisation of Nauruan living habits.'⁴⁰

There were substantial differences in the rates of pay received by Europeans and Nauruans for similar kinds of work. The U.S.S.R. representative in the Trusteeship Council remarked on these differences and was told by Australia's representative that Europeans had to be paid salaries in line with those earned by similar employees in the metropolitan country. In 1956 and 1957 Administration employees received salary increases which ranged from £50 to £300 per annum for Europeans, but only £5 to £100 for Nauruans.

In 1956 the Nauruan Workers' Organization petitioned the Visiting Mission, claiming that as working hours for Europeans and Nauruans were different they were discriminatory; that general wage conditions were unsatisfactory; and that the principles of capacity to pay, and equal pay for equal work, should be adopted by employers in fixing wages; and that the British Phosphate Commissioners' employment conditions for Nauruans were very unsatisfactory. The Administrator replied that 'the work output of the Nauruan employee is relatively low, and for this reason all Administration departments are heavily overstaffed by Australian standards. While this continues, the introduction of a 40-hour week would not be justified'.⁴¹

At the end of 1961 a uniform working week of 40 hours for Administration employees was introduced and a Commission of Enquiry in which the Nauruans' case was prepared by Mr W. Baker, an Australian Council of Trade Unions wages advocate, raised the basic wage from £6.2s. a week to £9.6s.6d. a week plus allowances of 10s. to 15s. per week in June 1962.⁴²

The number of Nauruans employed by the B.P.C. fluctuated between 105 and 146 in the years 1951 to 1956. They received no margins for skill or length of employment, no sickness benefits or transport to and from work. B.P.C. wages were the same in 1956 as the Administration basic wage, i.e. 12s. a day plus dependants' allowances. The 1956 Visiting Mission commented on B.P.C. Nauruan employment:

A great proportion of the 141 Nauruans are semi-skilled workers; general labouring work is not desired by Nauruans, who have aptitude for handling machines and tools . . . The Mission was told by the Nauru Manager that up to March 1956 there was no Nauruan with the British Phosphate Commissioners who had any intermediate training and that Nauruans holding suitable qualifications for staff positions were simply not available. In his opinion, it would be ten more years before Nauruans could be trained for executive positions . . . The Mission was informed that it is difficult to induce Nauruans to work steadily in the phosphate industry and that in general their performance is considered not as efficient as that of the Europeans or Chinese. The Mission had neither the time nor the means to investigate how efficiently Nauruan workers generally carry out their work.⁴⁸

Nauruan dislike of working for the phosphate company had been evident since 1907 and, although the real reasons for this are not entirely clear, it was obvious that poor conditions of employment played a part. Probably the dominant position of the B.P.C. on their island and its strength in royalty negotiations contributed to hostility which also resulted in a lack of interest in working for the B.P.C. B.P.C.-Nauruan relations were often acrimonious for other reasons; the B.P.C. found itself in continual difficulty with Nauruans over the acquisition of land whether for mining or installations, while the Nauruans were not happy about royalty rates and were jealous of the extra privileges European employees enjoyed. This and the fact that the B.P.C. staff kept themselves so aloof produced undertones of racialism, which only exacerbated the situation.

The Administration also was plagued by land disputes with the Nauruan people, who displayed an amazing tenacity on these issues. In 1952 the Administration had taken over land in the districts of Boe and Yaren to extend the airstrip to international standards. The Administration tried to pay compensation to Nauruan owners at twice the rate for non-phosphate land but most Nauruan owners objected strongly

to the acquisition, claiming that it deprived them of important coconut and housing land, and that the airstrip was never used except for Visiting Missions. The owners asked why could not the airstrip be built out on the reef or on worked-out phosphate land and told the Administration that the compensation offered was insufficient. These owners refused to take their compensation and it was placed in a fund. The 1956 Visiting Mission believed that an airstrip was a necessity and suggested to the Administration that this problem could be solved if the compensation rate was raised, but this solution was not adopted.⁴⁴

A second land dispute also occupied a great deal of time and energy. The Nauruans disputed that the Administration owned the 140 acres of land that had been leased to the German Administration before World War I for the erection of a wireless station. This land was now being mined and the Administration was receiving the money. The Local Government Council petitioned the 1956 Visiting Mission on this and received its support. Eventually, after the original German documents were obtained, the land was returned to the Nauruan community as a whole and the proceeds paid into a community fund.

A great deal of social discontent was caused by the prohibition of alcohol for Nauruans and other Pacific islanders. The 1936 Arms, Liquor and Opium Prohibition Ordinance had made it unlawful for a Pacific islander to consume or have in his possession any intoxicating liquors and the supply to Chinese was regulated. The Europeans, in contrast, enjoyed low-duty beer, wines, and spirits. The 1956 Visiting Mission 'found the whole question of consumption of alcohol very difficult and intractable . . . In the circumstances of Nauru total prohibition is not a practicable proposition. The present law . . . does involve discrimination and militates against the growth of closer and friendlier social relations between the different communities'.⁴⁵ The chief effect of the ordinance was to convert the Nauruans into law-breakers, for the number of convictions for liquor offences, which rose from 81 in 1955 to 147 in 1964, formed by far the greatest part of offences committed by Nauruans. In 1964 young Nauruans complained bitterly about prohibition in the

Observer of 8 February. Pointing out that all drinking restrictions had been lifted in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony in January 1964, they asked whether Nauruans were more backward than other Pacific islanders, or more religious or did the ban continue because they could not hold their drinks? It was also noted in passing that the black market beer price had again gone up, to £10 a dozen but 'nevertheless business is still prospering according to one bootlegger'.

Up to 1952 the B.P.C. continued to meet all Administration expenses by a royalty of 1s. a ton on phosphate and payments for commutation of customs. From July 1952, the old royalty payment method of funding Administration costs was abandoned, for it had resulted in the past in overpayments or deficits which were unrelated to actual needs.

The new arrangement required the Administration to prepare a budget before each financial year and after this was approved by the Minister for Territories the British Phosphate Commissioners were notified of their quarterly contribution. Under this scheme British Phosphate Commissioners' payments for Administration expenses rose from £134,000 in 1952-3 to £245,000 in 1955-6. These payments were additional to the £350,000 rehabilitation finance and the 3d. a ton paid for Nauruan housing. The 1956 Visiting Mission was doubtful about the new funding arrangement:

the influence of the British Phosphate Commissioners as the controlling agent of the main wealth of Nauru is obvious and can be felt in every walk of life in the Territory . . . it is a debatable question whether the new system which provides no direct sources of revenue to the Administration is desirable from a psychological point of view.⁴⁶

Nauruan royalties continued to be a thorny question. In 1954-5 a new agreement was negotiated between the B.P.C. and the Local Government Council. The total royalty was raised to 1s.6d. a ton, the 2d. a ton increase going as a cash increase to landowners. The B.P.C. also agreed that the period of investment of the Landowners Royalty Trust Fund should be reduced from 20 years to 15, after which both the principal and interest would be paid to landowners. The Trusteeship Council approved of this rise but again asked Australia to ensure that the Nauruans would receive the maximum benefits from the exploitation of the island's re-

sources. Australia replied that 'Payments to or for the direct benefit of the Nauruan people had up to 30 June 1955 totalled more than £700,000, with all social services provided free . . . the Nauruan people are well provided for'.⁴⁷ Australia's representative could have made a more important and relevant comparison if he had told the council that from 1922 to 1955 the Nauruans received £307,320 in cash and £387,034 paid into funds (a total of £694,354), while the total value of all phosphate exported for these years was £22,954,199.⁴⁸

The Nauru Local Government Council became increasingly concerned with royalties. In its frustration it told the 1956 Visiting Mission that

the f.o.b. price of the phosphate exported had increased two and a half times since 1939, being now 35s. per ton and that the increase in royalty rates had not been proportionate. The royalty trust funds created for the future benefit of the Nauruan community were inadequate. As the Council was not in a position to know what would be a fair amount to ask, it requested the Mission to 'negotiate' with the British Phosphate Commissioners with a view to arriving at a rate which could be regarded as fair and within the capacity of the phosphate industry to grant.⁴⁹

The Mission was unable even to form an opinion on this because it had no evidence of the capacity of the industry to pay. In each examination of the *Annual Report on Nauru* the Trusteeship Council had asked the Administering Authority to obtain for it detailed figures of the British Phosphate Commissioners' Nauru operations. Each year Australia's reply took approximately the same form: 'The British Phosphate Commissioners is not a commercial undertaking working and selling the phosphate for profit. In these circumstances any question of comparison of price is irrelevant',⁵⁰ and added that there were no separate financial accounts kept for Nauru, which seemed poor business practice indeed. The U.S.S.R. representative took up a new note of criticism in 1954:

If the prices paid by the Administering Authority were compared with prices realized in other areas, then it could be seen that the phosphate from Nauru was undersold by at least \$US2.00 per ton. Furthermore, if the fact that the phosphate from the Trust Territory was twice as good as the phosphate from the other areas of the world was also taken into account, then it was clear that, by means of these monopolistic prices, the Administering Authority had been able to take away each year more than \$US4 million from the indigenous population . . . the total resources amounted to approximately 90 million tons . . . [whose]

value was about £145 million sterling. If the fact that the indigenous population of the island has more than 4,000 acres of phosphate-bearing land was taken into account . . . for all this the Nauruans would receive about £6 million or about 4 per cent of the total price of the phosphate.⁵¹

The representative of the Administering Authority replied acidly:

Since the Council was devoted to the interests of the Nauruans, it should think twice before seeking to interfere with the working of the very efficient enterprise which provided the Nauruans with so many benefits . . . In the light of the many and large benefits which the Nauruans received from the phosphate industry, the Administering Authority was entitled to repudiate any suggestion, which might have been implicit in some questions, that it was exploiting or robbing the Nauruans.⁵²

and in this way an informed discussion on Nauru royalty rates was vetoed by Australia once again.

From 1950 to 1964 Australia's total imports of phosphate rose from 1,185,402 tons to 1,989,413 tons annually of which Nauru provided a steady 60 per cent.⁵³ Nauru also supplied New Zealand with approximately 400,000 tons a year and since 1954 had shipped more than 100,000 tons a year to Great Britain. To meet this rising demand the B.P.C. increased mechanisation of production and raised output targets. Long range changes in B.P.C. labour policy followed.

From 1951 to 1953 the number of Chinese employed fell from 1,381 to 449 because of increased mechanisation and completion of post-war restoration work. At the same time the number of Gilbert and Ellice islanders indentured increased to 420 in June 1952 and continued to increase until there were nearly 600 Pacific islanders other than Nauruans employed by the B.P.C. in June 1956. The Administration explained in 1953-4 that the reduction in the number of Chinese employees was due largely to a policy of preference given by the Administration and the B.P.C. in the employment of Nauruans and Gilbert and Ellice islanders. This policy changed under pressure from the United Kingdom, which was responsible for the administration of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. This Colony had widespread unemployment and little hope of economic prosperity, so that money brought back to the Colony by indentured labourers was very important. The islanders were recruited on the same wages and conditions as the Chinese.

In 1954-5 the rate of extraction exceeded 1,200,000 tons

per annum, and in 1955-6 the B.P.C., without consulting the Nauruans, announced a developmental program and construction of a second cantilever to raise the extraction rate to 1,600,000 tons per annum. This was expected to reduce the life of the deposits to forty years, to 1996, four years before the expiry of the British Phosphate Commissioners' concession.

The rise in output and increased mechanisation made the training of skilled workers essential. The short indenture period of one year became uneconomic and when indentures were extended to a three-year period, workers had to be allowed to bring their families with them. From 1952 Chinese and Gilbert and Ellice families were allowed to enter Nauru and what the Trusteeship Council had failed to achieve by pleas on humane grounds was won by the demand for phosphate.⁵⁴

The conditions of entry were that the wife and not more than two children under twelve years could be granted an entry permit of one year which could be renewed for a limit of three years. At the expiration of such a permit the whole family, including any children born on Nauru, would be repatriated and no applications for re-entry would be considered until three years had elapsed. These regulations ensured that no Chinese family could settle permanently on Nauru. The number of Chinese families which came to Nauru did not at any time up to 1956 exceed 35, although in that year the total number of Chinese employed was just over 600. A few quarters were built for married Chinese but the practical difficulties of housing and transport kept the number of Chinese families low. The Gilbert and Ellice islanders were in a somewhat different position and they found it easier to bring their families. In 1955 there were at least 138 such families on Nauru.

After continued agitation by the Trusteeship Council, the Chinese and Native Labour Ordinance was amended in October 1953. The penal sanctions were deleted but the Central Court retained the power to terminate contracts. The Movements of Natives Ordinance, however, remained in force because until the end of 1955 the Local Government

Council felt that some restrictions were necessary but then it could hold out no longer and the Ordinance was repealed.⁵⁵

Australia's demand for phosphate continued to increase rapidly. From total imports of over 1,400,000 tons in 1956 demand rose to nearly 2,000,000 tons in 1964 of which Nauru supplied about half annually.⁵⁶ Nauru's total exports to all countries from 1956 to 1964 fluctuated from 1.2 to 1.6 million tons per annum but the numbers of Chinese and Gilbert and Ellice islanders employed remained steady at about 600 and 800 respectively.⁵⁷ Because of increased demand, the B.P.C. decided in 1964, again without reference to the Nauruans, to raise the rate of extraction from 1.6 million tons to 2.5 million tons and this new tonnage was to be achieved by greater mechanisation and a further increase in the number of indentured labourers, who would have to be trained in the new techniques. The full three-year contract period was now an economic necessity and so preparations were made for an influx of labourers and their families. In 1964 the B.P.C. began to build over 600 new married quarters and over 700 new single quarters. At 30 June 1964 there were only 16 Chinese females and 24 Chinese children on Nauru but a year later 94 females and 131 children had arrived. The number of Gilbert and Ellice families rose in 1965 to nearly 300.

The new quarters were comparable with small Australian flat colonies although they were built very close together because of the scarcity of land. The new location schools were of better design than those for the Administration system and the B.P.C. hospital, modernised at a cost of £140,000, with air-conditioning and the most modern equipment available, was a good deal better than most Australian country hospitals.

The Nauruan people did not attempt to disguise their animosity towards the influx of new labourers and their families. With some bitterness they compared their shortage of houses and family overcrowding with the speed of construction of indentured labourers' flats. All Nauruan building had ceased while resettlement was under discussion and the problem of financing projects from inadequate council funds was still unsolved. Labour for construction and

material shortages also held up house building until almost every family was overcrowded and some Nauruans were building their own homes. The modernisation of the B.P.C. hospital also angered Nauruans for they had had to wait until 1957 for a new Administration hospital to be built to cope with rising tuberculosis and leprosy rates and the new B.P.C. hospital was vastly superior in design, construction, and the number of qualified staff.

The Local Government Council, as Board of Directors of the Nauru Co-operative Store, was most concerned about the strength of Chinese trading on the island and told the 1962 Visiting Mission that the store's business was adversely affected. The following figures were quoted in support of their contention:

	Value of imports in £A ⁵⁸		
		Nauru	
	B.P.C.	Co-operative Store	Chinese traders
1960-1	1,107,485	114,520	118,700
July 1961			
to			
Feb. 1962	1,008,942	63,202	127,470

But when the Mission was told that the Nauru Co-operative Store was in debt to the Administration for £21,000,⁵⁹ they took no action on the council's petition. The council also complained that only a quarter of Nauruan houses had electricity connected and that water, bought in dry periods at a cost of £1.11s. per 1,000 gallons, was too expensive. An inquiry into the relative cost of a standby desalination plant or more conventional methods of water collection would have been appropriate, but was not made.

These complaints were symptomatic of the worsening race relations on the island which, however, remained largely under the surface because personal relations remained normal and violent outbursts were infrequent. The addition of 600 Chinese and Gilbert and Ellice islanders who arrived in 1964 and 1965 aggravated existing problems. Nauruan society had always been something like a closed club. Marriage between Nauruans and Europeans and Chinese had been actively discouraged but the Nauruan people in the

1960s bore little racial resemblance to the Nauruans of 1880 because, besides the admixture of Caucasian and Negro blood from the beachcomber era, there were many Nauruans who were themselves descendants of, or who had family ties with, Marshall and Caroline islanders, Gilbert and Ellice islanders, and Banabans. Thus it had been the case that when a Nauruan married another Pacific islander, the non-Nauruan could be accepted as a Nauruan and live in the Nauruan districts, participating in the consequent benefits. A bond of ethnic relationship existed between the Nauruans and such Pacific islanders. In the past, as far as possible, the Nauruans had ignored the Europeans and Chinese, but the coming of a large number of Gilbert and Ellice islanders, added to their own population growth, produced a new social situation. The Nauruans disliked these new indentured labourers in spite of the racial similarity. The Gilbert and Ellice islanders came to be resented because they were indentured labourers, because the Nauruans began to fear their permanent settlement more than they feared it from the Chinese, and not least because most Europeans showed a clear preference for Gilbertese who, because they were not involved in the political situation on the island, were more willing to please. The Nauruans were the 'Scots of the Pacific', somewhat dour in their relationships with Europeans, tending only to be themselves when they were among their own people. They now felt they were being made outsiders on their own island. The actual causes of disputes—Gilbertese taking coconuts and toddy from Nauruan trees which were not being used and the Gilbertese intrusion into their fishing grounds—were symptoms rather than causes of increasingly sullen race relations on the island. The effect on the Nauruans was that they now felt they must gain more power on the island, power to govern themselves and protect themselves from the manifest encroachments of the alien communities and the phosphate company. Yet again their community strength was reinforced by isolation.

In Search of a New Home and a Separate Identity

Towards the end of the 1950s the Nauruan leaders became increasingly preoccupied with royalties. Fears for the future coupled with the feeling that they were not receiving a 'fair return' from the phosphate were growing and negotiations accordingly assumed a hostile character, especially in the face of the B.P.C.'s unchanging attitude to royalties. The B.P.C. found the Nauruans' continued inability to make precise claims to its advantage and it reiterated its stand that royalties were gratuitous payments within its sole jurisdiction. The B.P.C. told the Nauruans that it would provide for their needs as it had always done, but the Nauruans realised that such vague provisions delayed the establishment of criteria for calculating royalties on a 'rights' rather than 'needs' basis. The B.P.C. did play Santa Claus to the Nauruan people, providing them with housing, water, cheap transport and other facilities, the costs of which were absorbed into those of the industry but the Nauruans, while enjoying these benefits, now wanted to extricate themselves from this bog of paternalism. They felt an urgent need to win their full share of the profits of phosphate mining while there was still phosphate to be mined. The Trusteeship Council was a somewhat reluctant third party to the dispute. Most of its members argued that the B.P.C.'s paternalism was out of date and that the Nauruans deserved more from the phosphate but they were unable to make a strong stand because they had no precise information on the industry. From 1948 to 1 July 1958 the total royalty rate had risen from 1s.1d. per ton to 2s.7d. per ton,¹ yet the 1958 royalty was still clearly too low when the value placed on the phosphate by the B.P.C. was around £2 a ton.

The Trusteeship Council, aware of the increasing frustration of the Nauruans over royalties, asked that regular conferences be held to clarify the situation, and Australia accordingly arranged that a meeting should be held in Canberra in March 1959 to review the whole question of royalty rates with Nauruan, B.P.C., and Department of Territories representation.² The conference was held in Canberra on 22 and 23 April 1959. The spokesman for the Department of Territories made the alliance of Australian and B.P.C. interests clear when he opened the discussion: 'The Department does not wish or propose any examination of the legal position in relation to royalties . . . This Department is anxious not to hinder the task of the B.P.C. which is being carried out so efficiently and well'.³ Head Chief DeRoburt put the Nauruan position: 'The Nauruans would like the best terms possible for phosphate royalties and we think the best terms possible are to put us in a position where we own the phosphate and we exploit it to the maximum possible'.⁴ For the first time the Nauruans made a public statement of their future aims, but they had no information on which to base their claims. In fact they knew so little about phosphate costs and prices that they were unable to make any detailed submission on immediate rates and when they asked for the help of the Department of Territories and the B.P.C. to work out such figures, they had no success. Discussion followed on royalty rates, periods of review and some other minor issues but without resolution. The B.P.C. representatives and the Nauru delegation decided to report back to their separate bodies and submit further observations.

This conference was unsatisfactory for the Nauruans because none of the important issues even approached solution. The royalty rose to 3s.2d. a ton in 1960 by triennial adjustment, and payments for phosphate land were doubled to the £120 which the Nauruans had requested at the 1959 conference. In an attempt to gauge the merits of the Nauruans' claims the 1962 Visiting Mission asked for the Nauru operational figures from the B.P.C. but it was told that the Department of Territories would supply them instead. The figures supplied showed the cost of superphosphate to the consumer in various countries. The New South Wales price

of £12.9s. a ton did not compare unfavourably with Finland's £12.10s. or with any country except Japan, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.⁵ What the figures failed to reveal was how much in each price was directly attributed to the f.o.b. price of rock phosphate. Other factors in the price such as the costs of manufacture and delivery disguised the facts sought by the Visiting Mission. The Mission did, however, make a calculation of the proportion of royalty plus administration costs paid by the B.P.C. to the total value of phosphate exported from Nauru and found that whereas this was 4 per cent in 1947-8 it reached 24 per cent in 1960-1:⁶ 'The Mission considered that those benefits were substantial, and if supplies of phosphate had been inexhaustible it would have been reasonable to allow the questions of royalty administration costs to be dealt with in the future as in the past.'⁷ The Visiting Mission's opinion that benefits achieved were 'substantial' was mitigated by the fact that of the 1947-8 4 per cent, 1.6 per cent went to Administration costs and 2.7 per cent to Nauruan royalties. By 1960-1 the percentage of the value paid as Administration costs had gone up over eleven times to 16 per cent while Nauruan royalties had only risen to 8.5 per cent of the value.⁸ Ostensibly the Administration administered the whole of Nauru and so it could be argued that on a population basis only half the Administration costs would have been directly attributable to the benefit of Nauruans.

Australia agreed to the Visiting Mission's suggestion that annual B.P.C.-Nauruan meetings should be held and scheduled the first for July 1963,⁹ and it noted the further recommendation that if these meetings proved inadequate one or two Nauruans should be selected to participate in B.P.C. meetings on matters affecting Nauruan interests. The proposed meeting was finally held at 'Phosphate House' in Melbourne on 14, 15, and 18 November 1963.¹⁰ Sir William Dunk, Commissioner for Australia, acted as chairman and was supported by three B.P.C. representatives. The Administrator of Nauru, Mr R. S. Leydin, Head Chief DeRoburt, Councillors Bernicke and Gadabu also participated. The meeting was told that six submissions by the Local Government Council had been vetoed by the Minister for Territories

because of their political significance and would not be discussed. This action was symptomatic of the increasing interference in B.P.C. affairs by the Australian Government which had been forbidden by the 1919 Nauru Island Agreement. Such interference had in fact been long practised tacitly by the Australians, but it was clear that pressure would now be applied openly. Minor submissions on trading, land rentals, housing, and apprenticeships were then dealt with. Finally the meeting discussed royalties. The Head Chief opened 'by reiterating his request that the Nauruan delegation be assisted by advisers, and that his protest against the refusal of the Commissioners to accept this should be recorded'.¹¹ The Nauruans had realised before this meeting that they needed economic advice but this had always been blocked either by the B.P.C., who said that royalties had nothing to do with the economics of the phosphate industry, or by the Administration, who always offered Department of Territories assistance. Any attempt by the Nauruans to obtain private advice was vetoed. The Nauruans now asked for a substantial unspecified increase in the total royalty for it was clear to them, even without expert economic advice, that the island was a source of cheap phosphate to Australia. The B.P.C. pointed out that any discussion must exclude the Long Term Investment Fund because this was the Administration's affair and not the Nauruans'. This was hotly disputed by the Nauruans but no agreement was reached. The conference then agreed on a renewal period of four years.

Because the Nauruan representatives made no specific demand, Sir William Dunk offered a 30 per cent increase.¹² The Head Chief pointed out that at the present rate of 2s.8d. a ton (which excluded 1s. for the Long Term Investment Fund) this was only 9d. a ton increase which was by no means sufficient. The Head Chief put forward a 50 per cent increase (from 2s.8d. to 4s. a ton) and the Commissioners agreed immediately to make this their final offer. The B.P.C.'s precipitate agreement to the 50 per cent increase put the Nauruans on their guard and after discussing it among themselves, they rejected it as not representing a reasonable share of the phosphate operations. They resolved to report back to the Local Government Council and to prepare a new case.

This would be ready so as to achieve settlement by 30 June 1964 when the present agreement expired. Sir William Dunk regretted that agreement had not been reached: the 50 per cent increase was generous, reasonable, and final.

On the surface, the conference was as abortive as the 1959 one, but the Nauruan leaders had for the first time, though aware that their refusal would not be popular with all their constituents, refused a substantial 50 per cent increase and held to the principle that royalties should form a fair share of phosphate proceeds. Australia's report of the 1963 conference, though garnished with a list of benefits which the B.P.C. had made available to the Nauruans, failed to impress the Trusteeship Council and several of its members were displeased that the Nauruans had not been allowed advisers.¹³ Their concern finally bore results in July 1964 when the B.P.C., refusing to increase their offer, retreated into their role of government instrumentality and to break the deadlock the Australian Department of Territories took over the royalty negotiations with the Nauruans. Although the Australian Government agreed to the Nauruans' request that they be allowed to negotiate with the assistance of an adviser, it vetoed their choice of Mr W. Baker, an industrial advocate, who had been standing by since the previous November. Although the Nauruans were upset at this last moment refusal to permit Mr Baker to assist them, they found that Dr Helen Hughes, a Senior Research Fellow in Economics at the Australian National University, was able to give them some help instead. With professional advice the Nauruans were at last able to counter the B.P.C. offers with claims of their own. Informed by a quick survey of world phosphate prices and royalties paid on them, the Nauruans rejected the Australian Government's offer of 3s.4d. increase to bring the total royalty up to 7s. and asked for an increase in total royalty from 3s.8d. to £1 a ton.¹⁴ This was to be an interim figure based on the fact that the B.P.C. paid 25s.8d. a ton royalty (40 per cent of the value per ton) on Ocean Island phosphate which was sold at much the same f.o.b. price as Nauru phosphate. Of this amount 23s. went to the British Administration of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and 2s.8d. a ton to Banaban landowners. The British Government

limited the amount of phosphate shipped from Ocean Island to 310,000 tons a year to preserve the revenue-giving life of the deposit as long as possible, whereas 1.6 million tons were exported annually from Nauru, so the Nauruans argued rightly that the unit cost of Nauru phosphate must be lower than the unit cost of Ocean Island phosphate due to economies of scale.

The Nauruans claimed that because the proposed £1 a ton plus administration costs was closely comparable to the 25s.8d. per ton paid on Ocean Island phosphate, an increase of this magnitude should not push up the price of rock phosphate. They reserved the right to argue a case for royalties to be brought up to the full difference between the cost of Nauru production (including normal profit) and the world price for that quality phosphate as soon as a fuller inquiry gave them estimates for the relevant costs and prices. They claimed the right to this 'economic rent' as the original owners of the phosphate island, and foreshadowed that since Nauru phosphate was about half the f.o.b. price of Makatea (French Polynesia) phosphate, which was closely comparable in quality and geographic situation, their 'fair share' of phosphate amounted to a royalty in the region of £3 a ton.¹⁵

The Australian Department of Territories officials conducting the negotiations were put off balance by this turn in the argument and replied by claiming that since the latest Administration costs on Nauru were 11s. a ton, the Nauruan claim of an immediate rise to 20s. a ton would have amounted to a total charge of 31s. on each ton of phosphate mined, which could not be paid without raising the price of phosphate. The Nauruans' claim was thus rejected.

In an effort to compromise the Nauruans reduced their claim to 14s.8d. a ton which together with the 11s. administration costs would have made 25s.8d. to equal the Ocean Island royalty, although they knew that the 11s. was based on the 1963-4 figure which included heavy non-recurring capital costs. This was also rejected and the Department of Territories mediation was concluded by a statement that the 'generous' 7s. a ton offer was final. The Nauruans stated at the end of the Conference:

There was no negotiation. We were simply offered a handout. But we are

not here to beg. We want the value of economic rent on our land, just as every Australian farmer and mineral leaseowner does. . . .

We believe that we have been subsidizing the cost of rock phosphate in the past, and we do not feel that we should be asked to do so for wealthy countries such as Australia and New Zealand in the future. We believe that we are entitled to an explanation of operational costs of rock phosphate mining so that royalties can become the proper subject of negotiations.¹⁶

The Nauruans were now adamant that they would not accept this increase; ever since the war they had believed that they were not receiving a fair share of the phosphate proceeds; they now knew it and they could prove it.

At the 1964 conference the Nauruans also asked that formal steps be taken to transfer the legal ownership of the phosphate deposits to the Nauruan people. They stated that since the Nauruans had not been party to the original phosphate agreement between the Pacific Phosphate Company and the German Government, the British Phosphate Commissioners' claim to the phosphate ownership was faulty.¹⁷ The Australian Government rejected this claim outright.

It had become clear after a few days of the July-August conference that the Nauruans would need economic and other professional advice on a continuing basis and accordingly they chose a newly formed firm of consultants, Philip Shrapnel and Company of Sydney, to take on the task. A senior staff member, Mr K. Walker, who had extensive experience with the Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics and with the United Nations Statistical Division, continued the preparation of the economic case for the Nauruans and Mr John Melville, Q.C., was engaged to examine legal aspects of the Nauruans' problems. For the first time, too, a public relations firm began to advise on publicity and press releases.

The Nauruans now began to prepare submissions for further talks with the Australian Government which finally took place in Canberra in June 1965. There was urgency in the approach of both parties, for the 1947 agreement expired in 1967 and some agreement had to be reached. The first submission was on the ownership of the phosphate:

It is submitted that irrespective of what might have been in former times the consequences of conquest or occupation, modern society recognizes the

right of a cohesive unit of people identified with a particular territory, to seek and achieve sole control of their own territorial area.¹⁸

This submission referred to the claim that the British Phosphate Commissioners obtained their rights from the 1919 Agreement and stated that this agreement had no rights to transfer and that any such rights derived by a self-imposed Protecting Power could not avail against the wishes of an indigenous people. It was further submitted that any alleged title held under German concession ceased when Germany was defeated in World War I. The submission noted faults in the agreements of 1919 and 1923 and concluded:

no legal basis exists for any period of years for extraction of or right to extract phosphate from the territory of Nauru except as may be justified in the capacity of the 3 Governments under their Trusteeship powers and for the proper performance of such powers for the sole beneficial interest of the Nauruan people.¹⁹

The Nauruans went on to say that the Trusteeship concept explicitly provided that any profit (less costs of production and fees for management) derived from exploitation of Trust Territory resources was the right of the indigenous inhabitants. Exploitation should not be permitted to make the continued existence of the Nauruans on the island impossible. It was invalid that *all* administration obligations on the island should be paid for out of its only wasting resource. The submission denied that the British Phosphate Commissioners had the right to fix arbitrarily their own price and stated that the profit derived from the sale of Nauru phosphate at world market price, after deduction of cost of production and a reasonable management fee, was the entitlement of the Nauruan people. The Nauruans went on to demand full consultation on all aspects of the mining and in particular on the rate of extraction, which it proposed should be pegged at its present 1.6 million tons per annum.²⁰

These submissions were supported by a careful and comprehensive analysis designed to establish a world price of phosphate. This concluded that the f.o.b. price of Makatea phosphate should be taken as the minimum world price for Nauru phosphate, because the quality of and freight charges for Nauru phosphate approximated those for Makatea phosphate. Thus Nauru phosphate should have been sold for

£6.4s. per ton rather than for £2.10s. per ton which was actually charged by the B.P.C.²¹

The analysis argued that as the British Phosphate Commissioners always claimed to be a non-profit organisation, the Nauruan people should get the difference between £2.10s. per ton which covered the B.P.C. costs and £6.4s. per ton (world price)—77s.8d. (which included the present royalty of 3s.8d.). It was suggested that a total direct royalty of 55 per cent (68s.) of the world price be paid to the Nauruan people, leaving 37 per cent for cost of extraction and administration and 8 per cent for profit. This it was suggested was a minimum. The submission concluded:

The users of Nauru phosphate have therefore benefited to the extent of £67.7 million since 1949 through the failure of the B.P.C. to charge a proper price. The amount would be very much larger over the whole period since phosphate was first mined in 1906. This has rebounded to the disadvantage of the Nauruan people since they have not received royalties based on the true value of phosphate.²²

The Australian delegation insisted that the British Phosphate Commissioners had sound legal rights to the phosphate and that they had no obligation under the 1919 Agreement to pay any royalties at all. However, it was agreed that a royalty of 13s.6d. per ton be paid in 1964–5, and 17s.6d. per ton be paid in 1965–6, after which discussions would be held with a view to the Nauruan people taking a 50 per cent interest in the phosphate industry.²³

The outcome of the conference showed the value of the Nauruans' strongly argued and well supported case, for it had succeeded in driving the first wedge into the Administering Authority's hitherto unbreached wall of defence. The Nauruans received a higher figure in royalties at the 1965 conference than they had demanded at the 1964 conference although the 17s.6d. a ton achieved still bore no relation to the 68s. which they had demanded. In 1966 the Nauruans received nearly five times the 1964 royalty rate. Their rejections of proposed increases at both the 1963 and 1964 conferences had been well worth while.

Reaction in the Australian press was typified by the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 19 June 1965: 'The new rates will make the 2,700 Nauruans the world's wealthiest people on a population

basis'. But in the same issue Councillor Bernicke sounded a note of realism: 'It is quite wrong to speak of this as a payment of around £2,000 for each family on Nauru . . . We regard the phosphate as capital, and the payment for it is not so much income as an accumulation of capital to meet the community's needs in future, when the deposits are exhausted'.

While these years of negotiations for royalties passed, the problems of the future were pigeonholed by Australia until, in 1960, it was announced that the alternatives of resettlement had been surveyed and were being discussed by the partner governments.²⁴ At a conference in Canberra in early October 1960 the Minister for Territories told Nauruan representatives that the three governments offered to resettle individual Nauruans in any of the three metropolitan countries. It was envisaged that the dispersal take place in gradual stages over thirty years, to be jointly planned with the Nauruans, while cash allowances would be made to facilitate resettlement.²⁵ This plan to remove the Nauruans from their island and disperse them about any or all of three corners of the globe, was clearly a decision made by someone totally ignorant of the strength of community and racial unity of the Nauruan people. The Nauruans' reply to the offer at the conference was a plea that their own 'separate identity' be maintained. Australia's representative explained to the Trusteeship Council that:

the main point of difference [at the conference] was that the Nauruans had felt that their future home should be in a place where they could maintain their own separate identity, while the Administering Authority could see no way of making an arrangement of that kind without sacrificing the high living standards of the Nauruan people and without denying them the opportunity for future advancement . . . the most practical and promising solution was to admit the Nauruan people to permanent residence . . . where the Nauruans would live as the other residents of those countries and would have exactly the same opportunities.²⁶

An officer of the Department of Territories was sent to Nauru in December 1960 to explain the plan to the Nauruan people but he was informed on his departure from Nauru by the Local Government Council that the Nauruan people were not ready to accept the proposals 'as they still hoped that a place might be found in which they could continue

to live as a community'.²⁷ The proposals were formally rejected in a statement on 15 December 1960 to the Australian Minister for Territories which also set down the ideal qualities for a new island homeland. These included a congenial climate, an abundance of fresh water, an ample fertile area, an abundance of fish and mineral resources, and close proximity to Australia on a main shipping line.²⁸

Raymond Gadabu, the Nauruan adviser on the Australian delegation to the Trusteeship Council, asked that an offshore island be sought for the Nauruans and again pointed out that acceptance of the 1960 offer would mean the sacrifice of the Nauruans' national identity. Since the Nauruans' right to self-government had been admitted by the Trusteeship Council the offer could not be accepted although he found it a generous one. In reply to Trusteeship Council criticisms of the plan, Australia's representative stated:

the plan which was put forward . . . did not imply in any way the liquidation of the Nauruan community, the expulsion of the Nauruans into some reservation in some other country, or the conversion of them into stateless persons . . . [he] asserted that the Nauruans themselves had recognized that the proposals in question were generous . . . the three Governments were committing themselves to an expense involving millions of pounds and would be carrying out a policy which they had not adopted in the past and which represented concessions not normally accorded to citizens of the three metropolitan countries.²⁹

A Melbourne newspaper, the *Age*, still unaware on 26 June 1961 that the proposals had been rejected six months before, felt that 'There will be widespread approval of the humane and realistic solution of Nauru's population problem . . . There can be no question that the best way to handle the problem is by the direct route to complete assimilation. There should be no racial enclaves in Australia and no second-class citizenship for these Pacific people'. This conviction in the efficacy of assimilation based on a tacit belief in the superiority of the host culture was anathema to the Nauruans and displayed a total ignorance of their explicit desire to retain their national identity.

In February 1962, Head Chief DeRoburt and Councillors Gadabu and Detsimea travelled to Australia for talks on resettlement with the Australian Government and visited Prince of Wales Island and Fraser Island off the Queensland

coast. In their subsequent discussions with Mr Hasluck, the Minister for Territories, the Nauruan representatives asked for assistance to prepare a detailed plan for island resettlement. In requesting advice on the extent of self-government which could be achieved the delegation suggested a relationship similar to that existing between New Zealand and its former dependency of Western Samoa in which the two sovereign states signed a Treaty of Friendship after independence was achieved on 1 January 1962. Provision was also made for New Zealand to aid the new state to carry out its external affairs and to allow Western Samoa administrative and technical assistance. This suggestion was rejected. The Nauruans also asked for assistance to consult legal counsel but were told that departmental advice would suffice them. Thus the Nauruans failed to get any official statement on the degree of sovereignty that Australia would allow and this delay hampered negotiations.³⁰

Department of Territories assistance did not materialise, so the Local Government Council Resettlement Sub-committee went ahead to draft proposals which it submitted to the Australian Government in June 1962. 'The Nauruan people proposed the creation of a sovereign Nauruan nation governed by Nauruans in their own interest but related to Australia by a treaty of friendship.'³¹ The proposals, based on the governments of the Administering Authorities, envisaged a constitution, a unicameral legislature, an executive and a judiciary as well as all of the usual departments to carry out the administration.

While these proposals were being prepared, the 1962 United Nations Visiting Mission arrived on Nauru to find out what the Nauruan people wanted for their future. It found that

The problem of Nauru presents a paradox. The striking contrast is between a superficially happy present state of affairs and an uncertain and indeed alarming future. . . . But this picture of peace and well-being and security is deceptive. Indeed, it is a false paradise. For these gentle people are dominated by the knowledge that the present happy state of affairs cannot continue.³²

The Mission recommended that a new detailed plan for resettlement be drawn up because it felt that resettlement was economically unavoidable, but it doubted

whether the search for an island home in fact offers the best hope of a solution for these people. The Nauruans are neither farmers nor fishermen, having lived for so long on the proceeds of the phosphate and the employment which the phosphate provides. . . More and more of their young men are turning to the occupations and habits and tastes of highly developed societies . . . the Nauruans fear that they will be submerged and lost in the population of Australia. They fear that they will suffer from discrimination. They dearly wish to maintain their sense of belonging to a community with their own customs and unity . . . the Mission consequently feels that as an alternative to the proposal for an island home, a proposal should be worked out and set out in detail for the establishment of a single community centre for the Nauruans in Australia.³³

In any decision on resettlement the Mission felt that 'the strongest obligation rests with the governments of the countries which have benefited from low-price, high-quality phosphate . . . to provide the most generous assistance towards the costs of whatever settlement scheme is approved for the future home of the people of Nauru'.³⁴

The Nauru Local Government Council's June 1962 proposals were examined by the Australian Government, which replied that it would consider the resettlement of the Nauruan people as a group in Australia if a suitable place could be found but it warned that there was no possibility of transferring sovereignty of territory which was part of Australia. Following this decision a delegation of the Nauru Local Government Council inspected Hinchinbrook Island, Great Palm Island, Curtis Islands, and an area on the Queensland mainland near Rockhampton. The Nauru Local Government Council then decided that Fraser Island, which had been inspected in February 1962, showed the best opportunities for resettlement. The greatest advantage Fraser Island offered was that at its nearest point it was 6 miles from the mainland, providing the seclusion that Curtis Island lacked and that the Nauruan people desired. An expert survey of Fraser Island was requested, but this concluded that Fraser Island did not offer sound economic prospects sufficient to support the Nauruan people in spite of its extensive forest land.³⁵ The Nauruans believed, however, that the Queensland Government refused to make the island available for settlement.³⁶

In November 1962 Mr R. Marsh of the Department of

Territories was appointed Director of Nauruan Resettlement. He accompanied the Head Chief and the Administrator on the first official inspection of Curtis Island in February 1963 after which the island was visited by all members of the Resettlement Committee. The unanimous report of the Committee was that either Fraser or Curtis Island was acceptable. In August and September 1963 the Director of Nauruan Resettlement visited Nauru to explain the Australian Government's proposals for resettlement of the Nauruan people on Curtis Island. The proposals were first, that the Nauruan people would have full Australian citizenship with freedom of entry to the Australian mainland, and second, the Nauruan people would have 'power to manage their own affairs on Curtis Island'. Mr Marsh, in describing these proposals to the Trusteeship Council pointed out 'the Australian Government did not see its way clear to making Curtis Island available as an independent sovereign Nauruan state . . . however, the Nauruans could manage their own affairs substantially without interference to an extent which *might be fairly described* as self-government' [author's italics].³⁷ After several public meetings and a film showing Curtis Island, the Local Government Council informed Mr Marsh that the Curtis Island proposal was unacceptable because of its political limitations and told him that it would make counter proposals.³⁸ The Australian Government, however, continued in its aim to acquire freeholds of Curtis Island while the Queensland Government even began plans for 'model' houses.

The Local Government Council's counter proposals did not quarrel with the choice of Curtis Island. The letter to the Administrator of 17 April 1964 containing the proposals was solely concerned with removing the problem of sovereignty over Curtis Island by a treaty of friendship: 'ample safeguards can be provided for in the proposed treaty of friendship and would provide adequate safeguards to protect Australia against anything which might endanger her national security'.³⁹ At the July-August 1964 conference the Nauruans claimed that the Australian Government refused to take the treaty of friendship proposed by the Nauruans seriously. The Nauruan delegation pointed out that it had

made important compromises: It had agreed that questions of defence, external affairs, civil aviation, and quarantine should be left in the hands of the Australian Government. The delegation further remarked, with some bitterness, that

rights to the mineral sand [on Curtis Island] have been sold to a private firm. You [the Australian Government] argued that it would not be convenient to revoke the arrangements already made, but that we could join this firm in partnership, and that the firm would restore the surface of any area it mined for minerals in the sands. This is a situation with which we are familiar already.⁴⁰

They also complained about the degree of autonomy proposed and remarked that in some respects these powers were smaller than those now in force on Nauru. 'We like and admire Australia and the Australian people', the Nauruans stated. 'We wish to be bound by a permanent treaty of friendship to Australia, but we are Nauruans, and we want to remain Nauruans'.⁴¹ The Nauruans' desire for autonomy was reinforced by fears of colour prejudice among some Australians. Head Chief DeRoburt told a Press conference in August 1964 that he had experienced this prejudice 'when a group of Nauruans visited Curtis Island . . . one resident had spoken of "punching the nose of the first nigger who comes ashore on Curtis Island."' ⁴² The delegation emphasised that resettlement was made necessary by the phosphate mining and felt

that despite your full knowledge of the relevant factors in the situation you have made no effort to compromise so that we could reach a mutually satisfactory agreement, but rather that your stand and your attitude on this most important and vital matter to our people are based on little else other than sheer strength in bargaining.⁴³

The delegation reiterated its 1963 conclusion that the Curtis Island idea should be abandoned and that the Nauruan people would remain on Nauru. The delegation then asked that estimates of costs of rehabilitation of the worked-out lands be prepared promptly.

The final rejection of the Curtis Island resettlement proposal at the July 1964 conference made clear that there was no possibility of closing the breach between the Nauruans and Australia on this question. In the summary, for the first time, Nauruan views were set forth in forceful, sophisticated, realistic, and ironic terms. Resettlement on Curtis Island,

like the 1960 proposals, had foundered because it failed to provide for the retention of the Nauruans' national identity. The Nauruan identity, a product of geographical isolation before European contact, had been reinforced by an artificial social isolation since 1907 and although the Nauruans were greatly attracted to the idea of their new island home, their identity as Nauruans was more important than this to them.

Many Australians were amazed that such a small people as the Nauruans should desire what a comparatively large nation as Australia already possessed—sovereignty and independence. The *Daily Mirror* view (30 March, 1965) that 'the idea of independence for 2,800 people has overtones of Gilbert and Sullivan' was understandable, but, if national rights are to be recognised, the problem becomes one of degree. One Australian Member of Parliament found it fantastic 'that such a small population should aim, and be encouraged by an official world body to seek governmental independence',⁴⁴ but by emphasising the practical difficulties of allowing the Nauruans the self-government that was their moral right under the United Nations Charter, the Australian Government failed to explore the possibility of compromise. No detailed survey was made of other suitable islands in the Pacific, and it was possible that purchase of an island such as Rabi in the Fiji Group could have solved the political obstacles.

Australia had hoped that the results of the 1954 C.S.I.R.O. survey on the rehabilitation of the worked-out phosphate lands would have put an end to any subsequent discussion on the matter but found to its dismay in 1964, that this issue had again been disinterred. Some members of the Trusteeship Council, notably the U.S.S.R., India, and the United Arab Republic, had seen since 1956 that resettlement on Australia's terms was not going to suit the Nauruans and had continued to urge a more detailed survey of rehabilitation. The Australian representative at the 1960 session of the Council rejected a suggestion that the Food and Agriculture Organization's advice be sought on rehabilitation by describing it as an 'unprovable proposition'.⁴⁵

After the July 1964 conference and the Nauruans' insis-

tence on remaining on Nauru, Australia sought in September an estimate of costs of the rehabilitation of the lands from the British Phosphate Commissioners. Their reply in October 1964 concluded that 'it would clearly be economically impossible to replace the whole of the phosphate mined from the coral limestone formation with soil from an outside source'.⁴⁶ This was based on the fact that when the deposits were fully worked, a time now estimated to be only 25 years away, 90 million tons of phosphate would have been extracted and to replace this 3.75 million tons of soil would need to be backloaded every year when only 2.5 million tons of ore would be shipped out. The estimated cost was based on the premise that sufficient coral pinnacles would have to be blasted and levelled to fill the spaces between the remaining coral pinnacles so that two-thirds of the depth of the field would be partially filled. The report found that this levelling of 3,500 acres would cost £40 million, the loading and shipping of soil to bring the surface to its original level would cost £65 million, and the unloading and spreading of such soil £23 million—a total cost of £128 million. The cost per ton of soil spread would be £5.13s.8d. and the cost per acre £36,570. The report concluded on the pessimistic note that the cost of rehabilitation would add £2 per ton to the f.o.b. cost of Nauru phosphate. Ironically, the estimated cost per ton of rehabilitation of £5.13s.8d. was more than twice the f.o.b. value per ton of phosphate exported in 1963-4, £2.13s. per ton.

The 1965 Visiting Mission to Nauru reported the Nauruans' request that rehabilitation be begun but the Mission itself was not sanguine about the project.⁴⁷ The Mission was told that the Nauruans were prepared to suffer some inconvenience in order to retain and preserve their national and racial identity but they rejected any proposal that Nauruans should be expected to exist on one-fifth of the island and stated that it was irrelevant that some considered Nauru the richest island in the world. The Nauruans pointed out that they had used the plateau area before it was mined for housing materials, canoes, pandanus, and some coconuts and that it was then much more congenial than now with its graveyard of coral pinnacles. Their submission concluded

that rehabilitation should have been commenced immediately the Curtis Island proposal was dropped.

In June 1965, at a conference in Canberra between the Administering Authority and the Nauruan delegation, the Nauruans reiterated that it was Australia's positive obligation to restore the island. The Australian Government, on the other hand, was sure that resettlement was still the only practical solution and was not prepared to contribute to the cost of rehabilitation.⁴⁸ After this conference, on 24 January 1966, the Minister for Territories, Mr Barnes, announced the appointment of the Nauru Lands Rehabilitation Committee 'to examine the practicability, costs and usefulness of rehabilitating the mined out areas of the phosphate island of Nauru'.⁴⁹ A civil engineer, an agricultural economist, and a soils expert from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations were appointed to the committee and began their survey of Nauru in January 1966. Their report was duly concluded by June 1966 but it was not released for publication.

In the crises over royalties and resettlement the same few elected members of the Nauru Local Government Council made all the decisions on behalf of their people. By ordinance, the functions of this council were still only advisory, but it was clear that since its inception the council had extended its influence in representing the Nauruan people in all spheres of life on the island and in negotiations and had widened the powers laid down for it. The Trusteeship Council continued to urge that the Local Government Council be given wider powers and the 1959 Visiting Mission, after receiving a strong petition from the Nauruans, recommended that they were now able to look after their own affairs.⁵⁰ The U.S.S.R. representative accused the Administering Authority of holding back the Nauruans' political progress to allow the B.P.C. a free run on the island but Australia replied self righteously that

any organ of self-government should properly reflect the degree of political maturity of the people. If the Nauruans had not attained a sufficient degree of maturity to enable them to undertake a system of the highest political evolution it was certainly no fault of theirs, nor, having regard to the circumstances of the island, could it be considered the fault of the Administering Authority.⁵¹

The elections held at the end of 1959 showed that the Nauruan people placed full confidence in their elected members, for only two new councillors were elected and Head Chief Hammer DeRoburt was elected for a further term. By 1961 the Trusteeship Council told Australia that resettlement problems must not be allowed to impede development towards independence and asked that realistic target dates for this be set.⁵² Myopically Australia refused outright. Its reluctance to give any new political power to the Local Government Council was mostly due to its belief in the inevitability of resettlement in Australia, which would make steps towards self-government redundant, but these motives were misconstrued by some members of the Trusteeship Council as being based solely on self-interest.⁵³

In 1962, after the General Assembly had voted 80 to nil that Nauru be given independence, Australia was forced to make some concessions. It told the Trusteeship Council that proposals to widen the powers of the Local Government Council had been placed before that body, but these only envisaged that the need for Administration approval of the Local Government Council budget cease. The 1962 Visiting Mission received a strong petition from the council on political advancement. The petition pointed out that the legal powers granted to the Council of Chiefs in 1928 were the same as those enjoyed by the Local Government Council in 1962. This was discouraging and frustrating to the Nauruan councillors and they asked if 'we have to wait till we attain that human perfection in everything, before we are given a chance to find our own feet'.⁵⁴ The petition complained that the council had been presented with intangible promises on advancement for years and referred to the argument continually put forward by the Administering Authority in the Trusteeship Council that the Local Government Council did not fully use its present powers. This referred to the refusal of the Local Government Council to introduce taxation. One practical example of the difficulty caused by this disagreement was the Social Services Ordinance which had been under consideration by the council since 1956 but which was finally rejected in 1960 because the Administration required that the council tax the Nauruans to finance it.⁵⁵ The petition concluded:

It is our earnest hope that the Visiting Mission will persuade the Administering Authority to be a bit more daring to take a risk with us, and if it is not prepared, we will most reluctantly be persuaded to look around and request another Administering Authority, who will be willing to take more risk with us, to guide us and lead us to our ultimate goal . . .⁵⁶

It was clear that Nauruans' relations with their Administering Authority had reached a new low point for this was the first time the Nauruans publicly disputed Australia's power over the island. The Visiting Mission agreed with this petition and, supported by the Trusteeship Council, asked the Administering Authority that an advisory committee on the setting up of a Legislative Council and Executive Council be organised.⁵⁷

It was not until October 1963 that the Administering Authority made any attempt to comply with the demands of the Trusteeship Council and the Nauruans. Trivial changes were made to the Nauru Local Government Council Ordinance so that the Administrator could still act against the advice of the council but he had to explain his reasons if he did so; and the council was released from the obligation of submitting its estimates to the Administrator for approval.⁵⁸ The proposals for Executive and Legislative Councils were ignored. The election for the council held at the end of 1963 returned all sitting councillors.

At the 'deadlock' July-August 1964 conference in Canberra the Nauruan delegation referred to the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration of the General Assembly on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, and article 5 of the Trusteeship Agreement to support its claim that the Administering Authority should allow the Nauruan people a Legislative Council. The delegation pointed out that it had asked the Visiting Missions of 1959 and 1962 for such a council but in spite of political advancement in New Guinea, where the problems were much greater, the Administering Authority had not seen fit to do anything. The delegation proposed a council of fifteen members with nine elected Nauruan members and five officially appointed members representing the government departments with the Administrator as Chairman:

We appreciate of course that this will give Nauruan representatives a clear majority but we submit that this is as it should be. We recognize the

Government's concern lest control be taken out of its hands at this stage, especially in matters relating to the phosphate industry, and we propose that laws passed by the Legislative Council be subject to disallowance by the Governor-General and that matters affecting the phosphate industry be excluded from the Council's powers.⁶⁹

Six members of the Legislative Council should be appointed to form an Executive Council.

The delegation submitted that after two years of experience in the Legislative Council—in the years 1965 and 1966—the Nauruan people should be granted independence on 31 January 1967. The submission pointed out that independence should never have been linked with the resettlement proposals, that Nauruans had asked in 1959 that target dates be set for independence and that

We look for an independent government of the Nauruan people by themselves for themselves. Its functions would be largely related to the affairs of the people and area described and the complexity of the problems with which it will have to deal should not be exaggerated for the purpose of delaying compliance with our request.⁶⁹

Australia did not make any move on this in 1964 so that the proposed date of January 1965 for the inauguration of the Legislative Council was rendered ineffective. The Nauruan delegation came to the conference in Canberra in June 1965 with the same demand which Australia, in the face of criticism from other countries and the prevailing winds of anti-colonialism, could no longer ignore. Australia now agreed to the creation of the two councils and set up a joint advisory committee of two Nauruans, two Australian Government representatives, and the Administrator of Nauru to prepare recommendations on the powers of these bodies. The Nauruan delegation urged strongly that its new proposed target date for independence of 31 January 1968 be agreed to. The Australian reply was cautious:

The Australian delegation to the Conference indicated that the Administering Authority did not consider it appropriate to establish now, ahead of any practical experience of the operation of the Legislative Council, any specific target dates for independence or complete self-government. The Authority did however propose that after two or three years' experience of the working of the Legislative Council and the Executive Council, further discussions should take place [i.e. in 1968] regarding *the possibility of further political progress* [author's italics].⁶¹

The Trusteeship Council commended the establishment of

the councils but a note of common sense was injected into the discussion by the delegate from the Republic of Taiwan who pointed out that, with the establishment of the two new councils and the continuation of the Local Government Council which alone had power to negotiate for phosphate royalties, a troika system had been set up which was liable to produce confusion and inefficiency on such a small island as Nauru.⁶² The Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, told the 1965 session of the Trusteeship Council that of the ten Trust Territories which were the council's responsibility in 1947 only three remained—the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (U.S.A.) and the Territories of New Guinea and Nauru—both held by Australia. 'The most important question that is being asked today', he said, 'is not whether these remaining Trust Territories will ultimately attain the objectives set for them in the Charter, but when these objectives will be attained'.⁶³

A Bill to set up the Nauru Councils was introduced into the Australian House of Representatives on 3 December 1965. The debate on the Bill on 9 December 1965—the first full discussion by an Australian Parliament of Nauruan affairs—was marked by the poverty of its information and understanding of the subject. The Opposition supported the Bill but put forward the following amendment:

this House, while not opposing the passage of the Bill, regrets that the Nauru Agreement between the three Governments . . . contains no terms which provide for the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the indentured labourers in the phosphate industry.⁶⁴

In moving the amendment, Mr Beazley (Labour, Fremantle), referred to the poverty of the indentured labourers, the fact that they would have no representation on the proposed Legislative Council and suggested that the labourers should have their own council. He feared that if no steps were taken to protect the labourers' interests now, the Nauruans would reap trouble later. The amendment was a reasonable one, but posed a problem that was incapable of solution in the present context where the Bill was to be passed by an Australian Parliament. This problem could only find a solution in negotiations between Nauruans and

the indentured labourers themselves. Mr Whitlam, in supporting the amendment, pointed out that 'The island presents a microcosm of all the economically and politically dependent parts of the world'. He told the House that Australia was exploiting Nauru and that only seven of some 130 International Labour Organization Conventions had been applied to indentured labourers on Nauru. He asked why the Nauruans had not been given independence when they asked for it as the government had promised the people of New Guinea and reminded the House that 'the function of the Department of Territories is to preside over its own dissolution'.⁶⁵

Dr McKay (Liberal, Evans) and Dr Gibbs (Liberal, Bowman) replied to the Opposition speeches. Dr McKay, ignoring the Opposition amendment, spoke about what he had seen during a 3-day visit to the island, telling the House what was amiss with the Nauruans, culturally, socially, economically, and politically. He referred to the 'inadequacy of native customs and laws' and deduced that the Nauruans' attitude to work was that it was an evil to be avoided. Dr Gibbs's speech was similarly misdirected. It is ironic, but after all not surprising, that both Dr McKay's and Dr Gibbs's comments, well-meaning in the sense that both professed to know what was best for the Nauruans but underpinned by ignorance and misunderstanding of Nauruan life, should reveal so clearly the faults of forty years of Australian administration whose failure to communicate realistically with the Nauruans had led to a deep gulf between them.

The Bill was passed without amendment and the Nauru Act 1965 became law. When news of the debate on the Bill reached Nauru, the Nauruan people were angry and incensed at what they felt was a public slander of their way of life and any remaining illusions about the Australian Government were shattered.

The first general election for the Nauru Legislative Council was held on 25 January 1966. The electoral areas and numbers of candidates to be elected were the same as for Local Government Council elections. Twenty-four nominations were received for the nine positions and only sixteen informal votes were cast. Although the campaign

before the election closely resembled those held before Local Government Council elections, there was a great deal of interest because Nauruans felt at last that self-government was in sight. The results of the election were:⁶⁶

District	Councillor elected
Aiwo	S. E. Tsitsi
Buada	A. Bernicke
Menen	J. A. Bop
Yaren	J. Detsimea
Anabar, Anibare, Ijuw	A. J. Doguape
Baiti, Uaboe, Nibok, Denigomodu	I. V. Eoaeo, R. B. B. Detudamo
Boe	H. DeRoburt (unopposed)
Anetan, Ewa	R. Degoregore (unopposed)

Head Chief DeRoburt continued as leader of his people with their full support. He had been undefeated in election since 1956. All candidates who were elected had been at some time members of the Local Government Council.

Great preparations preceded the opening of the Legislative Council on 31 January 1966, a date doubly significant because it was also the twentieth anniversary of the return of the Truk survivors to Nauru. For weeks before the great day the Nauruans worked to heave the accumulated debris of years over the reef and competed to beautify and decorate their districts. On 29 January a planeload of guests invited by the Nauru Local Government Council and pressmen who were to cable the opening of the Legislative Council of the smallest nation in the world was met by the island's population. The next day, for the first time since the war, a second plane, bearing the official guests, who included the Australian Minister for Territories, Mr Barnes, the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, Sir John McLeay, Senator O'Byrne, Mr Hazlett representing New Zealand, Mr Arnold representing the United Kingdom and Sir William Dunk, British Phosphate Commissioner for Australia, landed on the disputed airstrip. On the morning of 31 January only a fraction of the island's population could fit into the small, temporary-looking Court House, which, after many years of witnessing illegal drinking

charges, was suddenly transformed into the seat of the Legislature. Yet, however imperfect the building, however incongruous the Speaker's wig and the dark suits of the Legislative Councillors on that hot sultry day, the solemnity of the occasion overcame the strangeness of the setting and it was appropriate that Head Chief Hammer DeRoburt, who had with such dignity and determination led his people for ten years to wrest this measure of independence from the three trust governments, should on this day be awarded the Order of the British Empire. Back in Australia the *Canberra Times*, on 1 February 1966, editorialised, truthfully if somewhat ungraciously:

The tactics of the Nauruans in recent years is a classic example of what has been described as the 'tyranny of the minority'. But we can hardly begrudge them their victories. We have done very well out of the phosphate and these are the days of reckoning.

Solemnity did not rule for long. Parades, parties, a barbecue, and island dances supervened as the whole population joined in the celebrations.

A week later the Legislative Council began its first working meeting, and on 8 February Head Chief DeRoburt gave notice that he would move that a Select Committee of four elected members and two official members be set up to inquire into ways and means of achieving independence by 31 January 1968. The Nauruans' desire for independence had been overshadowed by resettlement, but whereas the proposed resettlement had failed disastrously, patient agitation and negotiation had achieved some measure of the road to independence. The Nauruans were elated that at last their elected majority was free to act rather than advise and that their future was in their own hands.

Superficially, the 1966 Nauruans who will have to cope with the problems of the future are like chameleons. At work as a clerk in the Administration a Nauruan will wear white knee socks, shorts and shirt, conduct business in very good English, scarcely distinguishable from his European colleagues, with whom, however, he does not mix socially. Before or after work he may have gone out in an outrigger canoe or fibreglass dinghy with outboard motor to fish outside the reef. With friends and family he will gather at the

No. 1 Co-operative Store, a great meeting place reminiscent of an Australian country store, in spite of its recently introduced supermarket features. Here he will speak only Nauruan. In 'Chinatown', the Chinese market where he officially pretends that he does not buy, he haggles with studied impudence in pidgin with an ostensibly unperturbed Chinese. It is likely that he has spent at least some time in Australia and if he is married it is probable that his wife speaks rather less English than he and is even less outgoing in her relations with other races. He will have married young and he will probably have a large family. If he married before the 1960s he would almost certainly have married outside his own clan and received the permission of the council for his marriage. If it is practicable, he probably lives either together with, or close by, his wife's mother's family where such tasks as baby-minding, cooking, and care of the children are shared by most members of the joint family. He or his wife will probably be related in some degree to one of the large family groups on the island—perhaps the Harris or the Detudamo families. When his children's births are notified in the Nauru Government Gazette, their tribe will also be listed. There may be children other than his own living in his family for children are cherished communally by the Nauruans and illegitimacy is no handicap.

In spite of the appearance of strong matriarchal authority in the family, the Nauruan man is lord and master in his own house. He does no women's work, nor does he admit women to men's business. If he should be celebrating an important occasion, perhaps the first birthday of one of his children, a great feast will be prepared. Vast quantities of raw tuna fish soaked in coconut milk and lemon juice will be prepared, pigs caught and cooked, and Chinese food may be brought steaming hot from the cookshop, for the Nauruans have learned to enjoy Chinese as well as European food and are as adept with chopsticks as with knives and forks. Lava lavas, sarongs, leis of frangipani and crowns of flowers will make this an unmistakably Nauruan occasion. The children, having eaten, fall quietly asleep on mats on the ground, guitars and ukeleles will be brought out by the family

and guests and although modern American and Hawaiian music is popular, the music will eventually turn to island folk songs in which the Nauruans' talents for harmony and improvisation can be given full rein. Some of the younger girls will no doubt begin with a hula and then twist all night as everyone joins in the music and dancing.

The isolation of the island continues to affect Nauruan life. The reception of radio programs is too difficult for all but the initiated and the devoted and so most Nauruans rely on record players and tape recorders for entertainment. Newspapers, ten days old at least, except when landed by the occasional plane, are patiently read to maintain contact with the world but the cost of getting off the island, although reasonable by commercial standards at \$360 return, is prohibitive to most Nauruans. The social isolation engendered by the Administration in which Europeans live 'topside' on the crown of the island and the Nauruans live 'bottomside' around the rim makes for little social mixing and until recently it was unknown for a European to be a guest in a Nauruan home.

Although the Nauruans are absorbed in a semi-suburbia of refrigerators and motorcars, the moonscape of the worked-out phosphate fields nevertheless perpetually reminds them of the all-important problem of the future.

Independence and the Control of Phosphate

At the June 1965 conference between the Nauru Local Government Council delegates and the Australian Government representatives, the Nauruans had successfully driven a further wedge into the official position. By their agreement to a total royalty of 17s.6d. a ton the partner governments had at last tacitly acknowledged that the price of Nauru phosphate must be raised to be made comparable to the now established world price. This admission made royalties a minor issue to be negotiated on the basis of a mutually agreed formula and now allowed the Nauruans to concentrate on achieving control of the industry itself. The finer legal points on ownership of the phosphate remained unresolved, but the partner governments no longer actively opposed the Nauruans' claims to ownership. Accordingly, at the end of the 1965 talks, the governments proposed a partnership arrangement for the industry in which the Nauruans would receive 50 per cent of the financial benefit remaining after deduction of costs of extraction and administration.¹ These costs would take up a little over one third of the current world price, so that in effect the Nauruans and the governments, would each receive a third of the world price. The Nauruans refused to be put off with a minority share of their own rapidly depleting resource and counter-proposed that they themselves should take over the industry and allow the B.P.C. to act as managing agents on their behalf.

At the June 1966 conference the Nauruans submitted brief and pointed arguments against the governments' partnership proposal. The Nauruans saw the proposal as disadvantageous to themselves, for full economic benefit could

not be gained under a partnership which detracted from their legal and moral rights as owners of the phosphate, and further the concept of partnership implied an identity and equality of interest which did not exist between the Nauruans and the Administering Authority. Pointing out that the B.P.C. mined Christmas Island as a managing agent, the Nauruans pressed for an agreement which would allow the B.P.C. to mine the phosphate on their behalf. By such an agreement the partner governments would lose the share of the industry that had enabled them to subsidise their consumers by low prices in the past. The Nauruans put forward \$11.80 as an indication of the selling price of Nauru phosphate which would be comparable to the world price. This price would be split as follows:

	\$	c.
	per ton	
1964 direct royalty to Nauruan people	.37	
Cost of administration of Nauru	.90	
B.P.C. cost of extraction	4.13	
	<hr/>	
B.P.C. valuation of phosphate	5.40	
Management fee payable to B.P.C. (10% on costs)	.42	
Additional profit to the Nauruan people	5.98	
	<hr/>	
Total	\$11.80 ²	

The Nauruans believed 10 per cent of full costs was an adequate fee for the B.P.C. because it was a government instrumentality and although a commercial enterprise could charge more, state-owned enterprises often operated on smaller profit margins. Under such an agreement the Nauruans would receive a minimum profit of \$6.35 a ton, while the costs of administration of the island would continue as a charge on the industry. The Nauruans further offered to buy the B.P.C.'s plant and equipment at an agreed price to be paid off over ten years as a charge on profits. It was suggested that Nauruan and B.P.C. representatives should form a committee to act in consultation, but after extensive discussion no agreement could be reached on these proposals and the June 1966 meeting was adjourned.

Since the 1964 negotiations the Nauruans' stand on phos-

phate matters had hardened increasingly. The remaining short life of the deposits and the fact of imminent exhaustion made time an important factor in the negotiations and the Nauruans became more and more impatient with the governments' delays. This, coupled with the fear of a future in an unrehabilitated and therefore almost uninhabitable Nauru with no real prospect of an acceptable resettlement proposal, dictated the Nauruans' unbending attitude to negotiation. The publication of the Report of the Committee into Nauru's Rehabilitation in June 1966 and the Administering Authority's subsequent lukewarm suggestions on this confirmed the Nauruans in their opposition to the partner governments' proposals on phosphate.

In the six months since its inception in January 1966, the Rehabilitation Committee of Mr G. I. Davey, consulting engineer, Professor J. N. Lewis, professor of agricultural economics at the University of New England, and Mr W. F. Van Beers, a soils expert from the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization, had made a comprehensive, detailed, and reasoned survey of Nauru's land needs. Their main conclusion was

1. that while it would be technically feasible (within the narrow definition of that expression) to refill the mined phosphate areas of Nauru with suitable soil and/or other materials from external sources, the very many practical considerations involved rule out such an undertaking as impracticable.³

This was cold comfort to the Nauruans' hopes and demands for total resoiling. Of the three main practical considerations that ruled against total resoiling cost proved once again to be the most potent; 'as costs [\$256 million] would substantially exceed the net value of phosphate to be removed, this course has been ruled out at the outset as not offering a practicable alternative'.⁴ The natural slope of the island presented serious technical difficulties to resoiling and even if resoiling to a depth of four feet could be achieved on the plateau area, the principal proposed crop, coconuts, might very well fail because of the unfavourable climate.

The Committee suggested that partial and perhaps in some cases total fulfilment of the Nauruans' expectations from resoiling could be achieved by other methods. Strong

emphasis was laid on the need for an adequate water supply which could be achieved by collection from large mined areas by the use of storage galleries. Nauru's other great need, an international airport constructed on a worked-out area, would free land for habitation on the coastal fringe and also be a runoff area for water. A further 500 acres could be treated using local soil conserved from future mining areas, to provide a limited agricultural area for trees and vegetables and for residential and public purposes. To ameliorate the ugly worked-out areas artificial acceleration of natural regeneration would be attempted. This program was aimed at the support of a population of 10,000 Nauruans by the year 2000 with no fall in its standard of living as 'the ability of the Nauruan community to live within its prospective income abroad seems quite assured'⁵ and the cost, at \$31 million, was a mere bagatelle compared to B.P.C.'s estimates for total resoiling.

Various suggestions were also made as to how the Nauruans might care to occupy their time in the future, such as orchid growing, shipping, brickmaking, drink bottling, fish canning, and tourism.

The Nauru Local Government Council's displeasure with the Committee's conclusions was aired at the 1966-7 Session of the Trusteeship Council.⁶ As special adviser to the Australian representative, Head Chief DeRoburt pointed out that the Nauruans' view that complete resoiling was technically feasible had been borne out by the Committee but alleged that the Committee had exceeded its terms of reference in describing this as impracticable and had made a gross error of judgment in considering only a future population of 10,000. The Head Chief further reminded council that of a total cost of \$240 million for resoiling, the Administering Authority was only responsible for 38 per cent, or \$91 million, and the Nauruans, on achievement of ownership of the industry, would take care of the rest. He concluded by remarking that the Nauruans and the Administering Authority held apparently irreconcilable views on rehabilitation. Australia's representative replied that the partner governments were not opposed to restoration and told the council of their suggestion that \$2 million be put aside

annually from the profits of the phosphate industry to restore the land gradually. This would total \$60 million over the remaining thirty years of the phosphate's life and would more than cover the Rehabilitation Committee's plans. Further finance was also available from the Nauruan Community Long Term Investment Fund which was now not required for resettlement. This fund would yield \$US 21 million for 1967-8 and almost \$US 18 million per annum until the year 2000. Any responsibility for restoration on the part of the Administering Authority was disclaimed in the final statement: 'It would be most inappropriate and unacceptable to the Nauruan people that the Partner Governments should decide what was to be done in a self-governing Nauru'.⁷

After this discussion, although the Trusteeship Council had called on the partner governments to resoil their share, although even the Rehabilitation Committee believed that it was 'consistent with the general trend in regulatory policies for extractive industries to require such treatment [for Nauru] to be a responsibility of the phosphate extractive industry',⁸ and in spite of the Nauruans' demand that it was morally obligatory for the partner governments to refill their share, it was clear that the latter had no intention at all of fulfilling these demands unless the cost could be met from the future proceeds of the phosphate, for no Australian government could approve an expenditure of its share of the \$256 million (\$91 million) for this purpose without a public outcry.

The Nauruans understand this position very well and have used the moral right of their position on rehabilitation as a lever in phosphate negotiations for a better deal and for embarrassing publicity against the partner governments. Just how serious the Nauruan leaders are about rehabilitation as a project to be carried out is difficult to gauge, for it is the unofficial policy of the Nauru Local Government Council on the island, yet a continuing, if subdued interest in resettlement is evident in the Nauruan leaders' insistence that resettlement be included in every agenda for discussion. No positive suggestions for this have been forthcoming but the simple fact of inclusion indicates that the Curtis Island

enthusiasm could be revived for relocation on a suitable island chosen by an independent Nauru.

With all these considerations in mind the Nauruans came to the negotiating table in 1967 determined to have full rights. A major change in Nauruan policy was evident from the first page of the opening submission:

In the opinion of the Council [the Nauru Local Government Council] the Partner Governments' interests in the phosphate should be confined to these two matters, [supply and price] and all other matters affecting the industry should be the exclusive concern of the Nauruan people.⁹

With this statement the Nauruans assumed a commanding position at the negotiations. The official representatives were told that the Nauruans realised the importance of phosphate to Australia when rock phosphate imports into that country were rising by 10 per cent per annum and potential consumption had been estimated by the C.S.I.R.O. at some 20 million tons a year. In view of this the Nauruan people were prepared to guarantee continuity of such supplies from Nauru and would therefore enter into a long-term agreement on price of a variable figure based on \$12 per ton.

The Nauruan delegation explained its about face from the managing agency proposals submitted at the 1966 talks by referring to the absolute necessity of rehabilitation of the island 'in a manner satisfactory to the Nauruan people' and pointing to the refusal of the partner governments to meet any of these costs. The Nauruans argued further that they could not afford to pay a management fee to anyone, for from a total return of \$312 million over the remaining life of the deposits, only \$70 million would remain after rehabilitation costs had been met. The 10 per cent on costs management fee would have yielded the B.P.C. \$22 million and this amount was needed by the Nauruans. In any case, the argument continued, the phosphate affects every Nauruan's life and therefore 'true harmony' can only be assured by the Nauruans' taking over the industry.¹⁰ Two other factors not mentioned by the Nauruans in their submission had contributed to their determination to achieve sole control of the industry. The first was that when the managing agent proposal had been discussed at the 1966 talks the partner governments had insisted on a majority vote for the governments on management decisions or alternatively the

power of a veto. This was completely unacceptable to the Nauruans. The second factor was a decline in B.P.C.-Nauruan relations on the island and this formed another reason for abandoning the 1966 proposals. This new demand of the Nauruans for total ownership followed a pattern of negotiating set as far back as 1963. When a proposal for increasing Nauruan participation in the industry was rejected by the partner governments the Nauruans replied, not by compromising, but by raising their demands, and in spite of the governments' tenacious hold on the industry the Nauruans' tactics were extremely successful.

Changes in control of the industry were to be effected by the replacement of the B.P.C. by a Nauru Phosphate Corporation; the B.P.C.'s fixed assets would be purchased and its expatriate staff retained if willing to stay. Interim royalties for 1966-7 were also discussed and the partner governments' offer of \$3.50 a ton was increased after negotiation by \$1 for housing and water tanks on the island.

Over two months of hard bargaining on the Nauruan proposals followed before the Nauru Phosphate Agreement could be published on 15 June 1967. The Australian Government was forced in the agreement to accept a position as a mere buyer rather than, as formerly, controller of the supply and industry itself. Yet Australia had an advantage in the willingness of the Nauruans to guarantee supply and price, for even these could have been lost if the Nauruans had decided to sell on the open market. Australia still had doubts, however, for with Nauru's impending independence it would have no legal control over the supply and probably doubted the Nauruans' ability to guarantee it, even if willing to do so. Exports of phosphate from 1963 to 1966 had not reached their targets of two million tons a year, mainly because the vagaries of the weather delayed shipping, and if such normal difficulties should be added to by breakdowns in management or labour disputes the guarantee of supply would be rendered ineffective. Australia had sought to delay the onset of such problems by holding back complete independence and denying the Nauruans complete control of the industry, but the Nauruans were intransigent in their demands and forced agreement to them in June 1967.

The terms of the Nauru Phosphate Agreement were as

follows: phosphate was to be supplied exclusively to the partner governments at the rate of two million tons a year while the governments undertook to supply an assured market for this output at the agreed price of \$11.00 per ton f.o.b. for three years, when the price would be varied on an agreed Florida-based price index. The Nauru Local Government Council was to buy the capital assets of the industry for approximately \$20 million, of which \$9 million would be paid in the three years from 1 July 1967, the remainder to be financed elsewhere.¹¹ During this three-year period the B.P.C. would manage the phosphate operations and prepare to transfer management to the Nauru Phosphate Corporation which would be set up for this purpose. The net profit of the industry would be paid to the Nauruans.

With this agreement the Nauruan people achieved their economic objectives. In the three years since the 1964 talks where the Nauruans had rejected a 'handout' royalty increase of 50 per cent, they had achieved complete control of the industry. No revolution, no confiscation had been required but years of hard and sometimes bitter bargaining had enabled David to overcome Goliath. With this remarkable achievement of economic independence, political independence was assured.

In 1966 the Nauruans made no important moves to secure political independence by the target date of 31 January 1968. The Trusteeship Council again passed a resolution in February of 1966 calling on Australia to ensure that independence would be achieved by that date, but the Nauruan leaders, knowing that political independence could only be fully realised after the achievement of economic independence, concentrated on the phosphate negotiations. Thus the Select Committee of five Nauruan Members on Constitutional Development set up by the first session of the Legislative Council met but did not report. The Legislative Council itself, in spite of long periods in which Nauruan members were involved in negotiations in Australia, met regularly and in the next eighteen months passed twenty-four ordinances. The most important and far-reaching of these was the Liquor Ordinance which, by a unanimous vote,

ended thirty years of discrimination on the island. The ordinance in most respects closely followed Australian licensing laws, for it allowed the Legislative Council to license premises for the consumption of alcohol, but in one important provision it was uniquely Nauruan: Nauruan women were forbidden to drink alcohol outside their own homes unless granted a permit to do so by the Nauru Local Government Council. The purpose of this restriction seems to have been the protection of Nauruan women, but the provision itself rather gives the lie to the myth of matriarchal authority on the island which is so beloved of foreign journalists.

Two other important ordinances were passed. The first, the Air Navigation Act, provided safety and control measures for the time when Nauru would have an airstrip of international standing. The second was a Third Party Insurance Ordinance. Since royalties had been paid at the rate of \$1.75 a ton there had been a great increase in the number of motor vehicles with a consequent increase in accidents, for Nauruan drivers had only one main ring road to use. This ordinance, together with new traffic regulations, was an attempt to solve the traffic problem. Apart from these changes life in Nauru went on very much as before. Some of the improvements in education measures introduced in 1965 and 1966 began to bear fruit when in June 1967 there were double the number of students studying overseas. Of these, half were at junior secondary level, but four were at university and another five were training as teachers. In July 1966 a severe outbreak of gastro-enteritis attacked many Nauruans but it was quickly brought under control. Yet this outbreak demonstrated that even some fifty years after the 1920 influenza epidemic, such epidemic diseases could still strike the Nauruan community.

In April 1967, when the Nauruan delegation met the partner governments and presented their demand for complete control of the industry, this act set the climate for the kind of constitutional changes that the Nauruans wanted, for, with complete control of the phosphate, nothing less than complete independence would be acceptable. The Nauruan leaders were well aware of two important Pacific

precedents for constitutional change: the Cook Islands and Western Samoa, both of which had been administered by New Zealand as Trust Territories, and it was against a background of their experiences that the Nauruans decided on their future. New Zealand's attitude to future developments on Nauru as one of the joint administering authority was also conditioned by her experiences with her two former territories and was therefore predictably more liberal than that of either Australia or Great Britain.

The fifteen Cook Islands, with a 1965 population of about 20,000, had been administered by a New Zealand resident commissioner. After the United Nations Committee on Colonialism passed its 1960 resolution calling for independence for all colonial territories, the New Zealand Government offered the Cook islanders a choice of independence, integration with New Zealand, association with a Polynesian Federation, or self-government. The Cook islanders chose the last, and with self-government they retained their New Zealand citizenship, their freedom of access to New Zealand, and their right to a \$2 million a year subsidy. The people of Western Samoa had sought a different solution. They had been granted gradual and increasing control over their own affairs and had governed themselves through a Legislative Council and two Legislative Assemblies since 1948. This long experience had confirmed the Samoans in their desire for independence and by 1960 preparations for this were under way when a Constitutional Convention was elected to consider a draft constitution for an independent Western Samoa. By October 1960 this constitution had been adopted and a resolution of the Convention allowed Western Samoa to enter into a Treaty of Friendship with New Zealand after independence in which New Zealand would assist the new state to carry out its external affairs responsibilities. After a plebiscite, held under United Nations supervision, which overwhelmingly supported the constitution and the independence date, Western Samoa became an independent state on 1 January 1962.¹²

By May of 1967, when the Nauruans were ready to submit proposals for constitutional development, they had, as their constitutional adviser, Professor J. W. Davidson, Professor

of Pacific History at the Australian National University. Professor Davidson had been intimately associated with both the Cook Islands and Western Samoan solutions as constitutional adviser, and the proposals made by the Nauruans reflected not only these Pacific experiences but Professor Davidson's study of constitution making in other parts of the world. His general approach was that the stability of newly independent states could be affected by three procedural factors. The first was the way in which the representatives of the people were associated in the work of constitution making. Here the Indian example was important as a precedent, for when the Indian Constituent Assembly adopted and enacted its own constitution in 1949, this constitution not only became an 'overt expression of popular will' but 'cut the chain of authority linking the Law of India with that of England'.¹³ This precedent was followed by Burma and Pakistan but in the majority of British dependencies seeking independence the second factor of the legal form of constitutional enactment overrode the advantages secured through fully representative participation in constitution making. In these cases constitutional conferences were convened, usually in London, where colonial delegates discussed previously prepared drafts. The constitutions were enacted by order-in-council and the legal link was thus retained. This kind of constitution often reflected an isolation from local political pressures and a tendency to avoid rather than tackle problems.

The third important factor was the timing of the enactment in relation to the termination of political dependency. If, as happened in the cases of Pakistan, Indonesia, and South Vietnam, the constitution was not adopted before independence was declared, the executive power could exert undue influence on the Constitutional Convention or secure amendments to its drafts, whereas it was less likely that such pressures would occur if constitutional discussions were completed before independence.¹⁴ All these factors were extremely relevant to Nauru's plans for independence and formed part of the basis of the statement presented by the Nauruan delegation to the partner governments on 12 May 1967.

The Nauruan delegation asked the partner governments to agree to Nauru becoming an independent state on 31 January 1968. This step would require the United Nations to terminate Nauru's Trusteeship Agreement and before it could do this, the Trusteeship Council would need to know what preparations had been made for future government of the island. The statement then set out tentative plans for the government and a timetable to achieve these by the target date. Nauru was to become the Republic of Nauru, governed by a modified form of the British parliamentary system suited to the needs of such a small community. The proposed Constitution would specifically spell out fundamental human rights because the rights of the high proportion of indentured workers who would be non-citizens would need to be carefully protected. Again, because of the small size of the island, the roles of Head of State and Head of the Executive Government would be held dually by a President. Executive power would be vested in the President and a small cabinet of ministers. A Legislature of about fifteen members and a Public Service with a reduced number of departments was proposed. The Judiciary would consist of District Courts under Nauruan magistrates, a Supreme Court under a Judge, and a Court of Appeal.

The statement pointed out that the Constitution could be enacted by the Australian Parliament or by the Nauruans themselves through their own Constitutional Convention. This last course was preferred by the Nauruans for the Constitution would then 'be regarded by the Nauruans as one that they had given themselves, not as one that had been imposed by outside authority'.¹⁵

To achieve independence by the proposed date work on a draft constitution and other matters would have to begin immediately so that a Constitutional Convention could be elected in September or October to finish its work by the end of the year. The problems of Nauruan citizenship and re-organisation of the structure of the administration were also touched upon in the statement but these needed future discussion and expert advice. But in external affairs and defence, a definite stand was made that final authority in these matters would rest with the government of an inde-

pendent Nauru. Treaties and agreements would not be signed before independence for 'only then will the Government of Nauru be able to negotiate with other governments on terms of legal equality'.¹⁶

The partner governments presented their comments on the Nauruan statement on 15 June 1967. They agreed 'that basic changes should be made in the arrangements for the government of Nauru', and if possible by 31 January 1968, but their statement made sweeping changes to the demands of the Nauruans.¹⁷ Self-government should be achieved by passage of legislation through the Australian Parliament by an act which would reserve control of external affairs and defence to Australia but allow the Nauruans to determine the form of their internal government. In this way Australia's links with Nauru would be powerfully preserved. The Nauruans rejected this outright and the governments presented an alternative in which Nauru would become fully independent after making a treaty which would allow Australia to control her external affairs and defence. The Nauruans still maintained their original position on complete independence, but agreed to discuss the alternative further.

The joint statements of Head Chief DeRoburt and Mr C. E. Barnes, Minister for Territories, on the phosphate and independence negotiations, received wide publicity in the Australian press where a mostly congratulatory tone was adopted. The *Canberra Times* of 16 June 1967 pointed out rightly that the initiative for the external affairs and defence strings came from the Australian Government and not from Great Britain and New Zealand, who had had experience with 'freedom of association' arrangements in Pacific and West Indian territories. The *Pacific Islands Monthly* of April 1967 took a conservative stand in remarking that 'the partners do not feel the Nauruans are capable of running their own affairs by next January—nor are they. Nauru has not enough men of DeRoburt's ability'. What those who took this attitude failed to realise was that the Nauruans were by now experts in finding the right people to do for them those things which for a short period they were unable to do themselves.

After the adjournment of the discussions on the departure of a Nauruan delegation for New York to attend a Trusteeship Council meeting, a working party of Australian Government representatives, Professor Davidson, and Nauruan delegates was formed to work out the details of proposals on which agreement had been reached. One of these points was the governments' proposal of a committee system of government, which was rejected by the Nauruans as allowing expatriate public servants too much power in policy making. When the talks resumed on 23 August 1967, the Head Chief referred to the governments' proposed external affairs treaty and noted its advantages but offered instead to negotiate a Treaty of Friendship which would be concluded after independence. This would achieve, said the Head Chief, 'our primary objective—the attainment for Nauru of full and unfettered sovereignty . . . We cannot accept the continuance of a measure of political dependency'.¹⁸

Further delays occurred on the part of the governments and it was not until they fully realised that the Nauruans would not budge on external affairs that they gave in and in a joint statement issued on 24 October 1967 agreed to full and unqualified independence for the Nauruan people. These delays had reduced considerably the time available to solve the administrative and constitutional problems still remaining and had made the original plan for electing a Constitutional Convention in September or October ineffective. And still the partner governments continued to delay. In a meeting with the Nauruans on 1 November 1967 they demanded that the Administrator of Nauru, Brigadier King, should meet the whole of the Nauru Local Government Council on Nauru and advise them of the administrative difficulties that would ensue (because of the delays by the governments) if the independence date was held to. To the Nauruan delegation this smacked of an accusation of lack of competence on their part to stand as a fully representative delegation and they rejected this delaying tactic as 'highly objectionable'.¹⁹

Immediately after this the Nauru Independence Bill, which severed the links between Australia and Nauru, was introduced into the Australian Parliament. The debate on

the bill was almost as uninformed as that on the 1965 Nauru Bill and the highlight was when Senator M. C. Cormack, chairman of the joint foreign affairs committee, forecast that Nauru would become 'the greatest slum in the oceans of the world' in twenty-five years when the phosphate ran out and prophesied that the 'slave race' of indentured labourers would form a National Liberation Front to take over the island.²⁰ These dire predictions did not, however, affect the passage of the Bill. On the 21 November, Nauru's Legislative Council passed a Bill to set up a Constitutional Convention whose members would include the nine members of the Legislative Council and twenty-seven other elected members.

In New York on 22 November 1967, amid an air of general congratulation, the by now much reduced membership of the Trusteeship Council met and terminated unanimously the Trusteeship Agreement for Nauru. Head Chief DeRoburt told the Council of Nauru's plans for independence and explained that the Constitution to be adopted by the Constitutional Convention before independence would only be permanent in part. The powers of the President and Cabinet would, for a short transitional period, be vested in a Council of State, to avoid the difficulties of beginning a ministerial system before the administrative structure was fully reorganised. The Constitutional Convention would meet again after independence to adopt a permanent Constitution. The Head Chief then referred to the one outstanding issue on which agreement had not been reached, rehabilitation, and foreshadowed that the new Nauruan Government would continue to seek a just settlement of its claims.²¹

Preparations for independence now passed to Nauru. The thirty-six members of the Constitutional Convention were elected on 19 December 1967 and met for the first time on 3 January 1968. Hammer DeRoburt and Austin Bernicke were elected Chairman and Deputy Chairman, and Professor Davidson and Miss Rowena Armstrong, who had drafted the constitution, sat as advisers explaining the articles as they arose and answering questions. In its work of discussing and amending the Constitution, the Convention assumed importance as a widely representative expression of Nauruan opinion, not only on the important issues that

faced the community but as a reflection of Nauruan views on the past. Thus, as Professor Davidson put it later, 'many debates in the constitutional convention had been dominated by Nauruan reaction against past paternalism'.²² Both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Convention restricted themselves to the conduct of the meetings and did not offer (except in two cases) opinions on matters before the convention. A healthy conflict of views was observable on most issues but the only note of constant opposition was struck by veteran politician Victor Eoaeo who was against complete independence in general, preferring a Cook Islands type solution, and against independence on 31 January in particular because he felt it had been unduly rushed and the Nauruans were not yet ready to run their own administration. He had petitioned the Trusteeship Council to this effect the previous November, but he had no vocal support on Nauru.

In discussing the clauses on fundamental rights some younger members were very concerned with the protection of civil liberties and specifically attempted an amendment which would have removed any possibility of capital punishment for murder. The motion was lost 26 to 8 but the arguments used by Nauruans to support capital punishment illustrated Nauruan views of themselves and of the other communities on the island. The main argument was that as no Nauruan would ever murder another Nauruan the clause was not applicable to Nauruans, but 'hired foreign assassins' could not be allowed to escape capital punishment for a congenial life term in a Nauruan prison.

Another long standing bone of contention on Nauru, the power to tax, was argued fiercely. A motion which would have removed the government's power to tax was defeated by the narrow margin of 15 to 17 which showed that, although the majority were farsighted enough to realise that when the phosphate was exhausted the government would have to tax, a substantial minority was in favour of excluding this power.²³ This concern with reinforcing individual rights was again evident in the opposition to the compulsory acquisition of land for mining, which was a power absolutely necessary for ordered and economic exploitation of the phos-

phate. This arose again in discussion of a clause that vested the rights to mine the phosphate in the Republic of Nauru when a minority wanted to insert 'with the consent of the landowner'.²⁴

One legacy of the Australian administration was the piecemeal aid it had allowed Roman Catholic schools on Nauru. A proposed amendment that denominational schools be fully financed by the government led to a classic example of the 'State aid' argument and split the Convention on religious lines. The amendment was predictably defeated 12 to 15.²⁵

The problem of what was a fair share of phosphate royalties for landowners found a champion in Victor Eoaeo. He wanted power over the allocation of phosphate royalties left to the Nauru Local Government Council, where he presumably felt that landowners would get a better deal. Chairman DeRoburt entered the discussion to point out that the eighteen members of the Legislative Assembly would be a more representative body than the Nauru Local Government Council and they should therefore have control. This was supported by the majority. Eoaeo then attempted another tack and moved that landowners' cash royalties be increased by 10c. a ton. After lengthy discussion this was carried 14 to 12, the dissenters arguing that they were the trustees for future Nauruan generations and that it was their moral obligation to secure their future when the phosphate was exhausted. Chairman DeRoburt, who had been absent when this motion was carried, returned to speak against it in the same vein and his authority carried the doubters with him, for the royalties were returned to their original amounts by a vote of 18 to 8.²⁶

Two other important issues reflected the Nauruans' concern over the part expatriates would play in their new state. The first was the position of Principal Executive Officer, to be held by an expatriate who would carry out the instructions of the Council of State during the transitional period. Some members feared that this officer would have too much power under the Constitution, especially in his right to dismiss public servants, and moved to have the position removed. This was defeated 10 to 12.²⁷ The other issue was that of Nauruan citizenship. This citizenship was based on

the provisions of the Nauruan Community Ordinance 1956 so that only those persons of Nauruan descent, or the children of a marriage between a Pacific islander (as defined under the Ordinance) and a Nauruan could be classified as Nauruan. Except for stateless persons, all other children born on Nauru became nationals of their father's country. Thus a child born to a Nauruan mother and an Australian father could not claim Nauruan citizenship, unless under powers provided in the Constitution the legislative body allowed him to acquire it.²⁸ In this way the policy of restricting entry to Nauruan society and discouraging interracial marriage followed by the old Council of Chiefs and the Nauru Local Government Council was perpetuated.

With the unanimous adoption of the Constitution on 29 January 1968 legislative power was vested in a Legislative Assembly of eighteen members, elected for a three-year term by Nauruan citizens who have attained the age of 20 years. This Legislative Assembly would elect an interim Council of State of five members to exercise executive power. Professor Davidson found that 'the most significant aspect of the debates was the demonstration that among the younger Nauruans there were men who were politically astute, widely read and courageous, qualified to rise to high office in the years ahead'.²⁹ The members' awareness of the complexity of the effects of the political and social parts of the constitution illustrated a quite remarkable growth of political maturity from even two years before on the founding of the Legislative Council. Many of the older members showed great confidence in hopes for the young educated Nauruans' participation in their new state and this augured well for future government.

Elections for the Legislative Assembly were held on 26 January 1968 and of the eighteen elected, nine were members of the old Legislative Council. Concurrent with the meetings of the Constitutional Convention, feverish preparations were made for the independence celebrations, and on the morning of 31 January, the new Legislative Assembly met and after choosing a Speaker and Deputy Speaker, elected the five members of the Council of State. They in turn chose Hammer DeRoburt as their Chairman. In this

way the Republic of Nauru came into being, marking an end to a not always happy relationship with the joint administering authority and more importantly a new beginning for the Nauruans. This attainment of independence by the Nauruan people has a wider significance, for it shows that where economic and social circumstances are favourable, the attainment of legal sovereignty need present no insuperable problems. It is in its demonstration of this that the Republic of Nauru could blaze a trail for other small dependent communities to follow.

Appendix

TABLE 1
Administrators of Nauru

Administrator	Term of office
Brigadier-General T. Griffiths, C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O.	June 1921 to June 1927
W. A. Newman, M.B.E.	June 1927 to January 1933
Commander Rupert C. Garsia, R.A.N. (Retired)	January 1933 to October 1938
Lieutenant-Colonel F. R. Chalmers, C.M.G., D.S.O.	October 1938 to March 1943
M. Ridgway	September 1945 to August 1949
H. H. Reeve	August 1949 to November 1949
Honourable R. S. Richards	November 1949 to January 1953
J. K. Lawrence	January 1953 to June 1954
R. S. Leydin, O.B.E.	July 1954 to May 1958
J. P. White	May 1958 to April 1962
R. S. Leydin, O.B.E.	May 1962 to May 1966
Brigadier L. D. King, O.B.E., E.D.	May 1966 to January 1968

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Report for 1964-5*, p. 11.

TABLE 2
Public Finance 1921-66
£A

Year ^a	Revenue		Expend- iture	Spent solely for Nauruans from Admin. funds	% of expend- iture spent solely for Nauruans
	B.P.C. payment ^b	Other revenue			
1921	5,036	5,156	12,712	n.a.	—
1922	3,880	7,302	11,424	n.a.	—
1923	4,488	7,349	10,266	n.a.	—
1924	6,689	11,510	13,580	2,648	19·5
1925	6,805	8,370	15,257	3,471	22·8
1926	4,833	9,805	13,406	4,663	34·8
1927	8,050	8,991	17,243	4,938	28·6
1928	7,856	12,047	18,267	5,243	28·7
1929	8,585	11,351	17,860	4,670	26·2
1930	6,448	12,544	15,532	4,893	31·5
1931	5,989	10,450	16,903	5,964	35·3
1932	9,064	11,171	15,435	4,513	29·2
1933	9,944	9,835	18,748	7,018	37·4
1934	10,449	9,330	19,758	7,604	38·5
1935	11,655	8,143	20,666	6,799	32·9
1936	13,562	11,345	23,990	7,798	32·5
1937	15,375	37,968	29,312	8,598	29·3
1938	21,429	8,000	30,287	9,732	32·1
1939	25,066	8,017	29,391	9,500	32·3
1940	20,351	6,753	26,223	7,746	29·5
1948	7,077	16,668	96,347	15,763	16·4
1949	17,785	16,419	105,673	12,109	11·5
1950	25,443	16,660	68,568	13,859	19·8
1951	53,138	31,881	130,491	23,160	17·8
1952	56,701	33,713	146,742	23,609	16·1
1953	19,968	143,440 ^c	179,423	24,243	13·5
1954	223,000	14,174	226,996	n.a.	—
1955	290,623	13,051	276,783	n.a.	—
1956	244,763	26,401	257,274	n.a.	—
1957	198,064	20,852	302,349	n.a.	—
1958	328,988	23,668	357,396	n.a.	—
1959	330,597	19,747	357,759	n.a.	—
1960	412,052	26,194	408,906	n.a.	—
1961	470,667	19,566	486,214	n.a.	—
1962	494,415	29,365	420,242	n.a.	—
1963	530,525	28,728	658,676	n.a.	—
1964	878,995	40,926	734,724	n.a.	—
1965	607,594	42,850	770,065	n.a.	—
1966	862,136	108,216	1,778,214	n.a.	—

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a Year ended 31 Dec. to 1948, thereafter 30 June.

^b 1921 to 1953 royalty per ton of phosphate shipped.

^c Includes £133,789 paid by B.P.C. under new financing arrangement.

Table 3
Population of Nauru 1921-66

Year ^a	Chinese	Europeans	Other Pacific islanders	Total immigrants	Nauruans	Total population
1921	597	119	266	982	1,084	2,066
1922	514	110	265	889	1,113	2,129
1923	486	139	140	765	1,164	2,067
1924	684	114	31	829	1,189	2,120
1925	814	118	22	954	1,220	2,174
1926	822	117	27	966	1,251	2,217
1927	761	115	21	1,897	1,266	2,163
1928	1,051	131	20	1,202	1,277	2,479
1929	1,099	134	16	1,249	1,365	2,614
1930	1,110	147	16	1,273	1,411	2,684
1931	1,105	147	14	1,266	1,426	2,692
1932	696	141	4	841	1,475	2,316
1933	936	165	13	1,114	1,527	2,641
1934	933	163	14	1,110	1,567	2,677
1935	931	158	4	1,093	1,603	2,696
1936	1,092	179	4	1,275	1,647	2,922
1937	1,261	194	4	1,459	1,638	3,097
1938	1,533	179	27	1,739	1,661	3,400
1939	1,512	171	44	1,727	1,733	3,460
1940	1,350	192	49	1,591	1,761	3,352
1942	194	7	193	394	1,848	2,242
1945	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.a.	589	n.a.
1946	778	79	21	878	1,369	2,247
1947	1,163	192	31	1,386	1,379	2,765
1948	1,370	247	97	1,714	1,448	3,162
1949	1,440	247	58	1,745	1,524	3,269
1950	1,491	278	81	1,850	1,582	3,432
1951	1,411	274	131	1,816	1,618	3,434
1952	759	253	560	1,572	1,672	3,244
1953	515	270	874	1,659	1,745	3,404
1954	552	291	846	1,689	1,828	3,517
1955	568	262	911	1,741	1,935	3,676
1956	696	286	935	1,917	1,976	3,893
1957	732	373	1,105	2,210	2,093	4,303
1958	654	363	1,133	2,150	2,158	4,308
1959	712	382	974	2,068	2,196	4,264
1960	715	380	1,052	2,147	2,328	4,475
1961	712	324	1,094	2,130	2,409	4,539
1962	748	412	1,173	2,333	2,516	4,849
1963	697	469	1,077	2,243	2,558	4,801
1964	835	395	1,023	2,253	2,661	4,914
1965	900	446	1,481	2,827	2,734	5,561
1966	1,167	428	1,532	3,127	2,921	6,048

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a At 31 Dec. to 1940, then 30 June.

Table 4
Age groupings of the Nauruan population 1948-66

Year ^a	Under 16 years		16 to 60 years		Over 60 years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1948	369	327	405	332	6	9
1949	346	293	471	398	6	10
1950	363	311	480	410	7	11
1951	384	339	464	408	10	13
1952	397	363	470	420	10	12
1953	437	407	469	411	9	12
1954	460	451	481	403	13	20
1955	497	470	499	417	20	32
1956	521	461	510	435	21	28
1957	560	521	524	440	21	27
1958	598	562	519	434	19	26
1959	638	606	484	428	19	21
1960	692	668	493	433	18	24
1961	711	678	505	437	36	42
1962	740	726	526	447	36	41
1963	698	681	592	496	45	46
1964	758	757	574	476	49	47
1965 ^b	805	807	569	462	45	46
1966 ^b	790	738	698	603	42	50
					1,301	92

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a At 30 June.

^b For 1965, 1966 number under 15 years, 15-59 years, 60 years and over.

Table 5
Nauruan employment^a 1948-66

Year ^b	Adminis- tration	B.P.C.	Nauru Co-op. Society	Nauru Local Govt. Council	Other (including self-em- ployed)	Total	Nauruans em- ployed as % of Nauruan males over 16 yrs.
1948	209	116	39	—	—	364	88·6
1949	230	104	45	—	32	411	86·2
1950	251	101	46	—	40	438	89·9
1951	250	105	46	—	35	436	92·0
1952	269	124	48	—	39	480	100·0
1953	270	141	38	—	29	478	100·0
1954	241	137	33	—	55	466	94·3
1955	245	135	26	—	84	490	94·4
1956	253	146	21	—	76	496	93·4
1957	275	103	21	—	68	467	85·7
1958	292	122	23	51	14	502	93·3
1959	300	105	22	40	14	481	95·6
1960	265	122	21	42	30	480	93·9
1961	289	119	26	47	15	496	91·7
1962	286	137	24	54	15	516	91·8
1963	301	136	29	48	15	529	83·0
1964	348	141	38	62	5	594	95·3
1965	341	137	35	65	5	583	95·0
1966	354	127	37	72	9	599	80·9

Source: Territory of Nauru, Reports.

^a Male employment only.

^b At 30 June.

Table 6
Employment of immigrants^a 1948-66

Year ^b	Number of Europeans employed by			Number of Chinese employed by			Number of other Pacific Islanders employed by			
	Adminis- tration	B.P.C.	Other	Adminis- tration	B.P.C.	Other	Adminis- tration	B.P.C.	Other	Total
1948	8	123	2	16	1,351	—	—	—	—	1,367
1949	7	108	2	22	1,414	—	—	—	—	1,436
1950	9	117	2	23	1,468	—	—	—	—	1,491
1951	9	109	3	30	1,381	—	—	—	—	1,411
1952	12	96	2	31	716	—	—	—	—	747
1953	11	95	1	30	449	—	—	—	—	479
1954	14	97	2	18	462	—	—	—	—	480
1955	11	107	2	18	465	—	—	—	—	483
1956	12	116	—	18	589	—	—	—	—	607
1957	14	126	2	18	623	—	—	—	—	641
1958	16	114	2	23	529	—	—	—	—	552
1959	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21	590	—	—	—	—	611
1960	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	22	605	—	—	—	—	627
1961	17	107	2	20	600	—	—	—	—	620
1962	24	119	3	19	631	—	—	—	—	650
1963	26	135	2	17	627	—	—	—	—	644
1964	25	128	10	18	559	219	—	—	—	796
1965	26	132	13	23	649	—	—	—	—	672
1966	29	139	3	30	803	—	—	—	—	833

Source: Territory of Nauru, Reports.

^a Male employment only.

^b At 30 June.

Table 7
Health of the Nauruan people 1921-66

Year	Leprosy		Tuberculosis ^a		Infantile death rate per 1,000 live births
	Number segregated	Total no. of patients	Number of in-patients	Number of deaths (from the disease)	
1921	10	60	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1922	139	242	n.a.	n.a.	101.7
1923	151	295	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1924	188	346	3	1	357.0
1925	189	365	—	4	339.3
1926	167	336	8	5	365.8
1927	174	337	10	4	101.3
1928	132	218	—	4	72.4
1929	132	237	n.a.	6	112.8
1930	95	251	—	3	80.6
1931	77	256	—	14	29.8
1932	72	252	—	3	95.2
1933	66	233	—	6	61.7
1934	64	233	—	10	120.4
1935	56	163	—	7	244.1
1936	58	164	18	5	253.5
1937	61	167	28	12	250.0
1938	55	156	22	7	195.4
1939	45	163	8	8	131.6
1940	44	136	10	5	179.1
1948	10	85	21	15	49.5
1949	11	92	13	6	47.1
1950	12	68	16	4	34.1
1951	11	61	29	5	58.1
1952	9	50	8	1	58.8
1953	10	46	11	4	115.4
1954	9	46	15	—	56.9
1955	7	41	10	—	48.4
1956	3	42	9	1	37.9
1957	6	47	32	1	40.7
1958	9	48	27	1	34.1
1959	6	46	7	n.a.	20.9
1960	4	48	6	n.a.	56.7
1961	5	49	8	n.a.	51.3
1962	1	38	9	n.a.	18.6
1963	3	35	4	n.a.	15.4
1964	4	37	3	n.a.	13.3
1965	4	43	2	n.a.	22.6
1966	3	43	2	2	n.a.

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a The tuberculosis figures can only be accepted with reservations; firstly, because they are incomplete and secondly, because they were frequently corrected.

Table 8
Phosphate Exports from Nauru by country of destination 1922-66

Year ^a	Exports to Australia		Exports to New Zealand		Exports to United Kingdom		Exports to other countries ^b		Total exports tons	Total value £A	Value per ton £A
	tons	% of total	tons	% of total	tons	% of total	tons	% of total			
1922	143,920	79.0	38,250	21.0	—	—	—	—	182,170	823,045	4.52
1923	177,950	83.0	25,950	12.1	—	—	10,400	4.9	214,300	542,348	2.53
1924	200,770	71.5	80,220	28.6	—	—	—	—	280,990	695,940	2.48
1925	145,300	64.8	64,260	28.7	—	—	14,700	6.6	224,260	705,293	3.14
1926	193,785	70.5	81,150	29.5	—	—	—	—	274,935	611,654	2.22
1927	220,415	69.3	97,770	30.7	—	—	—	—	318,185	780,070	2.45
1928	255,520	80.1	63,250	19.8	—	—	75	—	318,845	666,992	2.09
1929	237,525	72.8	88,600	27.2	—	—	—	—	326,125	346,050	1.06
1930	217,945	80.4	53,310	19.7	—	—	—	—	271,255	270,067	1.00
1931	156,380	63.8	88,785	36.2	—	—	—	—	245,165	239,038	0.98
1932	296,570	70.9	121,610	29.1	—	—	—	—	418,180	466,423	1.12
1933	227,150	62.5	100,730	27.7	—	—	—	—	363,680	436,651	1.20
1934	270,850	64.6	111,750	26.7	—	—	36,350	8.7	418,950	470,872	1.12
1935	297,200	61.8	156,950	32.6	—	—	26,800	5.6	480,950	474,393	0.99
1936	373,950	68.3	149,950	27.4	17,500	3.2	6,000	1.1	547,400	469,607	0.86
1937	463,925	67.3	196,850	28.6	5,725	0.8	22,400	3.3	688,900	513,989	0.75
1938	626,950	74.5	190,950	22.7	15,650	1.9	7,350	0.9	841,050	546,683	0.65
1939	588,150	63.1	258,950	27.8	77,650	8.3	7,500	0.8	932,100	605,974	0.65
1940	459,300	56.8	281,650	34.8	22,900	2.8	44,550	5.5	808,400	541,168	0.67
1941	56,850	57.3	42,300	42.6	—	—	—	—	99,150	69,375	0.70

1947 ^d	83,843	86.9	12,630	13.1	—	—	—	96,473	192,946	2.00
1948	179,257	68.0	84,250	32.0	—	—	—	263,507	527,014	2.00
1949	513,256	75.4	167,490	24.6	—	—	—	680,746	1,174,287	1.73
1950	779,456	77.2	229,810	22.8	—	—	—	1,009,266	1,589,594	1.58
1951	693,815	73.0	256,929	27.0	—	—	—	950,744	1,378,578	1.45
1952	592,675	55.8	469,122	44.2	—	—	—	1,061,797	1,725,420	1.63
1953	758,831	61.8	468,272	38.2	—	—	—	1,227,103	1,994,045	1.63
1954	669,644	60.7	348,182	31.6	85,900	7.8	—	1,103,726	1,931,520	1.75
1955	663,380	53.6	423,306	34.2	150,350	12.2	—	1,237,236	2,165,163	1.75
1956	882,025	60.1	483,619	33.0	102,150	7.0	—	1,467,794	2,568,640	1.75
1957	755,538	59.1	391,588	30.6	131,050	10.3	—	1,278,176	2,236,808	1.75
1958	755,002	64.7	306,478	26.3	105,700	9.1	—	1,167,180	2,421,898	2.08
1959	704,632	58.7	291,956	24.3	204,550	17.0	—	1,201,138	2,492,361	2.08
1960	709,713	57.6	340,424	27.6	182,950	14.8	—	1,233,087	2,836,261	2.30
1961	783,961	58.6	363,520	27.2	191,200	14.3	—	1,338,681	2,945,098	2.20
1962	961,492	62.4	416,110	27.0	164,050	10.6	—	1,541,652	3,391,634	2.20
1963	981,550	61.0	399,300	24.8	227,900	14.2	—	1,608,750	3,981,656	2.48
1964	961,530	58.1	480,650	29.0	212,800	12.9	—	1,654,980	4,427,072	2.68
1965	982,400	58.0	505,550	29.9	205,050	12.1	—	1,692,950	4,782,584	2.83
1966	818,800	53.4	516,650	33.7	197,200	12.9	—	1,532,650	4,329,736	2.82

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

a Calendar years to 1940; then year ending 30 June.

b Japan, Finland and Samoa.

c 1922-8 from f.o.b. figures published in *Commonwealth Year Book*, 1923 and 1929.

d Average figure for 1942-7.

Table 9
Nauruan education 1948-66^a

Year	Nauruan enrolment ^b			Staff		
	Adminis- tration schools	Mission schools	Total	European	Nauruan	Total
1948	285	137	422	2	22	24
1949	289	92	381	1	26	27
1950	267	88	355	3	24	27
1951	287	93	380	4	27	31
1952	341	112	453	4	26	30
1953	356	123	479	3	26	29
1954	392	131	523	8	24	32
1955	353	167	520	7	20	27
1956	381	166	547	9	18	27
1957	414	199	613	10	19	29
1958	459	219	678	9	19	28
1959	527	239	766	9	22	31
1960	574	271	845	8	24	32
1961	613	309	922	10	24	34
1962	658	302	960	9	25	34
1963	676	308	984	11	24	35
1964	711	308	1,019	24	20	44
1965	727	319	1,046	27	22	49
1966	779	321	1,100	33	39	72

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a Some pre-war statistics are available but these are unreliable and incomplete.

^b There has been little consistency in gathering education statistics. The *Reports* have confused enrolment and attendance, include Gilbertese with Nauruan pupils occasionally so that the above figures can only represent general trends.

Table 10
Royalty rates since 1920
(per ton of phosphate exported)

Year	Royalty paid direct to landowners		Nauru Royalty Trust Fund		Nauruan Landowners Royalty Trust Fund		Nauruan Community Long Term Investment Fund		Total	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1920										$\frac{1}{2}$
1921	2		1		—		—			3
1922	2		1		—		—			3
1923	2		1		—		—			3
1924	2		1		—		—			3
1925	2		1		—		—			3
1926	2		1		—		—			3
1927	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{1}{2}$
1928	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{1}{2}$
1929	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{1}{2}$
1930	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{1}{2}$
1931	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{1}{2}$
1932	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{1}{2}$
1933	$4\frac{3}{8}$		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{7}{8}$
1934	$4\frac{3}{8}$		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{7}{8}$
1935	$4\frac{3}{8}$		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{7}{8}$
1936	$4\frac{3}{8}$		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{7}{8}$
1937	$4\frac{3}{8}$		$1\frac{1}{2}$		2		—			$7\frac{7}{8}$
1938	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		$2\frac{1}{2}$		—			8
1939	4		$1\frac{1}{2}$		$2\frac{1}{2}$		—			8
1940	4 or 5 ^a		$1\frac{1}{2}$		$2\frac{1}{2}$		—			8 or 9 ^a
1948	6		3		2		2		1	1
1949	6		3		2		2		1	1
1950	6		3		2		5		1	4
1951	6		3		2		5		1	4
1952	6		3		2		5		1	4
1953	6		3		2		5		1	4
1954	6		3		2		5		1	4
1955	8		3		2		5		1	6
1956	8		3		2		5		1	6
1957	8		3		2		5		1	6
1958	9		3		2		5		1	7
1959	9		7		3	1	0		2	7
1960	1	1	10		3	1	0		3	2
1961	1	1	10		8	1	0		3	7
1962	1	1	10		8	1	0		3	7
1963	1	2	10		8	1	0		3	8
1964	1	2	10		8	1	0		3	8
1965 ^b	3	0	10	3	5	6	3		13	6
1966	3	6	1	6	4	0	8	6	17	6

Source: Territory of Nauru, Reports.

^a Depending on price of phosphate; actual rate paid was 8d.

^b The new rate of 13s. 6d. per ton agreed to at the June 1965 Conference was paid in the 1965-6 financial year retrospectively to 1 July 1964. 17s. 6d. per ton was paid for year 1965-6.

Table 11
Value of royalties and costs of administration covered 1922-66

Year ^a	Adminis- tration costs ^b £A	Administration costs as % of value of phosphate exportsc	Nauru Royalty Trust Fund £A	Nauru Royalty Trust new houses Fund £A	Nauru Community Long Term Invest- ment Fund £A	Nauruan Landowners Trust Fund £A	Nauruan Land- owners ^d £A	Direct returns to Nauruan owners ^d £A	Total royalty pay- ments to Nauruans ^e £A	Total royalty payments as % of value of phosphate exported ^e	Total payments on Nauru phosphate as % of value of phosphate exported ^e
1922	3,879	0.5	—	—	—	—	—	2,277	0.3	6,156	0.8
1923	4,488	0.8	—	—	—	—	—	2,679	0.5	7,167	1.3
1924	6,689	1.0	1,092	—	—	—	2,420	3,512	0.5	10,201	1.5
1925	6,805	1.0	1,090	—	—	—	1,713	2,803	0.4	9,608	1.4
1926	4,833	0.8	863	—	—	—	2,574	3,437	0.6	8,270	1.4
1927	8,050	1.0	1,401	—	—	—	2,652	4,053	0.5	12,103	1.6
1928	7,856	1.2	1,920	—	—	2,560	5,314	9,794	1.5	17,650	2.7
1929	8,585	2.5	2,141	—	—	2,854	5,196	10,191	3.0	18,776	5.5
1930	6,448	2.4	1,838	—	—	2,451	4,188	8,477	3.1	14,965	5.5
1931	5,989	2.5	1,519	—	—	2,025	4,117	7,661	3.2	13,650	5.7
1932	9,064	1.9	1,808	—	—	2,411	8,849	13,068	2.8	22,132	4.7
1933	9,944	2.3	2,726	—	—	3,634	5,569	11,929	2.7	21,873	5.0
1934	10,449	2.2	2,369	—	—	3,159	8,214	13,742	2.9	24,191	5.1
1935	11,655	2.5	2,862	—	—	3,816	9,097	15,775	3.3	27,430	5.8
1936	13,562	2.9	3,166	—	—	4,222	10,567	17,955	3.8	31,517	6.7
1937	15,375	3.0	3,610	—	—	4,813 ^f	14,173	22,596	4.4	37,971	7.4
1938	21,429	3.9	5,227	—	—	8,711	14,094	28,032	5.1	49,461	9.0
1939	25,066	4.1	5,777	—	—	9,628	15,662	31,067	5.1	56,133	9.3

1940	20,351	3-8	5,748	--	--	9,580	11,617	26,945	5-0	47,296	8-7
1948	8,527	1-6	2,812	--	1,473	1,969	8,028	14,282	2-7	22,809	4-3
1949	29,785	2-5	7,675	--	5,020	5,020	12,194	29,909	2-6	59,694	5-1
1950	37,443	2-4	11,088	--	7,314	7,314	18,329	44,045	2-8	81,488	5-1
1951	77,138	5-6	12,806	--	17,637	8,537	16,288	55,268	4-0	132,406	9-6
1952	83,701	4-9	12,665	--	21,108	8,443	19,289	61,505	3-6	145,206	8-4
1953	153,756	7-7	14,449	--	24,081	9,632	28,398	77,060	3-9	230,816	11-6
1954	223,131	11-6	14,992	--	23,640	9,455	27,425	75,512	3-9	298,643	15-5
1955	293,113	13-5	15,008	--	26,134	13,241	46,397	100,780	4-7	393,893	18-2
1956	248,856	9-7	19,212	--	31,671	12,669	50,464	114,016	4-4	362,872	14-1
1957	201,645	9-0	17,584	--	28,957	11,934	35,653	94,128	4-2	295,773	13-2
1958	328,988	13-6	19,747	--	25,455	9,265	36,123	90,590	3-7	419,578	17-3
1959	330,597	13-3	24,336	26,383	86,350	19,074	38,916	195,059	7-8	525,656	21-1
1960	412,052	14-5	19,060	14,293	57,173	14,293	56,230	161,049	5-7	573,101	20-2
1961	470,667	16-0	37,711	18,582	74,327	40,071	79,085	249,776	8-5	720,443	24-5
1962	494,415	14-6	43,075	18,461	73,844	49,229	81,868	266,477	7-9	760,892	22-5
1963	530,525	13-3	47,377	20,304	81,218	54,145	90,645	293,689	7-4	824,214	20-7
1964	878,995	19-9	63,958	36,968	147,872	98,581	89,541	336,920	7-6	1,215,915	27-5
1965	607,594	12-7	82,627	17,402	91,354	60,896	105,675	357,954	7-5	965,548	20-2
1966 ^g	862,136	19-9	79,868	10,472	500,396	486,633	264,856	1,342,225	31-0	2,204,361	50-9

Sources: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a Calendar years to 1940; then year ending 30 June.

^b Includes royalty of 1s. per ton to Administration.

^c 1921-2 to 1947-8 calculated by multiplying Nauruan royalty rate by total tonnage exported; 1948-9 to 1957-8 from annual reports, royalty payable to Nauruans; 1958-9 to 1962-3 calculated by adding together all royalty payments to Nauruans.

^d 1923-4 to 1925-6, 1928-9 to 1957-8 calculated by subtracting amounts paid to Nauru Royalty Trust Fund and Nauruan Landowners Royalty Trust Fund from total royalty payments to Nauruans. 1927 and 1928 calculated by multiplying export tonnage by royalty rate.

^e The total value of phosphate exported for the years 1922 to 1928 from the *Commonwealth Year Book*, 1923 and 1929.

^f Includes an Administration subsidy to brass band.

^g Includes retrospective payments and adjustments for 1965.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Camilla H. Wedgwood, 'Report on Research Work in Nauru Island', *Oceania*, vol. 6, June 1936, p. 368.
2. Commander T. B. Simpson, 'Pacific Navigation and British Seamen', *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle*, no. 13, 1844, p. 102.
3. The high infantile death rate was later found to correspond directly to drought periods in which the supply of coconut toddy containing vitamin B1 was greatly reduced. See *Report on Nauru*, 1938, p. 22 and Appendix, Table 7.
4. Captain John Fearn, *Naval Chronicle*, July to Dec. 1799, p. 536; *Oriental Navigator*, 1816, p. 697.
5. Michelena y Rojas, *Viajes Cientificos en todo el mundo desde 1822 hasta 1842*. See also S. H. Riesenber, 'A Pacific Voyager's Hoax', *Ethnohistory*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1959.
6. *Sydney Herald*, 4.9, 7.9, and 28.9.1837.
7. Commander T. B. Simpson, op. cit., p. 102.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Captain Andrew Cheyne, *A Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean*, 1852, p. 76.
10. Captain L. V. Hammett, 'Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Serpent', *Nautical Magazine*, vol. 23, 1854, p. 1904.
11. J. D. Jones, *Life and Adventure in the South Pacific by a Roving Printer*, 1861, p. 257.
12. Rev. P. A. Delaporte, 'Nauru as It Was and as It Is Now', *The Friend*, July 1907, p. 8.
13. Paul Hambruch, *Nauru*, vol. 1, pt 1.
14. F. J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Seas*, p. 143.
15. From a manuscript in the possession of Mr Jack Mullins, Stephen's son-in-law.
16. H. E. Maude, 'Beachcombers and Castaways', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 73, no. 3, Sept. 1964, p. 276.
17. Moss, op. cit., p. 143.

Chapter 2

1. Queensland, *Journals of the Legislative Council*, vol. 33, 1883-4, pp. 112 ff. See also Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Further Correspon-*

- dence respecting New Guinea and other Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean, 1884, c. 3863, nos. 18-36, pp. 28-38 and ff.
2. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 Nov. 1882.
 3. Queensland, *Journals of the Legislative Council*, vol. 32, 1883, pp. 60, 61.
 4. *Ibid.*, vol. 33, 1883-4, p. 107.
 5. Australasian Convention 1883, *Report of Proceedings*, p. 14.
 6. Great Britain, *Further Correspondence respecting New Guinea and other Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean*, vol. 54, no. 26, 1885, p. 35. Unless otherwise stated £ means £ Australian before 1966 and \$ means \$ Australian thereafter.
 7. *Ibid.*, no. 32, p. 35.
 8. *Ibid.*, no. 72, p. 50.
 9. Great Britain, *State Papers*, vol. 73, 1886, p. 479.
 10. *Colonial Conference Proceedings*, vol. 1, 1887, p. 25.
 11. Imperial Consul, Jaluit to Prince Bismarck, 6 May 1887, Colonial Department A III, *Papers Concerning the General Organization and Business of the Administration of the Island of Nauru*.
 12. Act 12664, 21 Oct. 1887, *Papers Concerning the General Organization and Business of the Administration of the Island of Nauru*.
 13. Dr K. E. Kretzschmar, *Nauru*, Nauru Mission Press, 1913.
 14. Report by Sonnenschein and Emsmann to the Imperial Government, 1 Oct. 1888, *Papers Concerning the General Organization and Business of the Administration of the Island of Nauru*.
 15. *Ibid.*
 16. K. E. Kretzschmar, *op. cit.*
 17. E. M. H. Stephen, 'Nauru—the Richest Island in the Pacific Ocean', *Rabaul Record*, Sept. 1917, p. 7.
 18. A. F. Ellis, *Ocean Island and Nauru*, p. 39.
 19. Rev. P. A. Delaporte, *Ninth Report of the Nauru Mission*, 1910, Arundel Papers.
 20. This story was related by Jack Mullins, E. M. H. Stephen's son-in-law, in a manuscript on the early days of Nauru.
 21. Mrs P. A. Delaporte, 'Men and Women of Old Nauru', *Mid Pacific Magazine*, vol. 19, 1920, p. 156.
 22. E. M. H. Stephen, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
 23. This account is based on a booklet produced by the present Roman Catholic priest on Nauru, Father Clivas, for the Nauru Church's jubilee.
 24. Rev. P. A. Delaporte, 'Nauru as It Was and as It Is Now', *The Friend*, Sept. 1907, p. 10.
 25. Delaporte's New Testament and hymn book are still used in the Nauru Congregational Churches today.
 26. Ellis tells this story in *Ocean Island and Nauru*. The following account is also based on Ellis's work.
 27. R. Langdon, 'The Ocean Islanders: A Quite Scandalous Document', *New Guinea*, vol. 1, no. 4, Dec. 1965-Jan. 1966, p. 42.
 28. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 127.
30. *Indenture of 31 December 1920 between the Pacific Phosphate Company and King George V.* Concession attached as First Schedule.
31. *Ibid.*, German Chancellor's letter of consent to the transfer is attached to the concession.
32. *Ibid.*, 22 Jan. 1906, contract between the Jaluit Gesellschaft and the Pacific Phosphate Company attached as First Schedule.
33. *Ibid.*, 21 Feb. 1906, amending agreement attached as First Schedule.
34. *Ibid.*, 10 Aug. 1909, amending agreement attached as First Schedule.
35. *Ibid.*, 6 Nov. 1907, agreement attached as First Schedule.
36. *Ibid.*, Clause 3 of 6 Nov. 1907 agreement.
37. F. D. Power's *Report on Pleasant Island, 1901.* Made to the Directors of the Pacific Islands Company, Arundel Papers.
38. See F. D. Power, 'Phosphate Deposits of Ocean and Pleasant Islands', *Proceedings of the Australian Institute of Mining Engineers*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1914; also A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
39. British Sulphur Corporation, *World Survey of Phosphate Deposits, 1964*, p. 51.
40. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 129. The following account of the beginnings of the industry on Nauru is drawn from Ellis's work.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 139.
42. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 2, 1922, p. 2805.
43. The figure of 30s. was quoted by the Hon. J. Lewis, MLC, when he addressed the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, South Australian Branch*, vol. 21, 1919-20, p. 3.
44. This is the opinion of Mr Jacob Aroi who was a schoolboy at this time.
45. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.* p. 137.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
47. Camilla H. Wedgwood, 'Report on Research Work in Nauru Island', *Oceania*, vol. 6, June 1936, p. 369.
48. K. E. Kretzschmar, *op. cit.*
49. E. Dunsdorfs, *The Australian Wheat Growing Industry 1788-1948*, p. 199.
50. *Commonwealth Year Book, 1916*, p. 360.

Chapter 3

1. Great Britain, *Correspondence respecting Military Operations against German Possessions in the Western Pacific*, Cd 7975, 1915.
2. *Ibid.*
3. A. F. Ellis, *Ocean Island and Nauru*, pp. 171, 172.
4. Hon. J. Lewis, MLC, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, South Australian Branch*, vol. 21, 1919-20, p. 3.
5. Pacific Phosphate Company *Prospectus, 1915*, Arundel Papers.
6. J. MacMillan Brown, *Peoples and Problems of the Pacific*, vol. 2, p. 156.

7. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 5, 1917-18-19, p. 520.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1922, p. 2811.
9. A 1906 memorandum by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific to the Foreign Office argued 'In view of Nauru, its contiguity to British territory, and of its being operated by a British Company, the future acquisition of the island by Great Britain is worthy of consideration'. *Further Correspondence respecting the Pacific Islands*, Foreign Office, 1907, no. 26, p. 18.
10. P. E. Deane, *Australia's Rights: The Fight at the Peace Table*, p. 14.
11. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 94, 1920-1, p. 5799.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Great Britain, *Accounts and Papers*, vol. 43, Cmd 1202, 1921.
14. *Purchase Agreement*, 25 June 1920, Clause 1.
15. *Indenture between the Pacific Phosphate Company and King George V*, 31 Dec. 1920.
16. H. B. Pope, *Nauru and Ocean Island*, p. 23.
17. P. E. Deane, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
18. Hon. J. Lewis, MLC, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, South Australian Branch, vol. 21, 1919-20, p. 3.
19. Great Britain, *Accounts and Papers*, vol. 43, 1921, *Mandate for Nauru*, Cmd 1202.
20. League of Nations, *Covenant*, Article 22.
21. E. Sandhaus, *Les Mandats C dans l'Empire Britannique*, p. 133.
22. J. A. Decker, *Labour Problems in the Pacific Mandates*, p. 56.
23. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission*, Document C 552.M.334, 1922, vi, p. 2.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
25. *Ibid.*
26. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 11th session, 1927, p. 20.
27. *Ibid.*, 2nd session, 1922.
28. Great Britain, House of Lords, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 41, 1920, pp. 620 ff.
29. A. H. Charteris, 'The Mandate over Nauru Island', *British Year Book of International Law*, 1923-4, p. 152.
30. *Nauru Island Agreement*, 1923, Clause 1. Signed at London by the three participating governments on 30 May 1923.
31. R. D. Rhone, 'Nauru, the Richest Island in the South Seas', *National Geographic Magazine*, Dec. 1921, p. 570.
32. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 2, 1922, p. 2805.
33. See Appendix, Tables 9 and 11.
34. *Report on the Administration of Nauru*, 17 Dec. 1920 to 31 Dec. 1921, presented to the League of Nations, p. 4.
35. A. H. Charteris, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
36. E. Sandhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

Elle fait remarquer que, si, aux yeux des hommes civilisés, la remuneration ainsi versée aux propriétaires forciers peut sembler insignifiante en comparaison de la valeur immense que la phosphate

represente dans la Commonwealth, elle est néanmoins suffisante pour les indigènes.

37. *Report on Nauru*, 1921, p. 5.
38. *Ibid.*, 1922, p. 7.
39. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 20th session, 1931, p. 31.
40. *Report on Nauru*, 1922, pp. 13-14.
41. Banaban royalty figures from *A Memorandum to the Secretary, Western Pacific High Commission, on the Future of the Banaban Population of Ocean Island*, 1946, by H. E. Maude, MBE, Chief Lands Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.
42. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 2, 1922, p. 2811.
43. See Appendix, Table 7.
44. See Appendix, Table 7.
45. *Report on Nauru*, 1920-1, p. 7.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea*, 1921-2, p. 128.
48. H. B. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
49. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
50. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 5th session, 1924, p. 135.
51. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission*, Document C 552.M.334, 1922, vi, pp. 2 ff.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
53. *Report on Nauru*, 1922, p. 30.
54. *Ibid.*, 1923, pp. 22-3.
55. *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 24.
56. *Ibid.*, 1923, p. 37.
57. J. A. Decker, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8.
58. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 11th session, 1927, p. 21.
59. *Ibid.*
60. See court records in annual *Reports on Nauru*.
61. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
62. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 20th session, 1931, p. 29.
63. D. L. Oliver, *The Pacific Islands*, p. 318.

Chapter 4

1. *Report on Nauru*, 1926, p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 1927, p. 33.
4. This account of the founding of the Nauru Co-operative Society is based almost entirely on the testimony of Nauruans including Jacob Aroi, President DeRoburt, whose father was a prime mover in the founding, and Buraro Detudamo, only son of Timothy Detudamo. The *Report on Nauru* for 1924 only records the founding itself.

5. *Report on Nauru*, 1927, p. 43.
6. *Ibid.*, 1924, pp. 7, 14.
7. *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 18.
8. *Ibid.*, 1934, p. 33.
9. *Ibid.*, 1923, p. 11.
10. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 11th session, 1927, p. 25.
11. See Statements of Nauru Royalty Trust Fund expenditure in annual *Reports on Nauru*.
12. W. Groves, 'Nauru: A Pattern for the South Pacific', *Australia: Mandated Territories*, undated, p. 210.
13. See Appendix, Table 7.
14. *Report on Nauru*, 1924, p. 31.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
16. *Ibid.*, 1923, p. 22.
17. *Ibid.*, 1925, p. 21.
18. 'Vegemite': a concentrated yeast extract manufactured in Australia containing vitamin B1.
19. *Commonwealth Year Book*, 1938.
20. Helen Hughes, 'The Political Economy of Nauru', *Economic Record*, Dec. 1964, p. 526.
21. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 4, 1926-7-8, p. 1071.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 1079. A. F. Ellis noted the change in Commissioners in his *Ocean Island and Nauru* but failed to mention the 1926 Royal Commission in which he was a key figure.
23. A. F. Ellis, *Ocean Island and Nauru*, p. 216.
24. See Appendix, Table 8.
25. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
26. *Report on Nauru*, 1931, p. 7.
27. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
28. *Report on Nauru*, 1925, p. 13.
29. *Ibid.*, 1927, p. 29.
30. See Appendix, Table 11.
31. *Report on Nauru*, 1927, p. 30.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
33. *Ibid.*, 1925, p. 13.
34. H. E. Maude, *A Memorandum to the Secretary, Western Pacific High Commission, on the Future of the Banaban Population*, 1946.
35. *Report on Nauru*, 1927, p. 29.
36. *Ibid.*, 1938, p. 8.
37. *Ibid.*
38. See Appendix, Tables 2, 10, and 11.
39. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 27th session, 1935, p. 35.
40. *Report on Nauru*, 1937, p. 50.
41. See Appendix, Tables 2 and 11.
42. See Public Finance statements in annual *Reports on Nauru*.

43. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandates Commission Minutes*, 11th session, 1927, p. 24.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
45. Camilla H. Wedgwood, 'Report on Research Work in Nauru Island', *Oceania*, vol. 6, no. 4, June 1936, pp. 361-2.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Report on Nauru*, 1936, pp. 13, 17.
48. These reasons for the decline of Nauruan games were advanced by the Nauruans themselves.

Chapter 5

1. A. F. Ellis, *Mid Pacific Outposts*, chap. I. See also *Report on Nauru*, 1940, p. 8, and L. Wigmore, 'The Japanese Thrust', *Australia in the War of 1939-45*, p. 52. On Nauru itself there was some confusion as to whether there was more than one raider involved in the attack.
2. D. Patrick Cook, *Diary* (kept from 8 Dec. 1940 to 9 Aug. 1945. Cook was fifteen when he began his diary).
3. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 25; see also D. P. Cook, *Diary*.
5. Nai Fai Ma (Chinese interpreter for the B.P.C.), *Diary* attached as Appendix A to *Intelligence Section Report*, War Diaries of the 31st/51st Battalion, A.I.F., 1945. See also A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
6. D. P. Cook, *Diary*; Nai Fai Ma, *Diary*.
7. D. P. Cook, *Diary*.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, checked with Nai Fai Ma, *Diary*.
10. 31st/51st Battalion, A.I.F., *War Diaries*, Sept. 1945, Appendix 'W'.
11. When questioned in 1966, Father Clivas was still unable to explain his survival.
12. Nai Fai Ma, *Diary*.
13. Calculated from Cook and Nai Fai Ma.
14. A. F. Ellis noted: 'The reasons for deporting the natives are not quite clear. Probably it was owing to the food position which had become serious, mainly through a severe drought having set in early in 1943 . . .'. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.
15. D. P. Cook, *Diary*; Nai Fai Ma, *Diary*.
16. Access to Japanese documentation was not available.
17. Nai Fai Ma, *Diary*, see also post-surrender investigation in *War Diaries*.
18. Nai Fai Ma, *Diary*.
19. *Ibid.*
20. 31st/51st Battalion, A.I.F., *War Diaries*, Sept. 1945.
21. *Ibid.*, *Intelligence Section Report*.
22. Reports by the Chief of Staff, *Defence of the Phosphate Trade*, Nov. 1945.
23. 31st/51st Battalion, A.I.F., *War Diaries*, Oct. 1945.
24. A. F. Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-70.
25. 31st/51st Battalion, A.I.F., *War Diaries*, Nov. 1945.

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., Sept. 1945.
28. Ibid., Nov. 1945.
29. The following account is based on reports by Truk Nauruans and Father Clivas, checked where possible with the *War Diaries* reports.
30. 31st/51st Battalion, A.I.F., *War Diaries*, Nov. 1945.
31. A. F. Ellis, op. cit., p. 240.
32. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Oversea Trade Bulletin*, 1942 to 1945.
33. E. Dunsdorfs, *The Australian Wheat Growing Industry 1788-1948*, p. 321.
34. A. F. Ellis, op. cit., p. 293.

Chapter 6

1. A. F. Ellis, *Mid Pacific Outposts*, pp. 63-70.
2. *Report on Nauru*, 1947-8, p. 30.
3. See Appendix, Table 4.
4. See Appendix, Table 5.
5. *Report on Nauru*, 1947-8, p. 45.
6. Ibid., pp. 4-5, 25, 59.
7. Ibid., p. 88.
8. See Appendix, Table 7.
9. United Nations, *Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Nauru* (approved by the General Assembly on 1 November 1947).
10. United Nations, *Year Book* 1946-7, p. 569.
11. Ibid.
12. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1948-9, A/933, pp. 76, 77.
13. Ibid., pp. 93-4.
14. *Official Records of the Trusteeship Council*, 5th session, 1949, p. 83.
15. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1948-9, A/933, p. 80.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 1949-50, A/1306, pp. 140-1.
18. *Official Records of the Trusteeship Council*, 5th session, 1949, p. 97.
19. Ibid., p. 95.
20. *Report on Nauru*, 1951-2, p. 11.
21. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1950-1, A/1856, p. 224.
22. Ibid., p. 225.
23. Ibid., 1948-9, A/933, p. 77.
24. The judgments of the Nauru Lands Committee are published in the *Nauru Government Gazette*.
25. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1948-9, A/933, pp. 82-3.
26. Ibid., p. 82.
27. *Report on Nauru*, 1950-1, p. 13.
28. See Appendix, Tables 11 and 2.
29. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1950-1, A/1856, p. 227.
30. Ibid., 1951-2, A/2150, p. 262.
31. Ibid., p. 258.

32. The following account is derived from the *Report on Nauru, 1947-8*, p. 19, together with information supplied in subsequent *Reports*.
33. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1948-9*, A/933, p. 77.
34. *Report on Nauru, 1949-50*, p. 31.
35. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1950-1*, A/1856, p. 231.
36. *Ibid.*, 1948-9, A/933, pp. 81-2.
37. *Report on Nauru, 1948-9*, p. 79.
38. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1950-1*, A/1856, p. 226.
39. *Ibid.*, 1949-50, A/1306, p. 144.

Chapter 7

1. *Report on Nauru, 1951-2*, p. 11.
2. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1952-3*, A/2427, pp. 115-16.
3. *Ibid.*, 1953-4, A/2680, p. 266.
4. *Report on Nauru, 1954-5*, p. 38.
5. Chief among these attempts was *Pinnacle Post* edited by B.P.C. staff members. As for the Nauruans, *Boe District News* published district and island news in Nauruan when the occasion warranted and from 1962 the Observers Society published the *Observer* in English in which the youth of Nauru found a forum.
6. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1952-3*, A/2427, p. 115.
7. *Report on Nauru, 1955-6*, p. 14.
8. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1955-6*, A/3170, p. 327.
9. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1953, *Report*, pp. 3-4 and *ibid.*, 1956, p. 26.
10. *Report on Nauru, 1954-5*, p. 39.
11. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1952-3*, A/2427, pp. 112-13.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
15. *Ibid.*, 1953-4, A/2680, p. 267.
16. *Report on Nauru, 1952-3*, p. 19.
17. C.S.I.R.O. Land Research and Regional Survey Section. Unpublished Report 54/3, June 1954, report on *Present Land Use on Nauru Island*, pp. 7-8.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
20. *Report on Nauru, 1954-5*, p. 39.
21. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1955-6*, A/3170, p. 324.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1956, *Report*, p. 11.
24. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1955-6*, A/3170, p. 324.
25. *Ibid.*, 1956-7, A/3595, p. 209.
26. See Appendix, Table 3.
27. This account of education on Nauru is drawn from the annual *Reports, 1953-4 to 1964-5*.
28. See Appendix, Table 8.
29. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1956, *Report*, p. 24; see also *Report on Nauru, 1963-4*, p. 39.

30. *Report on Nauru*, 1955-6, p. 42.
31. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1952-3, A/2427, p. 126.
32. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1953, *Report*, p. 11.
33. *Report on Nauru*, 1952-3, p. 28.
34. See sections on education in annual *Reports*. The first useful figures appear in 1963-4.
35. *Report on Nauru*, 1963-4, p. 37.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
37. See Appendix, Tables 5 and 6.
38. *Report on Nauru*, 1953-4, p. 14.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
41. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1956, *Report*, pp. 26, 27.
42. *Report on Nauru*, 1961-2, p. 29.
43. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1956, *Report*, pp. 8, 20.
44. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1952-3, A/2427, pp. 119-20.
45. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1956, *Report*, p. 19.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
47. *Report on Nauru*, 1954-5, pp. 17, 38.
48. Calculated from Appendix, Tables 9 and 11.
49. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1956, *Report*, p. 15.
50. *Report on Nauru*, 1952-3, p. 32.
51. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1953-4, A/2680, pp. 273-4.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
53. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Overseas Trade Bulletins*, 1950 and 1964.
54. *Report on Nauru*, 1951-2, pp. 28-9.
55. *Ibid.*, 1954-5, p. 39.
56. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Overseas Trade Bulletins*, 1956 and 1964.
57. See Appendix, Table 6.
58. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, p. 16.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Chapter 8

1. See Appendix, Table 10.
2. *Report on Nauru*, 1957-8, p. 42.
3. April 1959 conference on Nauruan phosphate royalties, unpublished notes, p. 1. The following account, p. 133, is taken from these notes.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
5. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, pp. 11, 13.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13; see also Appendix, Table 11.
7. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1961-2, A/5204, p. 40.
8. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, pp. 12-13; see also Appendix, Table 9.
9. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1962-3, A/5504, p. 27.
10. The following account, pp. 134-5, is based on the unpublished notes of the proceedings of the November 1963 conference.

11. November 1963 conference on Nauruan phosphate royalties, unpublished notes, p. 11.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
13. *Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1963-4, A/5804*, p. 31.
14. The following account of the July-August 1964 conference is mainly based on the *Summary of Views Expressed by the Nauruan Delegation* and the *Report on Nauru, 1964-5*.
15. The economic analysis which lay behind the Nauruan case was published by Dr Hughes as 'The Political Economy of Nauru' in the *Economic Record* of December 1964. Dr Hughes argued that because Nauru's phosphate was of high quality, easily mined, and close to its markets of Australia, New Zealand and Japan, it enjoyed considerable advantages compared to its competitors. In spite of these advantages, Nauru phosphate was sold from 1947 to 1963 at a third to a half of the f.o.b. open market price. The total return from Nauru phosphate would have been increased by £5.2 million in 1961 if it had been sold at the same price as French Polynesian phosphate, which was closely comparative in other respects, and £2.5 million if sold at prices received for much lower quality U.S.A. phosphate.

Dr Hughes pointed out that the B.P.C.

have in practice acknowledged the principle of paying economic rent by paying some royalties to Nauruans from the beginning of their operations . . . [and concluded] Apart from economic arguments which would entitle Nauruans to the economic rent share of phosphate prices at world levels, it seems not only unjust but absurd that Australian primary production should be subsidized by Nauru. In comparison to other Pacific Islands, Nauruan living standards are high, but income per head is clearly below Australian levels and problems of the future have to be met. It would cost Australia relatively little, and bring rewards in international regard, if she began to tackle the problems posed by phosphate with more seriousness and less self-interest than she has in the past (pp. 533-4).

16. July-August 1964 conference, *Summary of Views Expressed by the Nauruan Delegation*, p. 11.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
18. Nauru Local Government Council, *Submissions Presented to the Australian Government*, June 1965, no. 1, p. 1.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 13. This submission was the basis for the following claims:
 1. It is not established that any right to mine or extract phosphate in or upon the lands of the Island has been validly acquired against the Nauruan people.
 2. It is inconsistent with the inherent right of the Nauruan people to ownership of their land and the phosphate deposits therein for the Administering Authority to create by Ordinance or otherwise compulsory powers of acquisition by lease or other medium of land and extract phosphate deposits therefrom upon terms unilaterally determined without the free consent of the Nauruan people.
 3. The Nauruan people seek payment of royalty for phosphate permitted to be extracted as a right and not in the nature of a concession or gratuity.

4. The mining of phosphate is being effected in reality by the Administering Powers although the medium may well be through the British Phosphate Commission and in the light of the amount of phosphate already extracted it is the present day duty of the administration in effecting this purpose to provide all facilities and expenditure for such purposes subject to reimbursement out of profit of reasonable and proper production costs and a reasonable fee for management.
20. *Ibid.*, no. I, p. 17.
21. *Ibid.*, no. II, p. 6.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
23. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1964-5, A/6004, pp. 48-9.
24. *Ibid.*, 1959-60, A/4404, p. 149.
25. *Ibid.*, 1960-1, A/4818, p. 60.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
28. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, p. 22.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.
31. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1961-2, A/5204, p. 32.
32. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, p. 5.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
35. *Report on Nauru*, 1962-3, p. 11.
36. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, p. 22.
37. Report of the Trusteeship Council, 1963-4, A/5804. Opening statement on the Trust Territory of Nauru by Mr R. Marsh.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
39. July-August 1964 conference, *Summary of Views Expressed by the Nauruan Delegation*, p. 1.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Canberra Times*, 28 Aug. 1964.
43. July-August 1964 conference, *Summary of Views Expressed by the Nauruan Delegation*, p. 5.
44. Commonwealth *Hansard*, 15 Oct. 1964, p. 2014.
45. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1960-1, A/4818, p. 63.
46. British Phosphate Commissioners' letter of 5 Oct. 1964 to the Secretary, Department of Territories.
47. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1964-5, A/6004, p. 36.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
49. Minister for Territories' Press Release, 'Nauru Lands Rehabilitation Committee', 24 Jan. 1966.
50. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1958-9, A/4100, p. 157.
51. *Ibid.*, 1959-60, A/4404, p. 153.
52. *Report on Nauru*, 1960-1, p. 45.
53. *Report of the Trusteeship Council*, 1962-3, A/5504, p. 23.
54. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, p. 24.

55. A discussion of Nauru taxes is contained in Helen Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 523-4.
56. Visiting Mission to Nauru 1962, *Report*, p. 24.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
58. *Report on Nauru*, 1963-4, p. 14.
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Jacket design by Robin Wallace-Crabbe from a photograph by the Department of Territories. Printed in Australia.



Set in 11 Baskerville Linotype, one point leaded, and printed on 85 gsm Burnie English Finish by Gillingham Printers Pty Ltd