Tulagi was a pearl—very small—the walk around at a leisurely pace only takes two hours. It was triangular in shape. The apex to the triangle being where the gaol was on the southern end of the island and a ridge of hill running from the back of the gaol right through the centre of the island. All the houses were similar, built of wood and on high piles with red corrugated iron roofs. Each house had several 400 gallon water tanks attached to it. We had to rely entirely on rain water for our drinking and washing water. These houses had good verandahs and a dining room and one or two bedrooms according to the status of the officer occupying them.

— Eustace Sandars, BSIP official

Viewed from its harbour, Tulagi—strewn with white coral paths and gardens—was picturesque and rather beautiful. Wilfred Fowler joined the government staff there in about 1928. After waking on his first morning at the single officers’ quarters, he shuffled out to the verandah:

I was entranced by what I saw and went down the steps into the garden. There were hibiscus bushes with scarlet, white and apricot coloured flowers. Frangipani trees with funereal cream-and-white blooms gave off a cloying scent. On a tree at the end of the garden a purple orchid was in full flower. Then I noticed the *poinciana regia* [sic], the flame tree, at the edge of the path outside, a gorgeous medley of red and yellow. Down the slope

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1 PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 11.
below the house, three hornbills, with black wings and white tails, flew laboriously with raucous staccato cries and whirring wings to a clump of trees. Further away a flock of cockatoos frightened by something screeched noisily. I walked around the garden. At the top of a coconut palm two red parrots clung upside down pecking at flowers. A crimson pygmy parrot perched on one of the hibiscus bushes; it flew off to the end of the garden and then a remarkable butterfly appeared. Its colouring was of rare beauty, but I marvelled at its size. It must have measured seven or eight inches across its open wings.2

One of Woodford’s legacies was the rapid spread of Japanese clover (Kummerowia striata), a vivid-green mat-like plant used as grass in most gardens on the island (and now used throughout the Solomons), which he inadvertently introduced with cargo from Asia. District officer Hector MacQuarrie, who arrived in Tulagi in 1924, fresh from a spell as aide-de-camp to Governor of Fiji and Western Pacific High Commissioner, Sir Cecil Rodwell, described the lush beauty of the Japanese clover and the pretty ‘white-painted bungalows, with their wide verandahs rising from intensely green lawns adorned with palms and coloured shrubs’.3

In the years between Woodford’s departure in 1915 and 1939, when war began in Europe, parts of the settlement altered. The prison was moved temporarily to the outer coast while new administration buildings were constructed on higher ground on the sheltered harbour side,4 and the hospital was moved to a healthier, breezier area at the southern end of the outer coast. The impressive cutting through the central ridge was completed in 1918 with the aid of prisoners and indentured labourers. It enabled use of large areas of flat land on the outer coast and provided easy access to both sides of the settlement without an arduous climb. The hospital, wireless station, the Tulagi Club and the police headquarters and barracks were on the outer side, facing towards volcanic Savo Island and Guadalcanal. The residents of the main government houses on the ridge had a bridge over The Cut for easy access along the central ridge.5

2 Fowler 1959, 6.
3 MacQuarrie 1946, 21–22; Laracy 2013, 243–56.
4 BSIP AR 1917–18, 4, 1918–19, 3.
5 PMB, Woodford Papers and Photographs, Photo 58/7–72, 92.
Plate 3.1 A tinted photograph of Tulagi, viewed from the harbour, circa 1935
The ‘Top Office’ is on the right halfway up the ridge. The third residency is at the top of the ridge in the centre. The large Lands Department office is on the shore and the canoe shed is on the far left.
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection.

Tulagi’s early plantation of coconut palms was reduced in size as the settlement grew and required more land. On the harbour side of the island, the government wharf (a small affair compared with Levers’ and BP’s wharves) was flanked by the administrative buildings, looking out over Tulagi Harbour. The only exception was the ‘Top Office’—sited halfway between the residency and the wharf. It was shared by the Resident Commissioner, the Government Secretary and the Judicial Commissioner. The government area was called ‘No. 1’. Ramshackle Chinatown marked the start of ‘No. 2’, the commercial sector, with the remaining business area spreading up the coast to Sasape. There were no roads and no vehicles other than a few bicycles and wheelbarrows, although there was a track around the island and connecting tracks joined the government buildings on both sides. The first horse arrived in the late 1920s and was owned by Stanley (Monty) Masterman, the labour inspector. The second was owned by Jack Barley while he was acting Resident Commissioner in the 1930s. Everyone else walked or rode a bicycle.

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6 Lawrence (2014, p. 199, Figure 31) is a sketch of Woodford’s office on Tulagi.
7 Knibbs 1929, 264–65.
8 Sandars 1971.
All houses and offices were clad with timber weatherboards painted white, had galvanised ripple-iron roofs painted red and were set on concrete stumps (some short, but others were 1.7 metres high). The houses were surrounded by tropical flowers and hedges formed by red and purple bougainvillea, Brazilian cherry trees (with their tart red fruit), bright hibiscus and crotons. Caladiums (‘elephant ears’) grew profusely and indigenous ground and tree orchids also adorned gardens. Just as still occurs in modern Solomon Islands, residents competed to have the best floral displays.9 There was a large European store and three hotels (each of very different character), with an iceworks adjacent to the expanding Chinatown, which consisted of a closely packed street of shops with houses at the rear and several rickety wharves.10 Across the harbour, the commercial establishments on Gavutu (Levers) and Makambo (BP) also grew in size.

The Cut through the central ridge was the only major infrastructure development. An idea mooted in the 1930s, to build a causeway from Tulagi to Gela Sule, was too costly when compared with the possible benefits and, anyway, there was no spare money during the Depression.11 Tulagi, despite its poor soils and swamps, was to remain the small, peaceful, pleasant capital of the protectorate—until the Pacific War intervened.

Resident commissioners

No local decision was certain to be implemented. The Government of the BSIP was answerable to the WPHC and ultimately to the Colonial Office in London, which was staffed with veteran administrators of the empire. From 1921, there was also the small Advisory Council, which met a few times each year on Tulagi, offering advice to the Resident Commissioner.

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10 Fryer Library, University of Queensland [hereinafter UQFL], Wilson Papers and Photographs. I have based this description on one written in 1972 by A.H. Wilson, who was on the staff of the Lands Department from 1919 to 1945.
Just as the WPHC high commissioners had varied backgrounds, so too did the BSIP resident commissioners. Although Woodford had significant on-the-ground experience in the Solomons from his younger years, most of the other resident commissioners did not. There were transfers back and forth between Fiji, the Solomons and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, and later transfers to and from colonial administrations in Africa and Asia. Between 1897 and the Pacific War, there were six substantive appointments as resident commissioner or military governor (during the war) and more than 30 acting appointments covering interregnums between permanent appointments or periods when the Resident Commissioner was on leave.

Table 3.1 Deputy commissioner, resident commissioners and military governors, 1896–1948

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Morris Woodford</td>
<td>b. 1852 – d. 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner, 1896–97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident Commissioner, 1897–1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Rufus Marshall Workman</td>
<td>b. 1874 – d. 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident Commissioner, 1917–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Rutledge Kane</td>
<td>b. 1877 – d. 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident Commissioner, 1921 – 13 October 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Noel Ashley</td>
<td>b. 1884 – d. 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident Commissioner, May 1929 – 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sydney Marchant</td>
<td>b. 1894 – d. 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident Commissioner, 1940 – 5 October 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Governor, 5 October 1942 – April 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Cyril Noel</td>
<td>b. 1898 – d. ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Governor, 31 August 1943 – 31 March 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident Commissioner, 1 April 1946 – 10 October 1948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: This table was drawn largely from information collected by David Akin (2015) and Judith Bennett (1987).

After Woodford retired in 1915, his temporary replacement was 56-year-old Frank Barnett, who had been Government Secretary from 1908 to 1914 and then Treasurer and Collector of Customs from 1914 to 1915. Barnett was born in Geelong, Victoria, in 1859, the son of Alfred A. Barnett. He served as acting Resident Commissioner during Woodford’s absences, and again from 1915 to 1917. He died in Wellington, New Zealand, on 15 July 1917. Based on a reading of his correspondence,
Barnett was officious and often unreasonable, more interested in the administrative rituals of the British Empire than in the practicalities of running the protectorate. Malaita’s first resident magistrate, Thomas Edge-Partington, and William R. Bell, head of the Labour Department and later district officer on Malaita, both detested Barnett because of his highhanded ways. Their correspondence with him was often insubordinate and barely civil.

Resident commissioner Charles R.M. Workman arrived in mid-1917 as Woodford’s permanent replacement, transferred from the Crown Colony of Gilbert and Ellice Islands. The 43-year-old Workman was confirmed as Resident Commissioner in 1918 and remained in Tulagi until 1921. Educated at Leys School in Cambridge and Christ Church College in Oxford, Workman was called to the Bar in 1900 and then joined the Colonial Service. He oversaw the Australian expedition that took possession of Nauru in World War I. Workman considered shifting the protectorate’s headquarters to other sites: to nearby Port Purvis on Gela Sule, Point Cruz on Guadalcanal (today’s Honiara), Thousand Ships Bay (Tanabuli Harbour) on Isabel, Bina Harbour on Malaita, Russell Islands and Lingutu in Marovo Lagoon, New Georgia. However, the government had expended considerable amounts of money on buildings on Tulagi (16 residences and 24 other buildings), as well as the wharf and had reclaimed land and drained swamps. Commercial companies had sunk money into wharves and buildings on Gavutu, Makambo and Tulagi. No move was made and, instead, Workman had The Cut built through the central ridge—his main legacy to Tulagi.

13 From 1921 to 1931, he was Colonial Secretary of the Gambia. He was awarded a CBE in 1927.
Plate 3.2 The cutting through the central ridge was constructed in 1918 using prisoners and indentured labourers.
A light rail line was used to remove the soil and rocks.
Source: ANUA, 481-337-92.
Plate 3.3 The completed cutting, showing the bridge over the top
Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.
A.H. (‘Spearline’) Wilson from the Department of Lands and Surveys described Workman as ‘the usual cultured English Gentleman, who in my opinion would have been just as well employed in the diplomatic service or as a politician’.14 In 1921, Workman was replaced with Richard Rutledge Kane, who spent a short period as Government Secretary before transfer to the top position. Kane’s salary in 1921 was £1,000. He served until October 1928, although he remained in Tulagi until early 1929, taking his final leave before retiring. Wilson’s assessment of Kane was acidic, and he was not alone in holding a negative opinion:

Transfered from Fiji service in 1921, and came with a reputation of being a strict and ruthless disciplinarian but did not continue along those lines. Like his predecessor, displayed no great interest in the matter of native land ownership and its problems, the key to success in a backward country just emerging from the stone age. Gradually became ‘One of the Boys’ and was very popular with them. Retired rather under a cloud in 1928.15

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14 UQFL, A.H. Wilson, 1972, Notes for James Boutilier.
15 ibid.
Kane, a Protestant Irishman and proud of it, seems to have been the oddest of the Tulagi resident commissioners. Eustace Sandars (a long-serving protectorate official) said Kane was such a nuisance in Fiji that he was promoted to the Solomons to move him on.\(^\text{16}\) He had a reputation for heavy drinking and was capable of public brawling. Historian James Boutilier mentions (but does not name) a resident commissioner who supposedly seduced the wife of one of his district officers. This was probably Kane, although the story could also be a malicious creation, based on the testimony of his contemporary Hector MacQuarrie. Even after historian Hugh Laracy’s investigation into MacQuarrie’s detailed accusations against Kane, the evidence was not conclusive. However, there is another similar tale told by Ernie Palmer, which indicates that the illicit affair might have been true, and actually quite public. On one occasion when his mistress arrived at Tulagi at the same time as an official guest, Kane—decked out in his white uniform and feathered hat—went forward to greet her and help her off the small boat. The locals tittered at the spectacle, at which Kane turned around and said, ‘Gentleman, you can find fault with my morals—but not with my manners’.\(^\text{17}\) Kane was also accused of having affairs with indigenous women, which was not acceptable within the Colonial Service or contemporary mortality.

After Kane, the position was held in an acting capacity, first by A.W. Seymore and then by long-serving government secretary Captain Norman S.B. Kidson, then Jack Charles Barley and Ralph B. Hill, until the arrival of Francis Noel Ashley in late 1929. Hill was another early appointment, serving as District Magistrate at Gizo (1909–12) and as a district officer on Malaita (May to June 1915), Guadalcanal (1920–23 and 1924–25) and Isabel (1927–29). He was also acting Resident Commissioner from late 1923 until October 1924 while Kane was on leave.\(^\text{18}\)

Ashley was the first of several resident commissioners with experience in British Africa. He was educated at Westminster School in London and had spent his working life in Nigeria, where he was appointed as a Resident. He was 45 years old when appointed to the BSIP on a salary of £1,200

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\(^\text{16}\) PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 9.

\(^\text{17}\) Boutilier 1984a, 48; MacQuarrie 1946, 9–10; Laracy 2013, 243–56; Akin 2013, 362–63, n. 59; Struben 1963, 42.

\(^\text{18}\) Bennett 1987, 211, 398, 399, 401.
Ashley had been a captain during World War I. According to Wilson, Ashley was the first resident commissioner interested in local land tenure systems. While in some ways Ashley was a welcome change and broadened administrative perspectives, Dr Sylvester Lambert, an American from the Rockefeller Foundation’s yaws and hookworm eradication campaign, said Ashley seemed inclined to think that because they had a similar skin colour, Solomon Islanders were the same as Africans. As is obvious below, based on his treatment of Wilson and his destruction of confidential papers, Ashley was not beyond reproach. Wilson detested him and called him a ‘poodle’. There is collaboration from Lambert, who described Ashley and his wife as ‘strange people’. Lambert noted that when Ashley returned from leave in 1933, there was a negative reaction:

Great disappointment to the service here, who all have their tails down since this man came back. Great blow to administrative affairs and all hold him in contempt—and this is not too strong a term. Not trusted, judgment poor. As one man says ‘Because he is such a damn fool Fiji thinks we are all damn fools and everything we propose, no matter how good, is looked at askance’ …

If he has a difference with an official he may refuse to speak to him for a long interval. For instance, Johnson the Treasurer differed with him and refused to follow a certain course on account of Colonial Regulations. He would not speak to him and called for Blake on the phone and say ’Major Blake, would you please ask Mr. Johnson so and so’. Possibly Johnson answered the phone originally. At about that time Johnson went on leave. Another question about finance arose and Blake, the acting, refused to do a certain thing against Regulations. Mr. Ashley says ’I order you to’. Blake says ’please look at Colonial Regulation No. 2, I refuse to’. Next day he called up, Blake answered. He said ’may I speak to Mr. Dix’. ’Mr. Dix, will you please ask Major Blake so and so’.

Ashley remained until 1939, replaced with 41-year-old William S. Marchant OBE, who served until 1943, during the Pacific War. He held a wartime appointment as Military Governor, as did Owen Cyril Noel, who succeeded him. Noel had been a district commissioner in Uganda, and Marchant had also transferred from the British African service.
where he served as a deputy provincial commissioner in Zanzibar from 1935 to 1937, followed by a similar position in Tanganyika until 1939. Marchant’s BSIP salary was £1,400 a year. Although well liked, he came to the protectorate on the cusp of war and had little chance to implement anything other than the evacuation in 1941–42. He was responsible for establishing the government in exile on Malaita, which was moved to Honiara once the Americans took control. In 1943, he returned to Africa to serve as Chief Native Commissioner in Kenya until he retired in 1947.23

Tulagi was not known for excessive pomp and ceremony, although important visitors were always received at the residency and all new protectorate employees were greeted by the Resident Commissioner at the ‘Top Office’ or the residency. Fowler described his experience in the 1930s when he had his interview with the Resident Commissioner:

The Residency stood on a hillock at the highest point of the island. A grassy bank sloped down to a bed of bronze-leafed cannas, showy plants with large scarlet blooms which made a gaudy display in the bright morning sun. I climbed the cement steps to the house … [The Resident Commissioner] was a good-looking dark-haired man, slightly above average height, compactly built and with an unmistakable air of authority …

Prints of officers in the Peninsular campaign hung around the room and there were some team groups. A hide cricket-bag lay on the floor against a wall; a bag of golf clubs stood in a corner with two tennis-rackets in an outsize press.24

**Tulagi’s public servants**

The British colonial and oversees civil services evolved over centuries as the empire expanded. In 1899, a major review instituted by Joseph Chamberlain, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, provided support as Britain moved into an era of accelerated colonial expansion. The BSIP administration began in this new phase, when the Colonial Service was becoming increasingly professional and the number of new territories required a large increase in staff. Woodford and Mahaffy were products of the old era, but over the next few decades, most of the BSIP

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23 UQFL, Wilson, 1972, Notes for James Boutiller; PIYB 1942, 129.
24 Fowler 1959, 7. The peninsular campaign probably refers to the Crimean campaign of the 1850s.
public servants were part of the new system. Training courses began in the mid-1920s, initially at the Imperial Institute in London and then at Oxford, Cambridge, Trinity College, Dublin, and, later, the London School of Economics. Another change was the introduction of the Dominion Selection Scheme in the late 1920s, which began to recruit public servants from Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The third change was the Warren Fisher Committee report of 1930, which led to the separation of colonial and dominion affairs and regularisation of appointment processes, leaving less space for patronage. Colonial Office staff began to be seconded to positions as assistant district officers and district officers, and district staff could move to Colonial Office jobs. Another recommendation was unification of each territory’s public service into one Colonial Service, which facilitated the movement of officers between territories.25

Colonial officials were expected to conduct themselves with dignity and to follow a complex set of rules drawn up in a handbook that was used throughout the empire. Confidential reports on senior public servants were regularly forwarded to London; they were expected to remain neutral and not express opinions in public. Those who breached the code received a reprimand and could be demoted, transferred, pensioned off or dismissed. Senior headquarters officers were often transferred between British territories. Most of the regular officers came from Britain, where they undertook a three-term course at one of the aforementioned universities. The Colonial Office then chose in which part of the empire they would serve. If it was the WPHC, they signed a contract to serve in the Crown Colony of Fiji, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorates (later one Crown colony) or the BSIP.

From its humble one-person beginnings in 1896, the staff of the BSIP central administration had risen to 38 by 1926.

In the 1925–26 financial year, revenue was £71,430 and expenditure was £60,330 (roughly equivalent to A$5.7 million and A$4.8 million today, respectively). Ten years later, during the middle years of the Great Depression, revenue had fallen to £58,465 and expenditure was £49,224.26 In 1935, basic salaries (without bonuses or extra allowances) varied from the Resident Commissioner’s £1,200 a year, down to £290 for

the third-level clerk in the Treasury and £160 for a nurse at the hospital.27 Quite a few BSIP headquarters staff worked for many years on Tulagi. Some Tulagi-based positions involved little travel, whereas others—for instance, lands and surveys staff—were required to complete tasks in the districts for a month or six weeks at a time. The district officer positions (paid at £500–£600 per year in 1935) suited staff who were physically fit, adventurous and capable of interacting constantly with Solomon Islanders. District officers had to pass exams, be familiar with one local language (always Pijin) and to understand local customs. There were different levels of appointment. New staff usually began as cadets and climbed the career ladder to become assistant and then full district officers. A surveyor might eventually become Commissioner for Lands (paid at £700 a year in 1935). The most competent district officers often filled in for senior deskbound positions on Tulagi when the incumbents were absent or positions were vacant, and some Tulagi-based officers took over district posts for short periods, mainly when there was a shortage of district officers. Given that there were very few staff, it was often a matter of ‘mucking in’ to ensure key posts were covered.

Table 3.2 The Tulagi civil service establishment, 1925–26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resident Commissioner’s Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Commissioner</td>
<td>£1,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Secretary</td>
<td>£475*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (2)</td>
<td>£270*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treasury, Customs and Postal Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer and Collector of Customs</td>
<td>£500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>£300*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Clerk and Boarding Officer</td>
<td>£350*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Clerk and Boarding Officer</td>
<td>£220*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Clerk and Boarding Officer</td>
<td>£200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmaster</td>
<td>£260*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storekeeper</td>
<td>£200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Port and Marine Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights Attendant (joined with Foreman of Public Works)</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Labour Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Inspector</td>
<td>£350*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Inspector</td>
<td>£280*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal and District Administration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Magistrate and Legal Adviser</td>
<td>£500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Officers (5)</td>
<td>£500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Officer (1)</td>
<td>£450*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant District Officer</td>
<td>£340*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Police and Prisons Department</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commandant of the Armed Constabulary and Superintendent of Prisons</td>
<td>£400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subinspector</td>
<td>£260*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jailer</td>
<td>£210*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical Department</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Medical Officer</td>
<td>£700**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Medical Officer</td>
<td>£650***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Medical Officer</td>
<td>£500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister in Charge</td>
<td>£150****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>£120*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispenser and Clerk</td>
<td>£210*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lands and Surveys Department</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Surveyor</td>
<td>£600*****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>£400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>£400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>£200*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Works Department</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreman (also Lights Attendant)</td>
<td>£270*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wireless Station</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer-Operator</td>
<td>£400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Operator</td>
<td>£260*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All received a bonus of 15 per cent, plus £22/10/- and a £50 local allowance.
** On a five-year contract, plus a £50 local allowance.
*** Received a £50 local allowance.
**** Received rations, a temporary bonus of 30 per cent, a £50 local allowance and a £12 uniform allowance.
***** Received the same as *, plus £50 as Superintendent of Public Works.

It was possible to begin as a cadet officer and rise to the level of resident commissioner. Jack Barley, who arrived in Tulagi as a 25-year-old cadet in 1912, served as temporary Resident Commissioner several times between 1921 and 1932. Born in Eton in Buckinghamshire on 4 December 1887, Barley had a degree from St John’s College, Oxford University. He was also a champion cricketer. His request to enlist in World War I was refused and instead Barley became a mainstay of the BSIP administration. After a period as a district officer at Gizo (1912–13 and 1915), he served at Marovo Lagoon (1913–15) and Ontong Java (1915–16). Between 1919 and 1921, he was the District Officer for Eastern Solomon Islands. His first posting as acting Resident Commissioner was at the age of 34, between Workman’s and Kane’s appointments. He resumed his substantive position on Makira until 1923, serving as acting Resident Commissioner again in 1928 and 1929. He worked on Tulagi as Francis Ashley’s assistant when he arrived in 1929 and replaced Ashley for several months in 1932 when the Resident Commissioner was on leave. Barley continued to work on Tulagi in various positions, which, with leave periods, explains the gaps in his district career path, and he also spent some time based in Fiji. He was the District Officer for Malaita in 1930–32 and briefly in 1933.

29 Bennett 1987, 398, 399, 402, 403, 404; Akin 2015; Akin 2013, 362–63, n. 59.
before he married and was appointed Resident Commissioner for the
Crown Colony of Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Dr Sylvester Lambert’s
comment about Barley is apt: ‘[T]o most of the natives in the group
Barley is the Government.’ Lambert also believed Barley should have been
Kane’s permanent replacement.

Barley’s attitudes to Solomon Islanders were unusual, in more than one
way. Just before he left the islands in 1933, he provided the following
assessment of the attitudes of Europeans towards Solomon Islanders:

Speaking with over 21 years’ experience of conditions in the
British Solomon Islands, I regret to state that my considered
opinion is that—with the exception of the Missionaries—scarcely
10 percent of the European settlers in the Protectorate regard the
native otherwise than a ‘necessary evil’ in the economic life of
the community or as being entitled to any sort of sympathetic
attention or interest outside his sphere of utility as a customer or
labourer. He is almost universally looked down upon as belonging
to a somewhat unclean and definitely inferior order of creation,
as one who does not know the meaning of gratitude, loyalty or
affection, and who will invariably mistake kindness for weakness
and immediately take advantage of any person rash enough to
trust him and treat him as a fellow human being. My personal
experience of the native of the Solomon Islands has always been
diametrically opposite to this.

While this seems laudable, Barley made ethnographic errors, had a light-
hearted attitude to learning local languages and there is the ethical issue
of his sexual relationships with local women, discussed in Chapter 5.

Another good example of the life of a cadet officer who became a district
officer in the late 1930s and early 1940s is provided in the personal file of
Michael J. Forster. Born in 1916, he was 20 years old when he first arrived
in the protectorate. He received his fares out (travel was at half-salary and
costs had to be refunded if the cadet stayed for less than three years), an
annual salary of £350, a special annual loading of £25 to compensate

30 Akin 2013, 69–70.
31 Akin 2009, Notes from Lambert, 21 May 1933. Lambert was part of the Rockefeller Foundation
assisted medical campaign to prevent yaws. See also Lambert 1946, 344; Lambert 1934a; Lambert
1934b.
serious positions or power to local leaders.
for ‘the less favourable living conditions’ and a yearly local allowance of £50 while resident in the BSIP. By the end of three years, providing he received good reports and passed examinations in a local language, the colonial and financial regulations, general orders, local legislation and the 1893 order in council, Forster would be eligible for a full appointment. The Colonial Office advised new officers to stay unmarried while cadets. The salary was not considered sufficient to maintain a couple unless they had private means. Government officers received free medical attention, as did the wives and children of officers with salaries of less than £400 a year. Accommodation in partly furnished quarters was rent-free, in strict accordance with rank. Salaries were paid locally, in English, Australian or BSIP currency—the last pegged to the Australian exchange rate. Taxation was in accordance with local regulations. Initially appointed to the Customs Department, Forster’s accommodation was in the single officers’ quarters next to the Tulagi Club.

Forster’s employment conditions included a return leave fare to England, although officers hired in Australia or New Zealand received their leave fare only as far as their place of recruitment. If they wished to travel to Britain, they could apply for a supplementary grant of £90, plus £15 for their wife and the first two children. Leave accumulated at a rate of four days for each month of service and was due every two years. Under certain circumstances, officers could obtain special leave on half-pay. They could receive sick leave for up to 28 days a year, with extra short periods of local leave, without impinging on biannual leave allowances.33

In 1940, Forster failed his law examination and spent his spare time over the next few months swatting up on contracts, torts, summary jurisdiction, indictable offences and the order in council. He sat again in 1941 and passed. Presumably, he had family obligations in England, because in 1941, he attempted to remit half of his salary home. He was refused permission as it was considered he would not have enough left on which to live.34 Posted to Malaita between August and December 1940, Forster was then seconded to Fiji, returning to Tulagi in August 1941. Forster’s next appointment was as the District Officer for Kirakira in the Eastern Solomons, from November 1941 until 1943. He continued

33 National Archives of Solomon Islands [hereinafter NASI], BSIP/III F58/68, Conditions of Service for Michael J. Forster, 31 August 1938.
34 ibid., Government Secretary to M.J. Forster, 5 November 1940, 16 January 1941; Noel Butlin Archives Centre [hereinafter NBAC], Burns Philp & Co. Archives, Sydney to Government Secretary, 4 April 1941.
to run the administration there during the Japanese occupation of the islands to the north. His postwar Malaita years are well covered in a book by David Akin. In 1950, Forster transferred to the Malaya civil service. Local people remember Forster warmly: he was willing to eat food with them (very rare for a European at this time), spoke Pijin well and participated in bride-wealth exchanges.

By the time of Forster’s appointment, there was a complex civil service regime on Tulagi, but it had not always been so. In the beginning, all administration was in the hands of the Resident Commissioner. Soon, however, Woodford gained the services of Arthur Mahaffy (see Chapter 2), who was based in the BSIP between 1898 and 1904. The price of copra fluctuated but provided the basis of the protectorate’s economy, which enabled the expansion of the administration. When Woodford retired in 1915, his salary was £1,050 per year. There were 14 staff in the central administration within various departments (medical, native labour, lands and surveys, public works, the armed constabulary and prisons, and treasury and customs). And there were several outstations, each with at least one government officer: Gizo (which opened in 1904), Shortland Islands (1906), Malaita (1909), Marovo Lagoon (1913), Guadalcanal (1914) and Ontong Java (from 1915 to 1916). Once the Western Solomons was ‘under control’ (Mahaffy’s main task), the next need for ‘pacification’ was on Malaita, from a new base established at Auki (‘Aoke) at the northern end of Langalanga Lagoon. Between 1912 and 1915, the BSIP armed constabulary’s headquarters was based at Auki, to aid initial ‘pacification’, after which the Commandant was transferred back to Tulagi. The Tulagi police barracks had accommodation for 36 men, extra housing for two married men, a guardroom, office and store. In 1916, the armed constabulary consisted of the commandant, one subinspector and 62 Solomon Islander police of all ranks. From 1923, Savo, Tulagi and the rest of the Gela Group were administered by a district officer based on Tulagi—usually a conjoint appointment held by the commandant.

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35 Bennett 1987, 403, 404.
36 NASI, BSIP/III F58/68, Treasurer BSIP to Accountant-General, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, 8 November 1950.
37 Akin 2013, 76.
Beneath the resident commissioners there was a strictly ordered hierarchy of officials—their salary levels, the size of their houses and their positions on the ridge all signs of their relative importance. In 1923, there were 24 headquarters staff and six officers in the district stations. The most senior Tulagi headquarters staff under the Resident Commissioner were the Government Secretary, the Judicial Commissioner, the head of Treasury and Collector of Customs, the medical officers, the Commandant of the Armed Constabulary, the Commissioner for Lands and Government Surveys, the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief Inspector of Labour. Table 3.2 outlines the government salaries during 1925–26, but not the cost of providing furnished living quarters and other allowances.

Various officers held the government secretary position, some of them for many years (for instance, Barnett and Kidson). They also doubled as acting resident commissioners when the incumbents were absent or when there was an interregnum. The Judicial Commissioner (the title changed to chief magistrate in the early 1920s) was equal in rank. There were six judicial commissioners or chief magistrates before the Pacific War. The first was appointed in 1913—26-year-old Isaac Grainger Bates, who remained until 1923. He was replaced between 1924 and 1928 with the less-than-competent N.W.P. De Heveningham, on a salary of £500 per year. The next was R.C. Higginson, a temporary appointment brought in from Fiji in early 1928 at the time of the trial of the Kwaio Malaitans accused of involvement in the death of district officer William Bell’s party at Sinalagu. Next came P.C. Hubbard, who began as a cadet in 1928 and then took over the position in 1930, after Higginson. Hubbard stayed for four years; the post was left vacant from 1934 to 1937 during the Depression, when it was filled for only a year by D.R. McDonald. The last prewar incumbent was Ragnar Hyne, former Chief Justice of Tonga (in 1936), who arrived in 1938, although he had held a temporary appointment on Tulagi in 1930. Born in 1893, Hyne held a University of Queensland arts degree and was called to the Queensland Bar in 1924. As with many government positions today, individuals were

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41 Keesing and Corris 1980, 193.
42 Hyne was later Chief Justice and Chief Judicial Officer for the WPHC, followed by terms as acting Chief Justice and later Senior Puisne Judge of Cyprus (1953–58). He was knighted and died in 1966. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 October 1966.
initially appointed in acting capacities or were owed leave and did not take up appointments until months after they began to appear on the payroll. The WPHC also shuffled staff about its territories.⁴³

There were not always unanimity and friendship between the staff, as is clear below in relation to Spearline Wilson’s promotion in 1939. They all had different motivations: some drank too much or were womanisers, while others were quiet Christian family men who disapproved of disreputable behaviour. In 1927, young anthropologist Ian Hogbin told Professor Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown: ‘Apparently from conversation everyone hates everyone else and regards him as incompetent. In most cases they are probably right.’⁴⁴ Hogbin was correct. Not everyone was enamoured of the skills of the senior administrators and, as the Tulagi correspondent of the Pacific Islands Monthly commented in October 1931:

[T]he younger fry of the service are beginning to show the strain and are frankly amazed that at least half of their number have not been long ago given ‘extensive leave’.⁴⁵

Some officials stayed for only short periods or transferred around the protectorate, making their way up the hierarchy. These people had little long-term impact on Tulagi, although they would have travelled in and out constantly. William Bell was one whose name is remembered. He was based on Tulagi from 1911 to 1915 while head of the Labour Department, although his position involved extensive travel. Born in 1876, Bell was educated in government primary schools in rural Gippsland, Victoria. In 1899, he enlisted in the 2nd Victorian Mounted Rifles in the Boer War in South Africa. After the war, he was working with his uncles on their farm at harvest time when a pitchfork entered his right hand and a doctor had to remove a portion of his palm and two fingers. He was very conscious of the injury and in his early years wore a glove and shook hands with his left hand. ‘Buster’ or ‘Will’ Bell then decided to go to Fiji to work for a trading company as an accountant. In 1904–05, he joined the crew of a labour recruiting vessel for the same company and then secured an appointment as a government agent on the schooner

⁴⁵ PIM, 23 October 1931.
Clansman. He made several labour recruiting voyages to the Solomons between 1905 and 1911. Two of his shipboard journals have survived, which show him to have been an upholder of regulations. He came to respect the tough and straightforward Malaitans who were the core of the labour force. When Solomons labour recruiting to Fiji ended in 1911, Bell applied for and received the position as head of the Labour Department. He was accommodated in the single officers’ quarters in Tulagi for four years before he was allocated his own house. When several officers left to enlist in World War I, he was promoted to District Officer for Malaita, from November 1915 until his death in 1927, which is discussed in Chapter 4.46

Five long-staying public servants formed the backbone of the Tulagi administration from the 1910s to the 1940s: Spearline Wilson (30 years), Dr Nathaniel Crichlow (28 years),47 Frederick E. (‘Pop’) Johnson and Stanley G.C. Knibbs (27 years each) and Arthur E. Osborne (25 years). Osborne oversaw the radio station from its construction in late 1915 until 1940. He married a nurse from the hospital and became a permanent fixture on the island. Although he was in poor health in his final years, along with his assistant, Robert S. Taylor, Osborne was responsible for Tulagi’s radio communications with the outside world. Between them, the two men managed to keep the increasingly antiquated equipment operational.48

Plate 3.6 Pop Johnson, Treasurer, Collector of Customs and Registrar of Shipping, 1919–42
During the war, he was in charge of the BSIP office in Sydney. He retired in 1946.
Source: Suzanne Ellis Collection.

46 Keesing and Corris 1980, 45–49.
47 Crichlow’s career is summarised in the section on the Medical Department later in the chapter.
48 WPHCG (S), 5 April 1940, 214, Minutes of the Advisory Council [hereinafter MAC], 27 November 1939, 214.
Pop Johnson, born Frederick England in Wandsworth, Surrey, on 18 March 1878, changed his name to Frederick England Johnson before he enlisted in the British Army in 1896 and served in the Boer War. We know that his father was a policeman who died in 1905 and his mother was Mary Ann England.\(^4^9\) Pop returned to England from Africa in 1903, paid his way out of the army and left for Australia the next year, before travelling to the New Hebrides, where he worked for the Kerr brothers as supercargo on their ships and managed copra and coffee plantations. In 1908, he transferred to the WPHC administration, first as Inspector of Labour and then as acting Commandant of Police. In 1911, he married 18-year-old Agnes Wilhelmina Watt Cronstedt, one of 11 children of Ester (née Ellis), from England, and Axel Frederik Auguste Cronstedt, a Swedish trader resident at various times on Tongoa, Aneityum and Efate islands. Johnson’s next move was to apply for the Treasurer’s position on Tulagi, which he held along with the positions of Collector of Customs and Registrar of Shipping from 1919 until he was evacuated in 1942. Johnson also acted as Resident Commissioner for periods during 1938, 1939 and 1941. He oversaw the BSIP office in Sydney during the war years, retiring in 1946.\(^5^0\) Johnson never took acting positions in the districts and remained based on Tulagi, because of his centrality to the administration and possibly also because of his higher rank and pay scale. In 1925, he earned £500 per year, which rose to £650 in 1935 and £900 by 1942.\(^5^1\)

Johnson qualified as an accountant, was exacting and could be overly officious, even supposedly questioning Jack Lotze (his daughter’s fiancé) to see whether he had paid duty on her engagement ring. From 1927, he was a government member of the BSIP Advisory Council.\(^5^2\) He was a constant pipe smoker, and he and his wife, Agnes, were fixtures on Tulagi. His attention to financial details kept the government budget balanced. His family’s nickname for him in his old age was

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\(^5^0\) Golden 1993, 95–96.

\(^5^1\) His family holds correspondence from 1922 and 1925 about his pay and pension. WPHCA, 2789/1922, confidential 1208/22, A/RC C.C. Francis to HC WPHC, 11 September 1922, F.E. Johnson to Burns Philp & Co. Ltd, 1426/25, 6 April 1925; PIYB 1935–36, 129, 1942, 314.

\(^5^2\) PIM, 23 June 1932; ISC award document, 3 June 1932, in the possession of Suzanne Ellis, Toowoomba, Queensland, May 2016.
'Frugal Fred’, which applied to his own finances, but also, it would seem, to those of the BSIP. He received an Imperial Service Order in 1932 for his lengthy public service.53

Stanley Knibbs, educated at Sydney Grammar School, arrived in Solomon Islands via Fiji, having previously worked as a field engineer for CSR. He was one of four children of Sir George Handley Knibbs, who trained as a surveyor, but was better known as an Australian scientist, the first Commonwealth statistician and first director of the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry (predecessor of the CSIRO).54 Knibbs’s deputy, Spearline Wilson, generously described him as probably ‘the best brain that ever went to the Solomon Islands’.55 Knibbs held a series of posts relating to land alienation and infrastructure development: Crown Surveyor (1913–24), Commissioner for Lands and Crown Surveyor (1924–39), Registrar of Land Titles (1919–39) and Chairman of the Mining Board (1927–39). In 1918, when the public works head retired, Knibbs was requested to keep an eye on the portfolio, but instead became the ‘permanent’ acting Superintendent of Public Works (1918–39). Although he refused to relinquish his public works position, it was always a problem and retarded the amount of work that could be accomplished in the lands and surveys portfolio. Perhaps the extra £50 it gained him in his salary had a bearing on his decision. Surveying always meant long periods in the districts. Knibbs also acted as District Officer for Shortland Islands for a few months in 1917 when the BSIP was short-staffed during World War I. He was forced to retire in 1939 due to ill-health brought on by alcoholism, making way for his long-serving deputy, who had carried the department for several years as Knibbs declined. Knibbs died in Sydney in 1941.56

54 Bambrick 1983.
55 UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, Wilson, 1972, Notes for James Boutilier. The CSIRO is the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, an independent Australian Government agency responsible for scientific research.
Plate 3.7 Spearline Wilson worked in the Lands Department from 1919 to 1942

He was Commissioner for Lands from 1939 to 1942, before being transferred to the Sydney office during the war. He returned as lands commissioner from 1944 to 1946, this time in Honiara.

Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.

All through the 1930s, Knibbs was bitter and distrustful of Spearline Wilson and seems to have had resident commissioner Ashley as his ally. There was palpable ill-feeling between Knibbs and Wilson. As Wilson wrote to his wife in 1939:

But what do you think of Dear Stanley? And his attempt to stop any promotion for me? He did the same thing once before, about 1931. He is just about as dirty, despicable, and contemptible as it is possible to be. I know for a long time he had resented the fact that I have always been able to carry on the job when he was too drunk to do it, and I expect the rest of it is an attempt to curry favour with Ashley by joining him in his hate. I am afraid I would be far from polite if I were to encounter him this morning. However, as things stand at present, the attempt seems to have got Knibbs and Ashley nowhere.57

Against Ashley’s advice, high commissioner Sir Harry Luke, who closely observed Wilson’s work during a 1939 visit, recommended Wilson’s appointment to Knibbs’s old position. Wilson, disgusted by the behaviour of Knibbs and Ashley, named Pop Johnson and M.J. Forster as two senior officials. Johnson put in a good word for Wilson with Luke. When Ashley left, he destroyed a confidential report on Wilson by Knibbs. The reason for the animosity is not entirely clear. Wilson had a ‘run in’ with Ashley in 1933, when the latter pronounced Tulagi to be malaria-free. Wilson, who lived closer to the jungle areas on the ridge than did most officers, regularly found Anopheles mosquitoes and their larvae, which he took to Dr Harry B. Hetherington, the Resident Medical Officer. Ashley reacted with anger: ‘You are an enemy of mine. I have reported that I have cleared the island of Malaria. I don’t want to hear any more of this. They aren’t here.’ To be fair to Ashley, Sylvester Lambert described Wilson as ‘Bolshevik and erratic, hard to manage’. While this only means he had Australian Labor Party sympathies, it indicates that he was politically to the left of Ashley and Lambert. He may also have had a difficult personality.

Like Knibbs, Wilson was appointed to the central BSIP staff after a term as field engineer for the CSR in Fiji. He served in World War I and then moved to the Solomons. Born in 1890, he worked in the BSIP from 1919 to 1942, first as a surveyor in the Lands and Surveys Department (1919–24) and then as Crown Surveyor (1924–39). Spearline (even his wife called him this) held the position of Commissioner for Lands until 1942, although he never broke the unsatisfactory nexus between the Lands and Surveys and Public Works departments. In charge of the logistics of Tulagi’s wartime evacuation, Wilson was himself evacuated to Sydney in 1942, where he assisted Johnson to run the BSIP office. Wilson also did some secret war-related work as he was knowledgeable about all parts the archipelago. Fifty-four years old, he returned to the Solomons in 1944, this time to Honiara, to reestablish the Lands and Surveys Department.

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58 UQFL, Wilson, 1946, Lands and Public Works Department: A Brief History.
60 Akin 2009, Notes from Lambert, 24 May 1933.
61 ibid.
62 Named for the boundary of surveyed land.
He also served as acting Government Secretary for a short period. In ill-health—largely because of his injuries from World War I—Wilson retired at the end of 1946.\textsuperscript{63}

When he received his 1939 appointment, Wilson detailed his salary to his wife, giving us a window into personal finances:

The increase in salary is only £50 to start with, but rises for the next four years at £25 per year to £700. Salary of the post is £600 to £700 up by £25. But there is also the local allowance of £50 per year, which however is not paid when I am on leave. Boiled down, the increase will be £150 at the end of 4 years. But that will make a difference of almost £100 to my pension at the end of that time. Of course, if the unexpected happens, and this long talked of reorganisation ever does eventuate, I would be on a much better salary, as the salary of the reorganised post goes up to £900. But I think that is quite dead now.\textsuperscript{64}

**Other officials**

Tulagi’s senior officials were the administrative and social elite of the BSIP, and their wives were the most senior women in European society. Other officers stayed for lesser but still substantial periods. The Commandant of the Armed Constabulary in the second half of the 1920s was Captain Ernest Nelson Turner, a tall overweight man with a loud voice, who always dressed in a khaki uniform. Born in Bristol, England, and known as ‘Ernest Nelson’, he seems to have been unpopular, leaving in 1928, not long after helping resident commissioner Kane lead the punitive expedition to Malaita on HMCS *Ranadi* and HMAS *Adelaide* in late 1927.\textsuperscript{65} Eustace Sandars, Turner’s new subinspector and temporary replacement, arrived in 1928. He became a long-serving district officer, remaining until 1942. At various times between 1923 and 1942, Turner and Sandars both held conjoint appointments as District Officer for Savo, Tulagi, the Gela Group and the Russell Islands.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{63} UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, A.H. Wilson to F.A.G. Wilson, 12 December 1946. \textsuperscript{64} ibid., A.H. Wilson to F.A.G. Wilson, 9 November 1939. \textsuperscript{65} BSIPNS, 14 February 1968 (Father D.J. Moore reminiscence). \textsuperscript{66} Bennett 1987, 400.
Despite the Great Depression, during the 1930s, the BSIP Government began to appoint a broader range of staff. Robert A. Lever served as Government Entomologist from 1930 to 1937, and in 1939 the BSIP seconded William C. Groves as the first BSIP Education Officer. He had worked for the Australian administration in New Guinea between 1922 and 1926 and then lectured at Melbourne Teachers’ Training College. Groves lived on Tulagi with his wife and children, completing the first major report into education.67

Missionaries seldom entered the administration. One who did was A. Hedley Abbott. He left the South Seas Evangelical Mission (SSEM) in 1913 and became secretary, consecutively, to Woodford, Barnett and Barley. Once Workman became Resident Commissioner, Abbott transferred to be Assistant Inspector of Labour. He was not a newcomer to the Solomons, as he had arrived with the first group from the Solomon Islands Branch of the Queensland Kanaka Mission in 1904.68 Trained as a carpenter in Ballarat, Victoria, he was a practical man, who taught himself navigation so that he could captain the mission’s vessels, Daphne and Evangel. Abbott played a significant part in the establishment of the mission on Malaita and Guadalcanal. He did not remain with the government and joined the Malayta Company (the commercial arm of the mission) as its plantation inspector. He and his wife returned to Australia in 1920.69

Other midranking officers served long periods of employment. Monty Masterman joined the BSIP administration in 1923 as Assistant Inspector of Labour and was promoted to the inspector’s position between 1924 and 1942. In 1925, he served a few months as Isabel’s District Officer and filled the same position on Malaita for two months after the death of William Bell in 1927.70 In 1935, his salary was £400 a year.71 Masterman enlisted in World War II, taking part in the Normandy landing, and then returned to the BSIP administration after the war, until 1952.72 Tom Russell, a senior postwar officer, noted Masterman ‘had two negative

67  Boutilier 1978; Groves 1940; Cross 1979 31–37; PIM, 23 April 1932.
68  Queensland Kanaka Mission 1903–04, 8–9.
70  Golden 1993, 412; Bennett 1987, 399, 402.
71  PIYB 1935–36, 130.
attributes, however. He had no political antennae and was about the worst Pidgin English speaker in the service.\textsuperscript{73} He seems never to have been very competent and was brutal in his treatment of Solomon Islanders, so was not the right person to oversee labour. In 1935, he was reprimanded for losing his temper and striking a prisoner while acting jailer. His personal file shows that he applied for promotion often. He also wanted to leave the public service but was constrained by lack of personal finances.\textsuperscript{74} However, in 1937, Masterman was appointed acting Government Secretary—the second highest administrative position. Perhaps this indicates that the administration was ‘scraping the barrel’, as the next year Ashley told Masterman that there was ‘little evidence of fitness for promotion, even were a suitable vacancy available’.\textsuperscript{75} Cumulatively, his BSIP service equalled that of the prewar long-stayers.\textsuperscript{76}

There were also many lesser government employees (and their wives) who did not stay long: clerks, postmasters, storekeepers, hospital staff and crews on government ships.\textsuperscript{77} There were tensions between them all, based on education, experience, competence, origins, tenures and personalities. Some of the most senior public servants were Australians, who, despite their skills and long tenures, would always have been looked down on by those with Oxford and Cambridge degrees and English or Irish middle-class or elite backgrounds.

### The Armed Constabulary and Prisons Department

In the initial years, the armed constabulary consisted of about 30 men, each armed with a Martini-Henry rifle, with the majority stationed at Gizo to control headhunting in the north-western islands. They were called ‘\textit{solodia}\textsuperscript{1}', the Pijin term for members of the armed constabulary. The establishment increased quickly: the 1918–19 annual report recorded

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{73} Russell 2003, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{74} NASI, BSIP 1/P1 iii, M 58/22/1, RC F.N. Ashley to S.G. Masterman, 21 November 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Akin 2013, 288, 428, n. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{76} ibid., 288–89.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Golden (1993: 409–13) provides a partial list of other government employees. Bennett (1987: 397–404) provides a list of all district officers until World War II. These two lists, plus an unpublished list by David Akin of BSIP staff on Malaita, give a good outline of the entire public service before 1942, all of whom lived on or constantly passed through Tulagi.
\end{itemize}
it as comprising 92 men. Recruitment was always an issue, as the men did not like the mobility necessary in the force. Most of the police were first, second or third-class constables, with wages ranging from £12 to £18 a year. Lance-corporals, of whom there were 10, earned £24, the three corporals were paid £27 and two sergeants received £36. The sergeant-major earned £48 a year. Many of the men served their two years and refused to reengage, preferring to become plantation labourers for less pay. Policing was dangerous and confronting work. Most of the police came from Malaita, Guadalcanal or Gela. The first commandant, Fred Campbell, found Malaitans to be the best *solodia*, although few of them wanted to join the constabulary. They were drilled in a squad using infantry training methods and, by Campbell’s time, were armed with old, unreliable Lee Enfield .303 rifles.

In 1922, there were 152 members of the BSIP Armed Constabulary, with the non-commissioned officers sent to Fiji for training. District police remained under the command of district officers. The Armed Constabulary and Prisons Department of the 1920s was administered by the commandant—a pattern that continued into the Honiara years. The commandant was assisted by a subinspector and a jailer. By 1929, the armed constabulary personnel consisted of two sergeant-majors and 141 other ranks, and there were 11 warders attached to the prison at Tulagi. The Tulagi headquarters on the outer coast was the training centre for all police in the BSIP. Spearline Wilson remembered Sandars, the subinspector who arrived in 1928, as a ‘typical English Gentleman, always correct in every detail. Well respected but not always liked’. Stephen Sipolo was one of the sergeant-majors; the quarter-master was Heman Ioi and the head warder was Ba`etalua—‘a huge very black skinned man’.

78 BSIP AR 1918–19, 3.
80 Boutilier 1984b, 45.
81 UQFL, Wilson, 1972, Notes for James Boutilier.
82 PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 4–6.
Plate 3.8 The armed constabulary barracks and offices, Tulagi
Source: ANUA, 481-337-64.

Plate 3.9 The armed constabulary on their daily parade
Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.
In 1935, during the Great Depression, the establishment was reduced to the commandant, one subinspector, 112 constables and two sergeant-majors. The next year, as a cost-saving exercise, there was no subinspector. There were also 15 warders at Tulagi prison and one warder at each of the district prisons.83 Police in the early days wore khaki sulus with a cummerbund covered by a leather belt—the latter obtained as surplus from the Manchester police force. Sergeant-majors wore a white cummerbund, sergeants wore black cummerbunds, corporals wore blue and ordinary constables sported red cummerbunds. There were also several boy buglers and drummers based at Tulagi and in the districts. Sandars’ memoir mentions Baura, a teenager from Malaita, as an early Tulagi bugler and `Abaeata (Abaeatha) Anifelo, son of Basiana, a Kwaio leader,

was another.84 For police transport, the government used small launches attached to the Labour Department and the district headquarters, as well as the dispatch boat Belama, until it was wrecked in 1921.85

The commandant or the subinspector also served as Crown prosecutors in the local court, with murder trials forming most of the work; they were held before the Judicial Commissioner and four assessors. In cases where the person was found guilty of murder, the matter was referred to the Supreme Court of Appeal in Fiji. All court materials were forwarded to Suva via Sydney, for review. A guilty verdict, which carried the death sentence, could take three months to finalise. A description from the 1930s gives some idea of conditions at the armed constabulary depot on the outer coast:

The blaring of bugles, more or less in tune, and the spasmodic rattle of a drum lured us around a bluff and to the head-quarters of the police force. A soldierly Englishman, of the very-correct school, showed us around the ‘barracks’—the armoury where the rifles were neatly racked, each police ‘boy’ being allotted his own weapon and being responsible for keeping it in perfect condition; the sleeping-quarters where the comfortable beds comprised a few boards nailed to two battens of different widths, the higher batten being at the head of the ‘bed’ to give a slope towards the foot; the ‘common-room’ and eating house and the cookhouse, all perfectly tidy and clean; the pet parrot, which, unlike the police ‘boys’ who answered all calls on the ‘toot’, uncompromisingly refused to do its trick of dancing, despite the continued cajoling by the commanding officer; the native carving of turtles, crocodiles, and other creatures decorated the buildings; and the batch of recruits being put through their rifle-drill on the edge of the ground.86

Prisoners were held on Tulagi from 1896, before there was a prison, and by 1898, there were 21 prisoners, most of them from Gela and Guadalcanal;87 Gizo prison was established soon after. The usual policy was that prisoners on long sentences were not kept locally. Prisoners from the south and central Solomons were sent to Gizo, while those from the north were sent to Tulagi—making escape more difficult. Occasionally,

84 PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 4–6; Keesing 1980.
85 BSIP AR 1921–22, 6.
86 Weetman 1937, 35.
87 BSIP AR 1898–99, 16.
prisoners did manage to leave a little too readily, such as one Isabel man in 1905 who had been on Tulagi for barely an hour when he swam for the mainland and had to be recaptured. Tulagi prison and the jailer’s house were surrounded by a 3-metre–high galvanised ripple-iron and mesh fence. During 1903–05, there were 42 prisoners at Tulagi and Gizo—the majority sentenced for adultery, assault and theft. Five were sentenced for murder, one of whom was executed. In 1905, Tulagi prison received its first European prisoner, who had shot a Guadalcanal man. He had to pay compensation, plus serve a sentence.88

Plate 3.11 An armed constabulary canoe in the canoe shed on Tulagi, 1930s
Source: BM, Robert Lever Photographic Collection.

88 ibid., 1903–05, 33–34.
The first substantial prison consisted of two buildings, one with concrete walls and floor and a galvanised ripple-iron roof, containing 10 cells. The second building had a concrete floor, a ripple-iron roof and wooden walls. The prison remained on the foreshore of the inner coast, although the 1918–19 annual report recorded that after the buildings were moved to higher ground, the health of the inmates improved.\(^89\) Further improvements made in the early 1920s meant Tulagi was able to house around 100 prisoners.\(^90\) At the time, Tulagi and Gizo prisons were accommodating around 80 prisoners, including two Europeans and two Chinese. Eustace Sandars described the new prison in 1928, which was run by Bill Hynam, whom he described as a ‘spit and polish merchant’:

The prison on the southern end of Tulagi was a beautifully kept place with white wood houses with their little red roofs and barbed wire stockade surrounding the whole. All the stone work was done in white, it really was a show … One quite extraordinary thing was that they used to fly a blue ensign at the masthead there, I never was able to discover why.\(^91\)

\(^89\) ibid., 1918–19, 3.
\(^90\) WPHCA, 1916/1236, Dr N. Crichlow, Annual Medical Report, 1916, 10; Knibbs 1929, 264–65.
\(^91\) PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 10. The Blue Ensign is the British naval flag.
One of the early constructions was gallows erected 1.6 kilometres from the prison; later these were transferred to Bangi Island, just off Tulagi. It seems the first execution took place in 1903, when Pogula of Visali on Guadalcanal was hanged for the murder of Momo. 92 In 1920, there were 82 prisoners on Tulagi, with others on shorter sentences at the six district outstations, where temporary lockups were used. 93 By 1931, Tulagi’s prison comprised one cell for Europeans, four other cells and four associated wards, together containing enough space for 94 prisoners. District prisons were built from local materials and, as with Tulagi prison, they were surrounded by high fences or barbed wire stockades. 94

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92 Boutilier 1984b, 47.
93 BSIP AR 1919–20, 3.
94 ibid., 1931, 4, 1933, 14.
The wireless station

Letters sent by ship were slow to arrive. Establishing a wireless network was crucial to improving communications in the Pacific, advancing shipping, trade and security. British and Australian discussions in the 1900s led to government control of the new media and the WPHC passed a regulation ensuring that all wireless transmissions were licensed, preventing independent commercial development.95 Ships began to carry wireless telegraphy equipment, which meant that when they docked at Pacific ports, residents gained up-to-date information on world affairs. With Europe unstable and on the edge of war, Britain was concerned to advance wireless technology in its territories. In May 1914, Cecil Monckton, the WPHC’s Superintendent of Telegraphs and Telephones, arrived from Fiji to find a suitable site on Tulagi. He chose the only large piece of flat land on the island—a swampy area on the outer coast. In July, Marconi Wireless Company won the tender to supply the service: a 5-kilowatt station costing £4,742. Installation was slowed by World War I, with the

95 PMB, Woodford Papers and Photographs, 1290, Reel 4, Bundle 20, Conference on Wireless Telegraphy in the Pacific, Melbourne, 1909.
equipment and engineers not arriving until 1915. The wireless station connected the BSIP to the world via two 55-metre masts made from welded tubular steel bases with wooden tops. Full transmission began in January 1916, with the wireless available for public messages later that year. Arthur E. Osborne, the technician in charge, was designated Engineer and Chief Wireless Operator. In fact, the government had been gazumped by a year when Cyril Buchanan, assistant manager for Levers at Gavutu, and another man, Fitzpatrick, applied independently for wireless licences. The WPHC prevaricated over their applications, finally granting Buchanan his licence on 27 July 1914, after which he set up a limited range experimental wireless station. Once World War I began, private licences were withdrawn.96

Between 1916 and 1921, Radio Tulagi sent 4,679 messages and received 4,261. By 1936, the annual traffic had increased to 1,314 outgoing messages and 905 received messages during the year, earning the Treasury £159.97 Initially, Radio Tulagi carried all government and commercial messages by Morse code. Signals could be sent to and received from as far away as New Zealand and Australia, although atmospheric conditions often made communication difficult, even with Fiji. Osborne was joined by Arnold Cookson in 1922, who was supposed to take over the senior position at the station, but it proved to be beyond his abilities.98 The Tulagi system was soon joined by others in the BSIP. In 1922, Levers, Malayta Company, the SSEM and the Methodist Mission all sought licences to operate wireless transmitters.99 In August the next year, the Methodist Mission installed a Marconi telephony/telegraphy system at Kokeqolo in Roviana Lagoon, New Georgia, enabling fast communication between Tulagi and the Western District. The Methodist service could use Morse code or voice transmission, forwarding telegrams and other cable traffic to Tulagi to be relayed to the outside world. A year later, San Cristoval Estates Limited, a major timber company on Vanikolo in the south of the BSIP, installed its own Morse code radio communications. In the early 1930s, the Catholic Mission also developed its wireless communications, based at Visale on Guadalcanal. Planters and missionaries who could

97  Hadlow 2016, 143.
98  BSIP AR 1923, 55–56; PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 12; Hadlow 2016, 87.
99  The SSEM and the Malayta Company did not proceed with installing wireless technology until 1934. Hadlow 2016, 133.
not afford expensive wireless systems installed 2-volt pedal-powered wireless sets, perfected by the Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) (AWA) Ltd, for use in the Australian ‘outback’. All that was needed was a strong set of legs (usually belonging to a servant) to pedal furiously, thus creating the necessary electricity. Until the mid-1930s, Osborne at Radio Tulagi attempted to keep the wireless system under government control. By then it was clear that costs had decreased and technology had changed so much that wireless communication was widespread. The BSIP had become ‘wireless literate’, although officials still doubted whether Solomon Islanders were capable of learning Morse code. Interestingly, the Methodists had no qualms about training Solomon Islanders to send and receive Morse code and to operate their telegraphy/telephony wireless system.\(^{100}\)

In 1929, after 14 years of service, the original Tulagi equipment was malfunctioning and needed to be replaced, before it became technically redundant in 1935. The next year, the equipment was even more antiquated and one of the masts was broken. The problem was partly solved in 1932 when Robert S. Taylor, Osborne’s new deputy, managed to construct a short-wave transmitter for £20. Taylor, who had considerable technical expertise, had joined the BSIP administration after World War I. The improvised system he created meant that messages could be transmitted to London via Rabaul with what was considered astounding speed: 17 hours to London and a 4.5-hour reply time.\(^{101}\) Unfortunately, his equipment did not work for shore-to-ship communications, which still required medium-wave transmissions via the Marconi system. Taylor persevered and managed to build a new radio capable of sending signals for 1,200 to 1,600 kilometres, which used only a fraction of the power required by the old Marconi system. He managed to save the BSIP £5,000, for a while at least. Two years later, the communication battle had moved on to establishing wireless links with the district offices. By 1937, with the Great Depression biting hard, the government was planning to install a radio at Auki on Malaita, and the network had been extended to include Gold Development Limited at Berande on Guadalcanal. Although Taylor continued to try to manufacture his own transmitters to equip all district stations, in 1938, the government purchased two wireless telephone sets from AWA Ltd—one for Tulagi and one for Auki—with another budgeted


\(^{101}\) Hadlow 2016, 135.
to go to Gizo. These made a large difference to the ability of Tulagi staff to communicate quickly with the districts.¹⁰² In 1939, as war approached, there were 65 licence-holders for wireless receivers in the BSIP, showing the rapidity with which radio transmission advanced.

In 1938, Radio Tulagi began experimenting with broadcasting at 10.15 am every Monday, providing London and local produce prices and shipping movements. The next year, this was broadened to include service messages and news, until war was declared. Having watched the Methodist success in the Western Solomons, Osborne began to plan to train Solomon Islanders as wireless operators.

The Medical Department

One large advantage of establishing a government was that it brought permanent Western medical care to the BSIP. Before that, the missions were the only source of medical treatment and doctors were rare. Isolated settlers dealt with their own ailments using home medical guidebooks.¹⁰³ Even small scratches could become infected and turn into major health disasters.

The first medical doctors in the archipelago travelled on whaling and naval ships. British and French whaling ships were required by law to carry surgeons, although the same was not the case for American whaling ships.¹⁰⁴ The first permanent doctor based in the BSIP was Henry Palmer Welchman, an Anglican missionary in the Solomons for 13 years from 1888. He worked on Isabel (1890, 1893–1901) and at Siota in the Gela Group (1896–1900).¹⁰⁵ After Welchman departed, the next doctor was John Northcote Deck, who visited in 1908 and returned permanently the next year as resident head of the SSEM, until 1928. Northcote’s brother Norman, a dentist, was based in the Solomons from 1913 until 1948.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ One readily available was James (1949), first published in the 1930s for use in Solomon Islands and other areas of Melanesia.
¹⁰⁵ Moore 2013, entry for Henry Palmer Welchman.
In 1911, the Anglican Melanesian Mission built a hospital at Hautabu near Maravovo on Guadalcanal, which was run by Dr Russell Marshall. Named the Welchman Memorial Hospital, it was short-lived, closing in 1916 when Marshall married the matron and both went off to war—never returning to the BSIP. In 1918, Levers employed Dr Sakurai, of Japanese origin.107

At various times, the SSEM, the Methodists, the Seventh-day Adventists and the Vanikolo Kauri Timber Company also employed medical officers. Dr Lucy Holt-MacCrimmon was based at Su`u, Malaita, during the second half of the 1920s, at her husband’s timber lease, which had connections with the SSEM and its commercial arm, the Malayta Company. She received a government stipend to extend her services to the surrounding villages. Later, she was based on Vanikolo (or Vanikoro). The Methodist mission at Kokeqolo, Roviana Lagoon, established a hospital in 1927, with Dr Edward Sayers in charge. The next year they opened another, at Sasamungga on the Choiseul coast, under Dr Clifford James. Both were subsidised by the BSIP administration. Dr Dorothy Mills-Parker began work at the Seventh-day Adventist’s Kwalibesi Hospital in Lau Lagoon, Malaita, in 1934. The Melanesian Mission tried again in 1928, this time with Dr Lysander Montague Maybury and his wife, Florence Edna Johnson-Kaine, (a nurse) at the Hospital of the Epiphany at Fauaabu in Coleridge Bay, west Malaita, which included the BSIP’s first Hansen’s disease (leprosy) colony from 1929.108 Dr John Gunther became health officer for Levers in 1935;109 and in the same year, Dr C.A. Courteney replaced Holt-MacCrimmon on Vanikolo. This small team of expatriate doctors was soon joined by Fijian and Solomon Islander native medical practitioners trained at the Fiji Medical College in Suva.110 All were in communication with the Tulagi Hospital.

107 Boutilier 1974, 18.
108 Detailed documentation on Fauaabu is held by Helen Barrett MBE, CSI, Brisbane, with a copy now in the author’s possession. The orderlies were John Patterson Nana, Frederick Fafele, Simon Peter Nwasina, Thomas Tisia (short term), Joe Qai (short term) and Etery Tharetona (also a teacher).
109 Later better known as Deputy Administrator of the Territory of Papua New Guinea and first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea.
Malaria was a serious problem faced by all residents of the islands, and blackwater fever (malarial hemoglobinuria, a complication of malaria) was also common during the 1920s. However, the main issue dealt with by medical authorities were dysentery outbreaks among labourers and prisoners. There were outbreaks during the drier months (July to October) of 1914 and 1915. For instance, in 1914, out of 172 recorded deaths, 101 were from dysentery (58.7 per cent). In 1915, 71 deaths from dysentery were reported out of a total of 119 deaths (59.6 per cent). Tulagi Hospital treated 131 cases of all types in 1915, with 21 deaths—20 of them from a dysentery outbreak, the origin of which was traced to the prison. The figures for 1916 and 1917 were lower.

Accommodation for labourers on Tulagi was inadequate and their sanitation arrangements and drinking water were substandard. Their water supply came from two 1,500-litre tanks and there was only one toilet—built over the sea near their barracks. Most of their work was on the other side of the island, where there were no facilities, which meant, as the annual medical report quaintly described, they ‘stooled everywhere’. Eventually, pit latrines were built for use by the labourers.\(^\text{111}\) Neither was there any easily accessible drinking water on some parts of the island, which meant labourers drank from springs that were considered unsafe. Other major medical problems among the labourers were tuberculosis, bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy, influenza and colds. Yaws (\textit{Treponema pallidum pertenue}) affected about 50 per cent of the population in the Solomons, causing many deaths among children and, in its tertiary phase, possibly also insanity. No attempt was made to bring the disease under control until the 1920s and 1930s.\(^\text{112}\) Gonorrhoea became common on some islands during the early twentieth century, although syphilis was rare. Neither seems to have been an indigenous disease; both were introduced by labourers who had worked in Fiji and Queensland and by traders and fishermen.\(^\text{113}\) The explanation for the lack of syphilis is that, where yaws is predominant, immunity is created and syphilis is seldom found. Nurses were excused from treating male venereal disease patients, who were sent to the male doctors.\(^\text{114}\)
Tulagi’s first temporary hospital was constructed in 1913–14, with 18 beds for Solomon Islander males, a small ward for women and a four-bed ward for a ‘better class’ of Solomon Islanders and Asians. It had an interesting feature: an ornate woven exterior wall—the first government-sponsored public art. This building was replaced in 1915 with a new, more spacious hospital complex, built on the outer coast. The new hospital had residences for the medical officer and the nurses, quarters for the orderlies, a female European ward (four beds), a male European ward (six beds), a ‘native’ ward (20 beds) and a main building with an office, operating theatre and dispensary. During the 1920s, the medical establishment usually consisted of two doctors and two nurses, an engineer-navigator for the department’s ship *Hygenia*, a sanitary officer on Tulagi and a squad of several labourers assisted by prisoners on Tulagi, plus about 40 local staff. There was a small isolation ward in the first hospital, with a similar facility added to the second hospital in 1920–21. There was no X-ray equipment or laboratory. In 1929–30, the executive council supported
installing X-ray equipment. Despite the offer of part-private funding, the decision was not supported by the WPHC or the Secretary of State for the Colonies.\textsuperscript{115}

The first government doctor was S.C.M. Davies, who was appointed at Tulagi in 1913 and transferred to Fiji at the end of 1914. Dr Nathaniel Crichlow arrived in November 1914, equipped with bachelor's degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Edinburgh. The first nurse was Edith Elizabeth Elliot, who arrived in March 1915 and had experience in West Africa.\textsuperscript{116} As the years progressed, the BSIP managed to maintain two medical doctors on its staff—one based at Tulagi Hospital and one travelling through the districts. There was often also a third doctor. Once the new doctor J.E. O'Sullivan arrived in July 1915, Crichlow became the travelling medical officer. Dr O'Sullivan and his wife were not well received. In 1917, Workman asked for O'Sullivan to be removed because ‘[o]fficially he is distasteful to the European community’ and he had the ‘qualities inherent in an Irish peasant’. The truth was that Mrs O’Sullivan was a Sinn Fein supporter and both expressed pro-German sympathies at the time of World War I.\textsuperscript{117} The O’Sullivans departed in November 1918, after which Crichlow and Sakurai (on secondment from Levers) shared the task.

It was always difficult to recruit and hold on to nursing staff. Elliot left in February 1918 to marry Jack Svensen, son of early trader Theodor Svensen. Her place was taken by sister Beavan in April, who was assisted by nurse Rushton, who arrived in July. Beavan resigned to marry A.E. Osborne, the wireless technician. The nursing staff always had a high turnover. Nurse Corfield arrived in May 1919 and had left by Christmas. The next was sister Bosden, in 1920.\textsuperscript{118} They were poorly paid.

Crichlow—of Chinese and Scottish descent, from the West Indies—was the second-longest serving member of the prewar administration. Officially, he was the District Medical Officer until 1927, when the position became Travelling Medical Officer, although in the early years he was often also acting Senior Medical Officer on Tulagi. Once Gizo and Faisi had been declared ports of entry, it was considered useful to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116] Boutilier 1984a, 188.
\item[117] Boutilier 1974, 15.
\item[118] WPHCA, 1921/1207, Dr N. Crichlow, Annual Medical Report, 1920, 8.
\end{footnotes}
have a medical doctor based in the north-west; the position was allocated to Crichlow, who became District Officer for Shortland Islands between 1915 and 1917, and again in 1923 and 1933.119 He was transferred back to Tulagi during the Spanish influenza pandemic in 1919–20. Appointed conjoint Medical and District Officer for Gizo (1925) and for Kirakira (1925–26), he also worked in Santa Cruz (for a few weeks in 1929, half of 1937 and a few months in 1940). Crichlow was acting Senior Medical Officer on Tulagi when Hetherington was on leave in 1934. None of the other medical doctors took on district duties. Crichlow’s willingness to do so is probably an indication of his peripatetic existence in the BSIP. He continued as permanent Travelling Medical Officer until 1942. Crichlow’s travels on the Hygenia, a 15-metre diesel launch, and its replacement, Hygenia II, made him known throughout the BSIP.120 Unmarried, he was a pleasant, clever man, whose only failing was deafness, which meant he could not use a stethoscope. One source also implies that he may have had relationships with local women.121

Plate 3.14 The ‘native’ ward, Tulagi Hospital, 1930s
Source: ANUA, 481-337-68.

119 Bennett 1987, 397; WPHCA, 1919/552, Annual Medical Report, 1918, 2.
120 The ship was wrecked and replaced with Hygenia II, although most accounts do not differentiate between the two.
Plate 3.15 Jessie Watt worked as a nurse at Tulagi Hospital in 1923, before she married Spearline Wilson
Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.
Plate 3.16 Dr Nathaniel Crichlow in old age
He worked at Tulagi Hospital and as a travelling medical officer between 1914 and 1942.
Source: Clive Moore Collection.
Table 3.3 contains the admission statistics for Tulagi Hospital for the years 1914–21. The rapid increase in patients over the period 1919–21 relates to the worldwide Spanish influenza pandemic, which spread throughout the BSIP. In 1922, the hospital was described as well equipped, with separate wards for Europeans (10 beds), Asians (four beds) and Solomon Islanders (30 beds). The hospital staff consisted of the new Senior Medical Officer, Dr Andrew G. Carment, a delightful elderly Scott; Crichlow, by then the Travelling Medical Officer; two European female nurses, E.G. Ralph and E.L. Low; and Solomon Islander orderlies and servants. Training was available for small numbers of ‘dressers’ from the districts, who were schooled at Tulagi Hospital for periods of three months, after which they were supplied with simple drugs and dressings and returned to their villages.122

Table 3.3 Tulagi Hospital admissions, 1914–21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Solomon Islanders</th>
<th>Outpatients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
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<td>1918</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n.a. = not available

Sources: BSIP Handbook (1923: 29); Annual Medical Reports, 1915–21, SiNA, BSIP.

Because Tulagi was the main port of entry, any diseases introduced from outside the BSIP were usually observed there first. As soon as it broke out in Australia and New Zealand in late 1918, the Spanish influenza pandemic was expected in the Solomons. Although the BSIP Government declared influenza an infectious disease and introduced strict quarantine, the pandemic reached the archipelago in March 1919 aboard BP’s Marsina out of Sydney. Within two days, almost everyone on Tulagi had

122 BSIP AR 1917–18, 4–5, 1923, 29, 63; WPHCA, 2034/15 to 391/15, No. 800 of 1914, Dr S.C.M. Davies to RC C.M. Woodford, 16 February 1914, Woodford to HC, 3 April 1914, 2954 of 1926, Dr N. Crichlow to Government Secretary, 27 May 1926.
influenza, but the ship had already departed. The disease spread to most islands in the BSIP—it’s effects exacerbated by concurrent bronchitis and pneumonia. On some islands, the effect was limited to scattered pockets, although on Malaita and other large islands the disease spread throughout. It is likely that thousands died, although it could have been even worse.123 Prompt treatment lessened the number of deaths on Tulagi; in 1919, 225 cases were treated, with only eight deaths. The highest death rate was on Malaita, where some villages were decimated. On Tulagi, the armed constabulary barracks was converted into a hospital ward. Former nurses Elliot and Beavan returned to the hospital to help manage the pandemic. In May, BP’s Minindi arrived with 10,000 doses of vaccine, which slowly restored normality, although in November and December, there was a second round of infections. All government employees were vaccinated. Only 7,500 doses were used because the smaller plantation companies were unwilling to pay for the vaccine for their labourers.124 From March to May 1920, the pandemic struck again. Labour recruiting stopped for two months and the government inoculated new indentured labourers with the vaccine. Tulagi Hospital was strained, having to deal with 399 inpatients during the year, as well as thousands of outpatients—mainly labourers passing through the capital. The disease continued to affect the BSIP until 1923.125

There were times when there were no European patients in the hospital, although the general ward for Solomon Islanders was often full. During epidemics, the European nurses were told to stay out of the ‘native’ ward and leave all treatments to the orderlies. The isolation ward was converted into an Asiatic ward in 1926. Although this ward was unfurnished, the Chinese still had to pay the same hospital fees as Europeans.126 Carment departed, replaced with a less pleasant, alcoholic Irishman, Dr C.R. Pattison, who was soon asked to resign. He had been based in Lautoka, Fiji, where he had caused problems and was given the Tulagi posting as his last chance.127

123 Boutilier 1974, 7–8.
126 WPHCA, 2954 of 1926 to RC R.R. Kane, 15 October 1926, Dr N. Crichlow to Government Secretary, 27 May 1926; UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, J.A. Watt to Mary, 28 September 1924.
Late in 1928, Dr Hetherington, the new Senior Medical Officer, chaired a medical committee to give advice on further expansion of the medical facilities. A quarantine station was established on an adjacent small island and four new isolation rooms for infectious cases were built at Tulagi Hospital. Provision was made to construct a ‘public lunatic asylum’ in 1928 and government records show that a small mental health facility existed at the hospital from about 1933, with seven males and one female admitted in that year.128 Outside assistance with health came through the 1928–31 Rockefeller Foundation yaws and hookworm eradication campaign—the largest medical campaign undertaken in the BSIP up to that time.129

Tulagi Hospital had a sister-in-charge (a matron) and one or two nurses and, at various stages, there was also a pharmacist. R.W. Stone arrived at Tulagi in July 1927 as clerk and dispenser in the Medical Department. He died from pneumonia following an acute malarial infection in September. He was replaced with Xavier Herbert—later an outstanding Australian novelist—who worked at the pharmacy between February and May 1928 and who was attracted to Tulagi because his stepsister was acting matron at the hospital. Herbert was ill for much of his stay and contemptuous of the pompous colonial world he found there. He detested resident commissioner Kane and was very happy to leave. Interestingly, he had a small role in the plight of the Kwaio prisoners imprisoned after the murder of William Bell and his tax-collecting party, and his short stay influenced the beginning of Capricornia, his first novel, published in 1938.130 Herbert was replaced in 1929 with Francis (Frank) T. Stackpool on a six-month temporary contract that became permanent.131

Nurse Jessie Watt worked at the hospital in 1923, employed at £120 a year plus annual uniform and other allowances totalling another £62.132 After working in Shanghai and Manila, she found Tulagi quite charming:

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128 McElwaine and Horne 1930, 140.
129 BSIP AR 1928, 5; BSIP Blue Books 1933–34, 120; Bradbury and Traub 2016; Mitjà and Marks 2016.
131 BSIP AR 1923, 63, 1928, 5; WPHCA, No. 2954 of 1926, RC C.M. Woodford to HC WPHC, 21 February, 3 April 1914, Dr S.C.M. Davies to Woodford, 16 February 1914, No. 800 of 1914, Dr N. Crichlow to Government Secretary, 27 May 1926, WPCH to RC R.R. Kane, 15 October 1926, 4/IV 222/1934, RC No. 530, 13 December 1933, 259/1934, RC, No. 21, 5 January 1934; Keesing and Corris 1980, 206, 209; BSIP AR 1923, 63; Bennett 1987, 397, 404.
The pay is good, the people nice & it won’t be hot till November. We have two nice tennis courts here at the Hospital, & our garden slopes right down to the beach, which is fringed with palm trees. It is so beautiful …

There is a soft rain falling (tropical rain) & the tide is low & one can see the tops of the coral reefs just beneath the water, & all green & silver shadings in the streaks. Very pretty indeed & it feeds my soul just as much as ‘white hyacanths’ [sic]. We are just a tiny island in the midst of tiny islands. I can count seven from where I sit—all palm covered & coral reefed. The real South Sea Islands effect. Also, two black boys in red lavas out in the shallow water spearing fish for their Kai-Kai (Dinner). They are hospital orderlies, ‘John’, & ‘Harry’ …

I love it and so far have been very, very happy. It is not nearly so hot as the Philippines & is far prettier, & we have the dearest little home all to ourselves.133

Although her descriptions of patient care are paternalistic by modern standards, there is also a sense of fondness. One of her patients was Marfee, an elderly man who had worked in Queensland and had been in the hospital for about a year. She described him as a ‘character’, who pronounced that he could ‘Savee white man too much’. Marfee was remarkably grubby. Watt ordered an orderly to scrub him with hot water and Lysol and shave his beard. The improvement was so great that Marfee announced that ‘the man he stop long bed before, he die-finish [I am a different man to the previous one in this bed, who died]’.134

Malaria was always rife, even though the authorities had filled in or drained most of the swamps. A medical report in 1927 criticised Tulagi and particularly Chinatown, which was constructed on a reclaimed mangrove swamp, in which mosquitoes bred:

There is a great deal of scrub & weedy ground. Close behind the town is bush & this bush clothes the sides of the hills which shut the town in. I had the opportunity of examining some twenty of the inhabitants. All had enlarged spleens. Some of them were tremendously enlarged.

133 ibid., J.A. Watt to Mary, 18 June 1923.
134 ibid.
Through cleaning of the scrubby & weedy ground in the Town, clearing of the bush behind it & cleaning of the drains of grass etc. And construction of new drains, and lastly regular inspection and filing where necessary—all these are required to render this important portion of Tulagi reasonably free of malaria.135

Foreign residents regularly took quinine, had screened sections in their homes and used mosquito nets over their beds. Some ensured that their staff took quinine as a prophylactic. Subinspector Sandars described the regular doses:

Everyone took his five grains of quinine each evening and my little police force used to parade at six o’clock and be given their dose of quinine and a drink of water. One had to watch them pretty carefully to see that they actually swallowed it because they liked it no better than anybody else. I was fairly lucky, I never suffered really badly from malaria as did some others. I was meticulous about taking my quinine and always used to see that my housestaff took theirs too.136

Quinine had disadvantages: common side effects were headaches, ringing in the ears, eye problems and sweating. There was also the possibility of more severe side effects, and users could become prone to sunburn, headaches, temporary deafness and nausea. However, for the majority, it was the standard malaria prophylactic or cure. Long-term residents frequently forwent their daily doses, instead using large doses to control the fever whenever it struck. After some years—just as still occurs with Solomon Islanders—early Europeans and Chinese residents gained a degree of tolerance and managed to function well enough, despite occasional bouts of fever and being constantly below optimum health. Atebrin (quinacrine) became available in Tulagi in 1934 and was substituted for quinine, although it turned the skin a bright bronze to yellow colour. This was known as the ‘mark of the Solomons’.137

Tulagi Hospital was a godsend, but it was isolated and primitive compared with 1920s and 1930s metropolitan standards. For instance, in 1927, Kathleen Bignell, a planter’s wife from Isabel, was bitten by a centipede. She failed to respond to treatment and was evacuated to Tulagi Hospital,

135 WPHCA, No. 2010 of 1927, Dr H.B. Hetherington, Report of Malaria Control Measures, Tulagi, 7 March 1927, in RC to HC WPHC, 8 August 1917.
136 PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 12.
where she made no progress. The next move was to Fairlight Hospital at Manly, Sydney, where for a while there was a possibility that her leg would have to be amputated. Some years later, her husband Charles grazed his ankle while diving for trochus shell. The wound turned into a septic ulcer and he was evacuated to Australia for five months, before the infection was cleared up. He walked with a limp for the rest of his life.138

The hospital also acted as a nursing home for the older foreign residents of the BSIP. For several months in the early 1930s, Philip Palmer senior was a patient there when he had a leg ulcer and anaemia. His bill of £377 was never paid and his estranged sons Ernie and Philip never visited him. Left to the charity of Dick Laycock and Geoff Clift, he returned to his plantation and died horribly in 1939.139

Dental problems were usually dealt with by deadening the pain with oil of cloves, aspirin and patent medicines. There was only one dentist resident in the Solomons, Norman Deck from the SSEM (1913–48), who was infamous for only treating SSEM patients. Often the only local possibility was extraction with clean pliers—an operation Charles Bignell once performed on himself.140 While there were dentists intermittently at Tulagi Hospital, when there were not, the options were to travel to Rabaul, Suva, Brisbane or Sydney. Dental problems were a constant issue for many expatriates. Some of the stories now seem amusing but would not have been to the individuals involved. Dick Horton had one screwed-in tooth that fell out while he was crossing a river. It was eventually retrieved and Eroni Leauli, a Fijian native medical practitioner, stuck it back in using gutta-percha (a rigid natural latex). Intended as a temporary solution, this repair lasted five years. Obtaining new false teeth was extremely difficult. At one stage, the Anglican bishop was capsized out of a small boat while going ashore across a reef at Alanguala, Makira. In the mayhem, he lost his false teeth. There was no way to replace them until a dentist employed by another denomination passed through Tulagi and made him a new set. His parting words to the bishop were: ‘You might preach Anglican doctrine, Bishop, but never forget that you’re doing it with Methodist teeth.’141

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139 Golden 1993, 337.
140 Watson 1991, 56.
The Lands and Surveys Department

Tulagi’s officials controlled all land matters in the BSIP. Understanding the large variety of customary land tenure systems was the key to economic development. Large-scale land alienation had followed the proclamation of the BSIP and there was always a nagging doubt that this was not legal in the circumstances of a protectorate. Regardless, the land alienation continued. Although resident commissioner Woodford wanted sufficient land to be transferred into the hands of expatriate plantation developers, it was a balancing act. He also needed to curb land speculation and to safeguard indigenous land rights. It was some years before he could convince the British Government that the BSIP had long-term financial prospects. One of the ways Woodford did this was to declare ‘unoccupied lands’ to be the property of the Crown. Immediately he arrived, Woodford issued the September 1896 land regulation, which declared that all previous land ‘contracts’ were regarded as provisional until investigated by BSIP officers. The regulation stipulated improvement clauses for land acquired as trading stations and for agricultural purposes, which enabled legal negotiation of leases with Solomon Islanders.

Until 1912, it was possible to purchase freehold land directly from Solomon Islanders and land declared as ‘waste’ could be leased for up to 999 years with a certificate of occupation. However, the basis of the legal right of the BSIP Government to claim control over ‘unoccupied’ land was not entirely clear. Initially, the Colonial Office gave an opinion that the BSIP Government had no right to declare any land in the protectorate to be the property of the Crown and that the ‘vacant’ land provision of the 1896 regulation was invalid. This was soon superseded by an 1899 Law Office ruling that it was legal to declare land Crown land if the inhabitants were ‘practically savages without any proper conceptions of ownership of land’. These two opinions were at cross-purposes and the solution was to issue certificates of occupation on land ‘neither owned, cultivated nor occupied by any native or non-native person’. Today, we understand that all land and the surrounding reefs and sea have indigenous owners.

142 Quoted in Heath 1981, 64.
Plate 3.17 The Tulagi waterfront with the Lands Department building in the foreground
Source: Clive Moore Collection.

Plate 3.18 Government offices on the Tulagi waterfront
The Labour Department building is in the foreground.
Source: ANUA, 481-337-77a.
Maintaining indigenous rights to land was a consistent theme in Fiji, British New Guinea and BSIP land policy, although in practice, there was considerable variation in implementation. Woodford’s attitude was a marked swing away from the situation in Fiji, where Britain had assumed rights to all non-alienated land upon cession in 1874, with indigenous land rights protected by the Governor. The Native Lands Ordinance, 1880 made Fijian land inalienable. In the Solomons, land policy was closer to the situation in British New Guinea (later Australian Papua), where the government controlled all land matters and the indigenous people were guaranteed rights to their customary lands, but with large areas of ‘waste’ lands declared and made available for sale or lease. By 1910, the Government of Australian Papua had declared more than 400,000 hectares to be Crown land available for sale to investors.\textsuperscript{143} Despite the 1896 BSIP regulation, until the creation of the Lands Commission in the early 1920s, no attempt was made to investigate pre-protectorate land sales or the rapid acquisition of land in the 1900s and 1910s. Foreigners were able to gain control of ‘native land’ reasonably easily. This trend in the 1890s–1910s encouraging European enterprise, combined with shallow rhetoric supporting ‘native rights’, was to provide the marker of land policy in the BSIP. Nevertheless, the government only ever claimed rights to ‘unoccupied’ land and never made a claim to the underlying title of all land.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{143} Lawrence 2014, 248–49.
\textsuperscript{144} Heath 1981, 64.
The 1896 and 1900–04 Solomons (Waste Lands) Regulations provided the basic legislative framework enabling alienation of 162,000 hectares (about 5 per cent of the BSIP) between 1900 and 1914, most of which was accessible coastal land used for coconut plantations. This land was obtained by foreign companies, with no thought of indigenous rights or participation in development, other than as a labour force. Woodford believed that Solomon Islanders attached little importance to land and were more interested in productive crops planted on the land (a concept closer to usufruct in European law). He did not understand that even if land was unoccupied it was still owned or that Melanesian custom seldom allowed permanent alienation. Added to this was the complexity of land tenure systems, which differed from island to island. He also believed that the people were dying out and that it was in the best interests of the government to buy and control the land. The government paid a standard price of 2 shillings an acre and, for a 10 per cent commission, it would broker leases. The intention was to allow the government greater control over land, to stop inflation and to create revenue.

Solomon Islanders were not in a position to comprehend the huge hectarage that had passed into foreign hands and had no understanding of the British land tenure concepts involved, nor that their actions in marking papers and accepting gifts had permanently separated them from their customary lands. Eventually, the strength of protests by Solomon Islanders—particularly in the New Georgia Group, on the Guadalcanal Plains and on the west coast of Malaita—brought about the Phillips Lands Commission.

During the 1900s and the first half of the 1910s, Woodford negotiated with the WPHC for his administration to be able to purchase land directly, which could then be sold to developers at a reasonable price. In 1911, it was agreed that all nongovernment land purchases should be banned. The 1914 Land Regulation enabled leases to be issued for 10 to 99 years, including a forfeiture clause. With minor amendments, this regulation remained in force until 1959. The Resident Commissioner could authorise land to be leased to ‘non-natives’ for cultivation, grazing and building purposes, if the consent of the owners was obtained and if the land was not under cultivation or required for the future support

145  Lawrence 2014, 245–49. See also Heath 1979, for a detailed analysis of land tenure, and Heath
1981.
146  Allan 1957, 37.
of the landowners. This replaced the long-term interests in land created by the government under the 1900–04 regulations. The new regulation also halted the previous system that allowed 999-year leases, although occasionally after 1914 owners of freehold were allowed to obtain a lease in perpetuity. In 1918, the government introduced regulations to enable the compulsory registration of land title deeds and established a land registry office in Tulagi. No provision was made for investigation of the validity of deeds lodged with the registrar. Copies of all entries in the register of land claims held in Suva were transferred to Tulagi.147

The staff of the Department of Lands and Surveys were crucial to the economic development of the BSIP. To administer land matters, Woodford created the Tulagi-based position of Government Surveyor in 1911, which was held by G.R. Turner until his resignation the next year. The Lands and Surveys Department began in 1912, with the appointment of the Commissioner for Lands, who was also the Crown Surveyor. Another surveyor arrived in 1919. The rent for cultivation leases was 3 pence per acre for the first five years, 6 pence per acre for the second five years, 3 shillings per acre from the 11th to the 20th years and 6 shillings per acre from the 21st to the 33rd years. At the expiry of the 20-year or 33-year period, the rent was reassessed at a rate not exceeding 5 per cent of the unimproved value of the land. A condition of cultivation leases was that one-tenth of the area leased had to be cultivated within five years. However, some aspects of the old system continued, and nongovernment Europeans sometimes dealt directly with Solomon Islanders in land matters, although when the agreement was ratified, the government became the owner and renter of the land. Slowly, Solomon Islanders were beginning to understand the nature of land sales and leases, and that district officers were willing to investigate their claims that foreigners had gained control of some land by fraud.148 All of this meant that Tulagi was the central source of all government land policy and practice.

Stanley Knibbs, mentioned earlier, arrived on 22 May 1913 as the first Commissioner for Lands and Crown Surveyor. In 1918, the department expanded, with the appointment of Felix F. King to the position of Government Surveyor. Like Turner, King resigned quickly after making only a few surveys, replaced with Spearline Wilson on 3 May 1919, who

147 BSIP AR 1971, 23; Allan 1957, 41.
148 Allan 1957, 42.
succeeded Knibbs in 1939. Knibbs and Wilson made an effective team (at least in their early years), although they seem to have been surrounded by incompetent junior appointments in lands and public works and often had no support staff, not even clerical assistance.

The next addition to the Tulagi department was Harry W. Sando, appointed as temporary Government Surveyor on 1 October 1924, but forced to resign due to ill health. Then came Edward C. Chester—seemingly well qualified, with American degrees in surveying and engineering. He proved inept and was permitted to resign. The next to occupy the position was E.L. Leembruggen from Fiji, but he, too, was not up to the task and, even with on-the-job training from Wilson, could not carry out even basic surveying duties. To solve the ongoing difficulty, the administration decided to train survey office clerk N.L. Nevison, who had been a surveyor’s assistant in Canada and Australia, to be a surveyor. He qualified and became the Government Surveyor on 27 June 1929, but was retrenched the next year because of the Depression. All of this severely limited the amount of surveying possible. Surveying remained combined with public works, but the latter always dominated, which led to constant neglect of the surveying section of the portfolio.149

The much-needed Lands Commission operated between 1919 and 1924. Although it investigated only 55 claims out of 300 European titles, it was a check on the rapacious land-grabbing that had occurred. The commission added a little to the patchy understanding of the nature of and variation in customary land tenure. There were two commissioners, both based on Tulagi, who travelled around the BSIP. The first was Captain G.G. Alexander, a legal officer from Fiji, who left the Solomons when he was appointed Junior Puisine Judge in Tanganyika, Africa. Alexander’s investigations were rushed and unsatisfactory. The life of the commission was extended and Frederick Beaumont (Monty) Phillips, a young barrister from Melbourne, was appointed. Phillips was thorough and made it his practice to hold his hearings on the lands in question, which revealed numerous discrepancies. His success was even more remarkable when one realises he had a damaged leg and was short in stature. Monty Phillips sailed his own yacht—designed for a one-legged sailor—and (rather oddly) used musical instruments to provide showmanship when adjudicating land disputes. Not bluffeed by the large companies making

many of the claims, he halved one 106,569-hectare Levers’ lease in the Western Solomons. Phillips’s success in the BSIP led to his appointment to the New Guinea Mandated Territory as a magistrate.\textsuperscript{150}

Rather than quelling indigenous discontent, the Phillips Lands Commission (as it became known) drew attention to the inequity of the land alienation.\textsuperscript{151} In the 1920s and early 1930s, the Lands Department concentrated on surveys connected with the Lands Commission’s findings. The 1930s and 1940s brought little change in land policy and administration, although Levers’ numerous certificates of occupation were replaced with leases. The Australian Navy began preparing large-scale surveys and coastal traverses of Guadalcanal, Shortlands and Banika (the smaller of the two main Russell Islands, on which Yandina is situated)—all areas of plantation development. The Lands Commission occupied most of the time of the Lands Department staff (Knibbs was seconded as Deputy Commissioner), slowing routine surveys. Even so, by 1930, approximately half of the alienated land in the BSIP had been surveyed.\textsuperscript{152} This commission was central to business on Tulagi over several years, and staff and ships were seconded to assist.

During the 1930s, Knibbs and Wilson performed clerical as well as surveying duties. Most of their jobs revolved around public works, and once small-scale mining began in the BSIP, surveying new mining leases took up the rest of their available time. As Wilson gently phrased it:

\begin{quote}
The Head of the combined departments had lost heart and interest, and had given way to a weakness which gradually increased until it culminated in his retirement during the visit of Sir Harry Luke to the Protectorate in 1939.\textsuperscript{153}
\end{quote}

The only other European officer in the department was Jimmy Mutch, the Foreman of Public Works, who, like Knibbs, was an alcoholic. This left Wilson virtually alone to carry out most duties. Temporary respite came when C.E. Spencer was appointed as clerk between late 1937 and late 1941. Again, Wilson phrased his opinions carefully and mysteriously: ‘Spencer was found to be suffering from a malady which precluded his

\textsuperscript{150} He later became a judge there, then Chief Judge, and was knighted in 1956. Quinlivan 1988.
\textsuperscript{151} Files on the individual cases investigated are held in Solomon Islands National Archives and, although there was a brief overall final report, no copy can now be located.
\textsuperscript{152} BSIP AR 1930, 14; UQFL, Wilson, 1946, Lands and Public Works Department: A Brief History, 3; Allan 1957, 43–47.
\textsuperscript{153} Wilson, 1946, Lands and Public Works Department: A Brief History, 2.
confirmation in the Colonial Service, which influenced his subsequent actions, and resulted in his decision to resign. 154 Could this be code for relations with indigenous women, homosexuality or alcoholism? Once Wilson took over from Knibbs in 1939, World War II had begun in Europe and rigid economies were in place.

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This chapter has outlined key areas of the administration on Tulagi. The small number of Tulagi-based officials were at the core of the BSIP's elite. Certainly, that was how they regarded themselves. They paid little attention to the Chinese, who were the major group of foreign residents. The 1920s was an important decade for consolidation. Tulagi became a permanent home for government and commercial employees, both on the island and on Makambo and Gavutu. Marriages occurred, children were born and life rolled on at the Pacific outpost. The next chapter looks at other aspects of life in Tulagi in the 1920s.

154 ibid., 3.
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