

Preface

This is a fascinating memoir written by Keith Woodward many years after he left the then New Hebrides where he worked for almost twenty-five years in the British Administration. Although he is modest about his own contributions in these years, Keith played a significant role in the moves towards self-government, an innovative, electoral system and ultimately, in 1980, independence when the country became Vanuatu. This work not only led to his award of an OBE but a Vanuatu Independence Medal. It will be an invaluable history not just for those ni-Vanuatu who lived through those momentous and turbulent years leading up to independence but for those of subsequent generations. It will also be a great resource for scholars of the decolonisation process and political history of Vanuatu and the Pacific more broadly. In addition, it highlights the complexity of the relations between British and French colonialisms in the archipelago and the region.

I would like to thank both Brian Bresnihan and Michael Allen for their excellent photos from the period and Keith's daughter Fleur for the recent photograph of her father. I am also grateful to Brian for permission to reproduce his photograph of the painting of the British Administration buildings by Olla Reeve which is in his collection. I thank Mitiana Arbon for his excellent cover design using two historical photographs provided by Brian and Michael respectively.

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Margaret Jolly
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