

# Sir Albert Ellis' Death at 81

## Made Rich Phosphate Discoveries

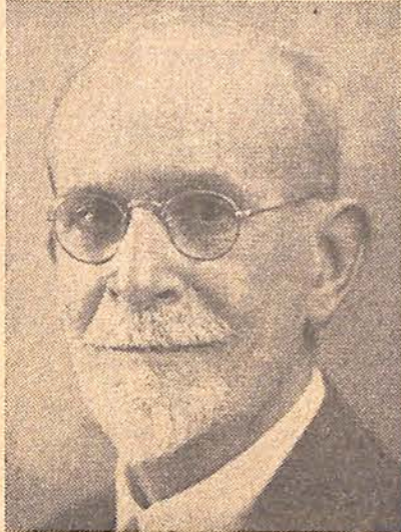
Sir Albert Ellis, C.M.G., British Phosphate Commissioner in New Zealand for the last 30 years, died in Auckland yesterday at the age of 81. He was the man, a farmer's son, who in 1899 made the discovery which led to the exploitation of the vast stores of Nauru and Ocean Island phosphate deposits.

When he discovered the rich values of Nauru rock, Sir Albert Ellis was analyst and prospector for a London company which had been carrying on the phosphate industry in the Pacific, as well as trading in copra, pearl shell and other island products.

Sir Albert was in the Sydney office in 1899 when he noticed a large block of stone keeping open an outer door. It resembled a special kind of hard phosphate rock which he had found on Baker Island some years before. The manager said that he had found it on Nauru Island, and several geologists confirmed his view that it was only fossilised wood.

But Sir Albert was still fascinated by the rock. He made a complete analysis of it—and found it to be the highest grade phosphate rock. It is now in the Auckland Museum. The development of an industry of the greatest importance to Australia and New Zealand resulted from Sir Albert's curiosity about this "door stop."

He landed on Ocean Island in May, 1900, and at Nauru about three weeks after the analysis, at the orders of the London board to confirm the existence of phosphate and the extent of the deposits. Three months later Sir Albert started operations at Ocean Island as manager, with a white staff of eight, and about 50 Ellis Island natives. Work at Nauru started in 1906. Five years later he was given the position



Sir Albert Ellis

of local director with residence in Auckland, making trips to the islands as desired by the board.

The Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand purchased the industry outright in 1920, and Sir Albert was offered the position of New Zealand commissioner. By 1949, both islands reached an output of 1,250,000 tons of phosphate a year.

During the Second World War, Nauru was laid in ruins. When the war ended, reconstruction and the resumption of the industry were promptly begun, and Sir Albert played an important part in restoring the industry.

Sir Albert was knighted in the King's Birthday Honours of 1938. He was born in New Zealand, and his father was first a chemist, and later a farmer, combining his work with saw-milling between Cambridge and Mata-mata. He was a foundation member of Rotary, an elder in the Presbyterian Church, a Bible Class leader, and a director of the Bible Training Institute and Postal Sunday School Movement.

Sir Albert is survived by Lady Ellis, and a daughter, Mrs G. R. Milne, of Wellington.

## OBITUARY

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# PHOSPHATES: WHY, HOW, AND WHERE?

or to be more explicit

## Why Needed? How Used? and Where Found?

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(Address by Sir Albert Ellis at Auckland Rotary Club, 3.6.42)

When invited by the Programme Committee to speak on Phosphate matters I demurred at first, owing to the fact that the industry is greatly affected by war conditions and particulars cannot be given in public. However, all of you know that in December 1940, five phosphate vessels were sunk by German raiders, and that one of the raiders shelled the Nauru plant, also that in December 1941, the Japanese bombed Nauru and Ocean Island the day after they attacked Pearl Harbour.

Notwithstanding all difficulties, we have been able to bring in a lot of phosphate to New Zealand and Australia since the war began, but I am unable to give any particulars as to what is being done at present, or what are the prospects for the future. It depends upon the progress of the war, and all I can say is that we hope for the best.

Thinking over the Committee's suggestion it seemed that I could deal with Phosphates in a broad sense and avoid any details to which exception might be taken by the powers that be. Though the subject is usually looked on as being more applicable to the man on the land, I consider it has a much wider association, and indeed is bound up with the welfare and prosperity of the Dominion in no small degree. My remarks will be based on the questions: why are phosphates needed? How used and where found?

When considering basic substances it is usually the custom to give a brief outline of their history, how they came to be utilised, and how their use has developed over the years. We may refer to phosphate in this connection.

Though tilling the soil was one of the earliest occupations of mankind, and certain methods of improving its fertility go back to antiquity, it was not until the beginning of the Nineteenth Century that phosphates as such were used to any extent. About that time it was recognised that bones gave good results as fertilisers, and with increasing knowledge of agricultural chemistry this value was traced to their phosphate content. Naturally it stimulated the demand for bones, and not only Britain but also Europe was ransacked for supplies. It seems that Britain was most successful in the search and even the old battlefields of Europe did not escape her attention. This ghoulish trade drew forth the wrath of the great German scientist, Liebig, who compared Britain to a vampire in very forcible language. It soon became evident that this source of supply was quite inadequate

With their newly acquired knowledge other investigators made gloomy calculations as to when the soils of the world would be exhausted of their phosphatic contents, and a dire situation was forecasted of the overcrowded human race struggling for a bare existence, finally dying out for want of food. Some of us older folk will remember the closing phases of this depressing line of thought.

In 1842 the discovery by an Englishman, Sir John Lawes, that certain rocks contained phosphate was of vital importance, for it has changed the whole position. A world wide search for phosphate deposits began, and during the last sixty years met with such success that there is now no apprehension as to phosphate or food supplies. (Please note I am not speaking about war conditions) We hear more nowadays about over-production of certain foods, but as a matter of fact the real trouble is inefficient distribution, and if the wants of all were supplied there would be no surplus. It is generally recognised however that under modern methods of agriculture the world will be able to support an increasing population for ages to come.

The attendant growth of phosphate rock production has been remarkable. In 1847 it was only 500 tons; in 1885 the world production was 1,250,000; in 1900 3,100,000; and in 1937 just on 12,000,000 tons, so that in 90 years a world-wide industry producing 12,000,000 tons per annum has sprung up, and there is reason to expect further expansion.

But why are all these phosphates needed? The man in the street might reply that it is just to give the farmer good crops. This is only a partial truth; the need goes much deeper. In 1859 one Thomas Green Clemson put the position pithily when he said "There can be no civilization without population, no population without food, and no food without phosphate." And food must contain its quota of phosphates to be wholesome otherwise deficiency diseases of bad type will develop both in human beings and in animals. Instinct tells even the dairy cow when her pasture is badly short of phosphate for in such case she hunts up a bone and chews away at it by the hour. Useful under the circumstances but her time should properly be spent in grazing or chewing her cud instead of bones. Medical men are agreed that everything living, whether animal or vegetable requires phosphate. I was told by a Doctor friend that without phosphorus, life as we know it would cease; that every cell in the body contains this necessary element, and it is essential for the multiplication of cells and growth of the body.

But we will not dwell too long on the scientific aspect. Why are New Zealand and Australia vitally interested in phosphates seeing that they are new countries and have not been subjected to centuries of cropping operations with the accompanying drain on the phosphate content of the soil. The answer is that they are both naturally deficient in this constituent, to use an agricultural term, it is the 'limiting factor' in our soils, and so all application of fertilisers must centre around it.

I read in the press recently that a member of an agricultural council down South had stated that New Zealand was not a fertile country and owed its good results to the annual heavy dressings of Nauru and Ocean Island phosphate, combined with a regular rainfall and equable climate. There is much truth in it.

Not only is there this natural deficiency in our soils to contend with, but the huge annual shipments of butter, cheese, meat, wool, and indeed all farm produce draw heavily on this vital soil constituent: each year thousands of tons of phosphates leave our shores contained in these exports. The loss can be made up only by replacing the phosphate as economically as possible, and for this purpose the annual importation of phosphate rock to the Dominion has risen to over 300,000 tons: sixty years ago it was practically nil. The cost of these extensive supplies is heavy, but the Dominion's revenue, derived from its exports of farm produce, depends upon them.

Not long since I was chatting about phosphates with Mr. Gilbert Archey our esteemed Museum Director and remarked on the benefits experienced by New Zealand from topdressing. "Yes," he said "and it has even affected our art!" "Oh" I said, "that's a new one on me; how do you make that out?" "Well," he replied, "it is quite plain; formerly paintings of the countryside were in rather sombre hues, now they are bright green." You may remember too that when the American Fleet visited us some years ago, some aeroplanes were sent on ahead to report. On their return they said it was "a green land." And those of us who have been in arid drought-stricken countries can appreciate best what that means.

Turning to another aspect. Surely one of the lessons to be learnt from the present war is that these two countries must have a largely increased population. To obtain this, a policy of closer settlement is imperative. Many of our farmlands need cutting up into smaller holdings, and farming the reduced areas more intensively possibly getting equal results from the smaller farm. Towards this end, nothing is of greater importance than plentiful supplies of cheap phosphate. Then we have large areas of second and third class land lying idle and absolutely unproductive. Clear away the fern and scrub, put on the phosphate and soon "the desert will blossom as the rose." See what successful work has already been done with a relatively small portion of the vast pumice lands of the interior. A leading Hawkes Bay sheepfarmer told me recently that New Zealand with ~~#~~ superphosphate could supply all England with meat, and I think he is right. No country in the world is more suitable for closer settlement than this Dominion with its fine climate, good rainfall and widespread hydro-electric potentialities. Such a policy would give us an ever increasing population of small farmers of the best type, a sturdy independent class of people who may be called the backbone of a nation. It would solve many of our problems.

How are phosphates used? Let us consider New Zealand practice. Here are four pieces of rock; this one is Ocean Island high grade phosphate. It does not look very unusual, but how about its properties? High explosives may shatter it but cannot affect its value; throw it into the fire, nothing happens; a glacier may grind it to powder, and it is still phosphate. But treat it suitably by chemical action, scatter it on the soil, and there it comes under the gentle influences of nature, the sunshine, the soil waters, the roots of plants, and it is absorbed by these same plants to the benefit of whatever they produce, be it fodder, grain, tubers or fruit. In his turn and in his daily diet, man and indeed everything living is nourished. Not an ordinary piece of rock after all!

But in practice things are not quite so simple. Tricalcic phosphate as it exists in nature is not sufficiently soluble to be readily available for plant requirements, and for various reasons, man wants to speed up their growth, as well as to increase their yield. More than a hundred years ago Liebig suggested that if bones were treated with a strong acid the resulting chemical change would produce a more soluble phosphate. In 1842 Sir John Lawes discovered a process for making what he termed superphosphate by treating the rock with sulphuric acid. That is where this yellow piece of rock comes in, it is sulphur; the only odourous one of the four. All of us who have been to Rotorua know what it smells like, but we love the place notwithstanding. From sulphur, which is obtained from remarkable subterranean domes in Texas, sulphuric acid is made, and the phosphate rock after being ground to powder is treated with it, setting up a chemical change by which the tricalcic phosphate is turned to monocalcic. Thus is produced a water soluble fertiliser, sold as superphosphate, which is very rapid in its action, and stimulates root development and plant growth to a remarkable degree. This product has held pride of place in the fertiliser world for just over a hundred years, and the world's production by 1929 had risen to over 15,250,000 tons. In the Dominion there are 8 large and up-to-date works turning out this article with certain variations.

Here we find a place for the third rock, Limestone, which as is generally known is of marine origin having been raised up from the sea bed. It is fortunately plentiful in New Zealand. Some crops and grasslands do better with a less soluble form of phosphate, and one which lasts longer in the soil. So in the process of manufacture pulverised lime is added to the hot superphosphate, chemical action is set up, and a useful intermediate form or dicalcic phosphate is produced, termed basic super; apart from its service in making this special fertilizer, superphosphate and lime work together very efficiently and economically; in its action lime sweetens the soil and prepares the way for the phosphates.

The latest variation in manufacture is represented by this fourth stone, serpentine rock, consisting mostly of magnesium silicate. It is said to have come up in a molten form from the earth's core through lines of fault in the geological formation. Present supplies are obtained from quarries of limited extent in North Auckland, but D'Urville Island in the south, which I visited recently, has deposits of many millions of tons. The use of serpentine is at present more of a wartime measure and the material may be called a phosphate economiser, helping our supplies to spin out. It is added to the hot superphosphate somewhat similarly to the lime, and the finished article is sold as serpentine super. Despite the name, I am told that there is "no snake" in it, and further experience is likely to prove that it has a definite future value.

Time will not permit me to dwell at greater length on the manufacturing side of the phosphate industry, or to describe certain other useful processes for producing soluble phosphate, one of which is being developed successfully in this country.

And so these four rocks represent a very important feature in providing what is a first necessity with all of us - our daily bread. Some of you may be interested in looking at them after the meeting. I am going to ask our President to accept the Ocean Island specimen; perhaps he will find it useful as a paper weight for his office table.

Our last section: Where are phosphates found? It is at least singular that the vast British Empire so rich in natural resources is nevertheless poor in phosphate deposits. The largest and most important are at Nauru and the adjacent Ocean Island; these are of particular value to Australia and New Zealand by reason of their proximity and good quality. Then there are valuable high grade deposits at Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, and at Safaga and Kosseir in the Red Sea, within the British sphere of influence there are useful deposits of low grade. Apart from these nothing else of much value exists in the Empire, so far as is known at present, but there is always hope of further discoveries. A relatively small deposit of low grade exists in Otago and may be worked later on, in view of the present scarcity owing to the war.

The most extensive deposits of the world are in Morocco, Algeria and Tunis controlled by the French; some of them are of fairly high grade and their composition gives evidence of marine origin, sharks' teeth and other fossil remains being abundant. It is supposed that in earlier ages parts of North Africa were extensive sea areas and after being cut off from the ocean they gradually dried up, leaving fish and other organic remains which in changed form now constitute the beds of phosphates. The deposits contain hundreds of millions of tons, sufficient to supply the world for many generations. There are also considerable deposits of high grade on the French island of Makatea in the Eastern Pacific, which come in usefully for New Zealand and Australia.

The next in value and extent are in the United States, mainly in Florida and some of the Central States. These too contain reserves sufficient for long periods. The origin of the Florida deposits is a matter of much speculation, and an interesting theory is to the effect that in antediluvian times when prehistoric monsters were abundant, a climatic change set in and drove them south to the Florida peninsula where they were trapped and perished, their remains after being subject to various geological changes constituting the phosphate deposits. As one walks over the area after the overlaying soil has been stripped off, great quantities of enormous bones may be seen.

In Russia within the Arctic Circle at Kola Peninsula there are enormous bodies of apatite or native phosphate rock, from which the Soviet Republic draws its supplies for manufacturing super-phosphate.

Beyond the foregoing deposits, we know of little else of much extent. Many of the earlier discoveries have already been worked out.

I have not referred to the origin of the valuable high grade deposits on Nauru and Ocean Islands. There are several theories, but the one that appeals most to me is that they too are of marine origin and were raised up from the ocean bed similarly to the underlying limestone. In working the deposits we find enormous masses of coral, also shells, sea urchins, sharks' teeth and other marine fossils, all changed by chemical action into phosphates, though retaining their original structure. Even fragile pieces of coral are found in the phosphate beds, transformed from calcium carbonate to tricalcic phosphate, the only noticeable difference being that whereas they were once white now they are creamy coloured, and lighter in weight.

By studying the formation it is evident that the islands have been upraised and submerged several times; these processes and the abundant rainfall of the Tropics have had the effect of washing out the excess calcium carbonate and other impurities, leaving the phosphates in remarkably pure form. Down the ages the islands in fact have been nature's laboratories on a huge scale preparing this vital necessity for our welfare. We in our day and generation reap the benefit.

In conclusion, as we contemplate the history and services of these various phosphate deposits, I consider that we may discern the definite part they play in the scheme of things, and indeed look on them as being further evidence of the wisdom and design of the Creator in thus providing for the needs of mankind.

*A pull from N.Z. Journal of Agriculture for March 1950*

# REHABILITATION OF NAURU AND OCEAN ISLAND

By SIR ALBERT ELLIS, New Zealand Representative on the British Phosphate Commission.

**S**OMEONE has said about phosphate that it is one of those things whose value is not realised until the supply ceases. Most people simply take it for granted. Nevertheless the production of this vital aid to agriculture entails work calling for much enterprise and careful planning, nor is the element of high adventure wanting. Indeed, there is too much of it at times!

**S**INCE the acquisition of the Nauru and Ocean Island phosphate industry in 1920, when the organisation known as the British Phosphate Commissioners was set up, the requirements of high-grade phosphate for New Zealand were met almost entirely from these two islands. With ever-increasing agricultural and pastoral production in New Zealand and Australia the demand for phosphate rose proportionately, as it must continue to do in the years that lie ahead, but by developing the resources of Nauru and Ocean Island all requirements were met, and by 1939 the annual output had risen to 1½ million tons.

## Enormous Damage by Enemy Raiders

In the Second World War Hitler became aware of the vital importance of these supplies and in the latter part of 1940 two German raiders arrived in the Pacific. Part of their programme was to put the phosphate industry out of action. Five of the Commission's vessels were sunk, Nauru was bombarded for two hours, and enormous damage was done, mainly to the shipping plant. The cantilever came in for most attention, but though it was hit repeatedly by shell fire and was doubtless considered wrecked by the raider commander, the main structure still stood upright. Repairs were put in hand immediately, but by the time one of the arms was ready to resume loading the Japanese came into the war and we knew the position was hopeless, for they too were fully aware of the value of the phosphate deposits. Their bombers attacked both islands the day after the Pearl Harbour raid and repeatedly afterwards, doing much damage. Defence was impossible and evacuation became necessary. Shortly after, the enemy occupied the islands in strong force, remaining there for 3 years, during which time the places were fortified very thoroughly. An air base was constructed at Nauru, long naval guns were installed, and round the coast was a series of tank traps, machine-gun posts, and underground shelters. Both islands seemed practically impregnable.

Meanwhile strong American forces had become established at Tarawa after the great battle there. Fleets of bombers were soon over Nauru, the air base was put out

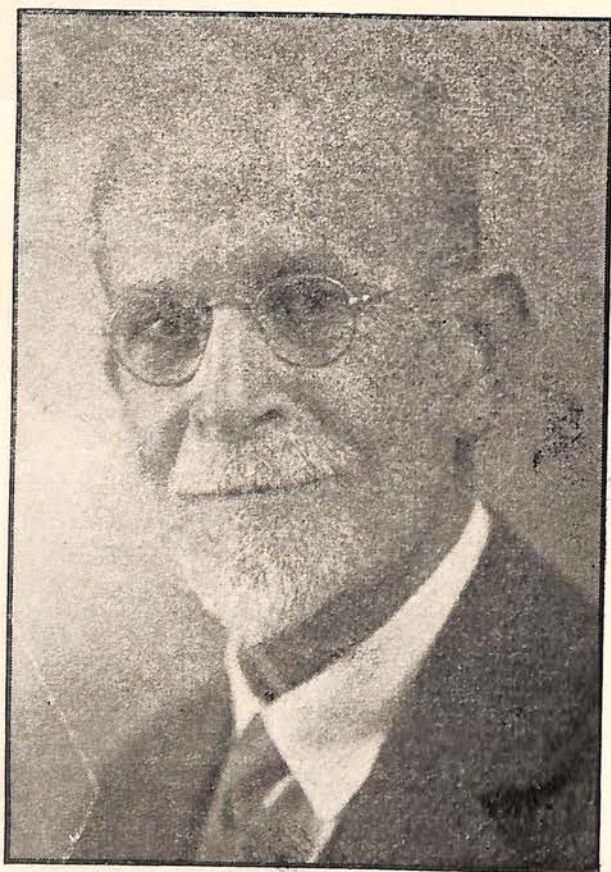
of action, and further damage was done not only to the enemy equipment but also to our phosphate plant. This was revealed by aerial reconnaissance photographs. On one occasion a squadron of capital ships made an early morning call off Nauru and opened fire with 16in. guns, adding to the devastation. They left as a memento an unexploded 16in. shell near the main road, and it is still one of "the sights." Fortunately no landing was attempted, for the loss of life would have been very heavy.

With the cutting off of phosphate supplies from the two central Pacific islands the position soon became serious in New Zealand and Australia. In close touch with the Department of Agriculture in each country, the British Phosphate Commission was given a free hand in obtaining phosphate supplies wherever possible. Makatea, a French island in the eastern Pacific, was of great value in this connection. A rigid rationing system was set up and naturally farming interests suffered considerably through shortage of fertilisers. The release of Nauru and Ocean Island was therefore eagerly awaited.

## Post-war Preparations for Restoration

After the war ended in September, 1945, an Australian Expeditionary Force went to both islands and the surrender of the Japanese forces there was accepted. As a representative of the New Zealand Government, the writer had the privilege of being present on these important occasions. Simultaneously a party of the British Phosphate Commission's managers and engineers landed to report to headquarters on the damage and make preparations for the restoration of the industry. A tragic story of war crimes and atrocities on both islands was revealed; the natives and a limited number of Europeans, all of whom were dead when the surrender took place, suffered dreadfully at the hands of the enemy. Considering their size it is doubtful if any islands in the Pacific had such a bad time as these two small isolated places. Subsequent investigations resulted in numerous offenders being arrested, and there is reason for thinking that the claims of justice were fully met.

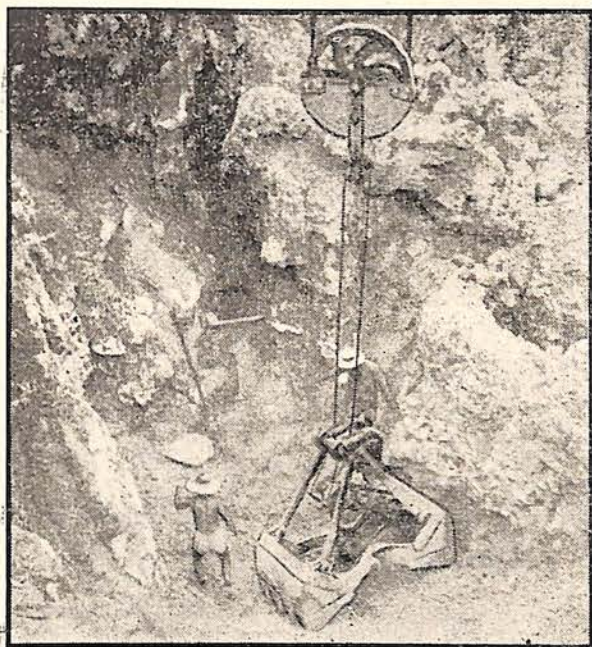
With the removal of the Japanese the time for the rehabilitation of Nauru and Ocean Island had come. Inspection showed that Nauru was wrecked; "it was a shambles," to use the term of the expeditionary officers; our settlement was a tragic scene of desolation and war damage and would require rebuilding entirely. The same pertained to the administration and mission stations. This destruction was not unexpected and preparations had been made for the work of restoration, as far as the phosphate industry was concerned, by accumulating at Melbourne an enormous quantity of material such as prefabricated houses and workshops, diesel engines, machinery, motor trucks, powered lighters, mooring material, provisions, etc. The Commission's sole remaining vessel after the attentions of the German raiders, the *Trienza*, was loaded up and with an enthusiastic crowd of our island staff, mostly old hands, set out for Nauru and Ocean Island. Naturally there



[Schmidt Studios photo.]  
Sir Albert Ellis, New Zealand representative on the British Phosphate Commission.



## REHABILITATION OF NAURU AND OCEAN ISLAND . . .



Quarrying phosphate by grab and cableway at Nauru. The rock at each side and the back of the grab is limestone, the phosphate having been removed.

was considerable hardship at first, for the Japanese had left the islands in a disgusting and insanitary state, particularly at Nauru. Simultaneously with these activities a large force of Gilbertese and Ellice Island natives was recruited, many of them being old hands and glad to re-enter the employ. Not long afterwards a Chinese labour force from Hong Kong arrived, many of them being mechanics who, under the supervision of our experienced staff, proved most useful. "Full speed ahead!" was the order of the day.

### More Convenient and Suitable Layout

Plans had been prepared beforehand for the reconstruction work and it was found possible to make the whole layout of the settlement, the labourers' quarters, hospitals, workshops, stores, etc., on much more convenient and suitable lines than was the case previously. Buildings went up in rapid succession and it was not long before living conditions on both islands had greatly improved.

Meanwhile preparations for the resumption of phosphate shipping operations were pushed ahead. With the cantilever so badly damaged and the Ocean Island jetties destroyed, it was necessary to make improvised arrangements, using the old jetty at Nauru and the boat harbour at Ocean Island for shipping by means of lighters. Long conveyers were installed connecting the phosphate bins with these points of shipment. The elaborate system of deep-sea moorings at both islands had been completely destroyed. To re-lay these a vessel with special gear in the form of a massive mooring winch and other appliances was required. The German raiders had sunk both of the Commission's vessels which were thus fitted, but we were fortunately able to get one built during the war and she did the work of re-laying in good style. It was thus possible to resume phosphate shipping 7 months after the reoccupation of the islands, though necessarily at a much slower rate than in pre-war years.

### More Mechanisation in Re-establishment

Early attention had been given to the phosphate quarrying, transport, artificial drying, and storage plant, all of which was badly damaged. The tram lines had all been ripped up by the enemy, the sleepers being used for firewood and the rails cut into short lengths for building their machine-gun posts, pill boxes, dug-outs, etc. Many rails were placed upright in lines on the reef as barriers to

landing craft. Worst of all, our elaborate cableway towers built of latticed steel were toppled over and cut into suitable lengths for constructing underground shelters and so forth. Costly conveyer belting was cut into short lengths and used as floor covering for the enemy's defences. Our engineers devised ways of using much of the damaged steel work, for such material was scarce and difficult to purchase. A great deal of electric welding of cableway towers, tram rails, etc., was done, necessitating much extra work. The position led to the use of mechanised plant for quarrying and transport of phosphate, much more than in pre-war days, and this at least has proved an advantage. Mechanical shovel loaders of various types, also grabs, were obtained and are proving very serviceable, though they can be used only in selected phosphate country where the limestone pinnacles are not too numerous. Elsewhere the hand labour methods of pre-war days are necessary.

The artificial drying plant had suffered very badly, but fortunately the enormous steel dryer cylinders were intact and are now in use; the electric dust-precipitating plant was damaged beyond repair. For some months it was necessary to dispense with drying the phosphate and to ship it wet.

In the powerhouse several of the damaged diesel engines have been repaired and the new machines installed, placing this vital portion of the plant in a strong position.

Great improvements have been made in the workshops and stores buildings. Whereas in pre-war days they were more or less scattered about the settlement, they are now contained in two large pre-fabricated steel framework buildings suitably placed and most convenient for their various purposes, thereby effecting a great saving of labour.

### Loading of Vessels Speeded Up

Throughout the tragic war experiences the Nauru cantilever seems to have had a charmed life, for, though greatly damaged, the vital parts practically escaped, and so the main structure remained standing. Repairing it has been a long and costly job, but here again our engineers found that they could "go one better." Whereas the original specifications called for a shipping rate of 550 tons per hour, it was found that the structure permitted of speeding up the rubber belt conveyers and increasing their size. The main belt is now 4ft. wide and phosphate is delivered direct into the holds of vessels at the rate of 1600 tons per hour, nearly thrice the original rate. This improvement is of the greatest importance, and quite frequently a large 10,000 ton vessel arrives at Nauru in the morning, hauls under the cantilever, and is away in the evening fully loaded.

At Ocean Island the damage was nothing like so serious, but the plant and general arrangements were not on such an extensive scale in pre-war years as on Nauru.

And so the work of rehabilitation has gone on, all departments under experienced heads pulling their weight and working together toward the one end. There is still much to be done in the way of construction work and improvements on existing procedure, but when finished Nauru and Ocean Island will be more efficient and labour-saving than was the case in pre-war days. Labour has been a serious problem at times, as elsewhere, but all has gone well for many months and we hope for the best.

### Pre-war Output Achieved

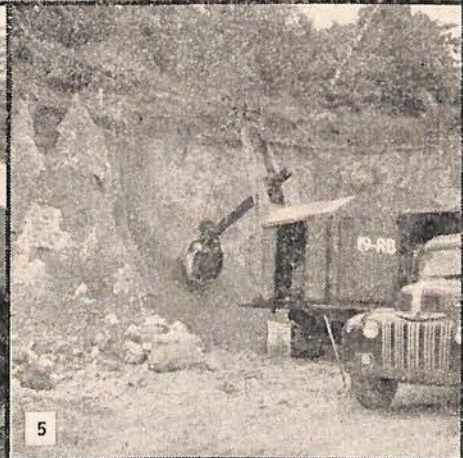
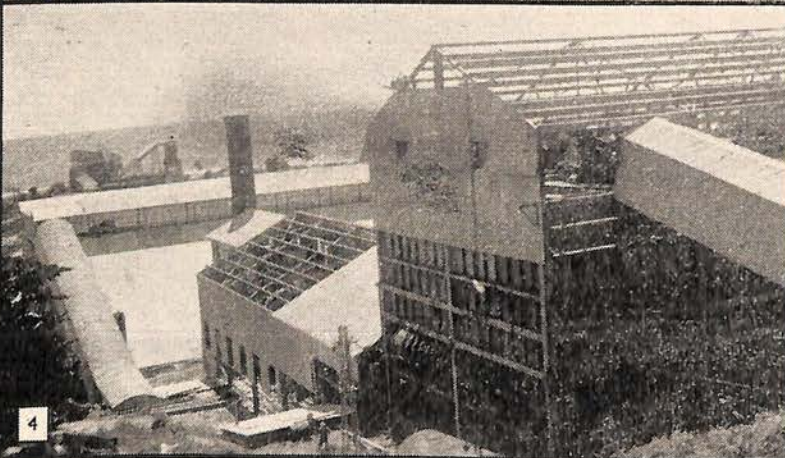
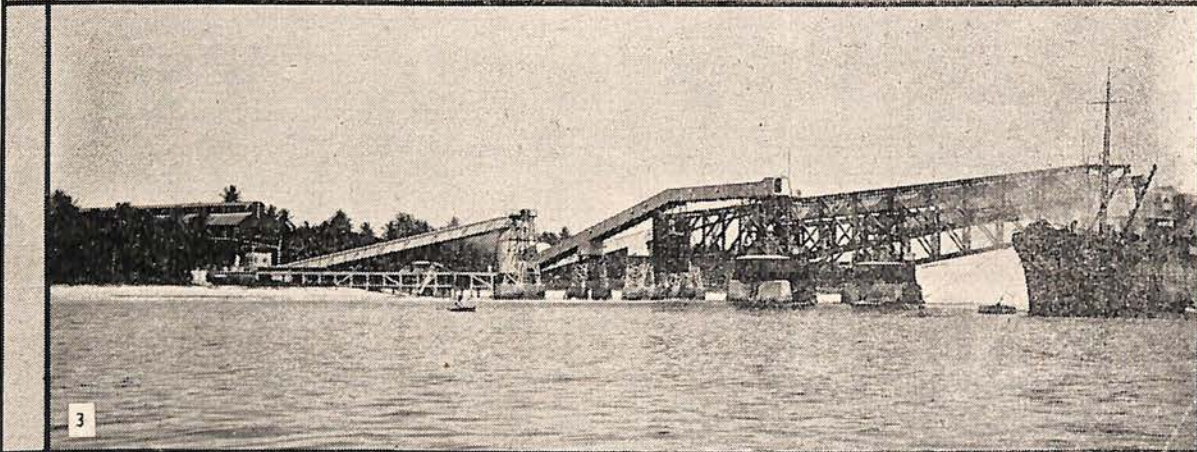
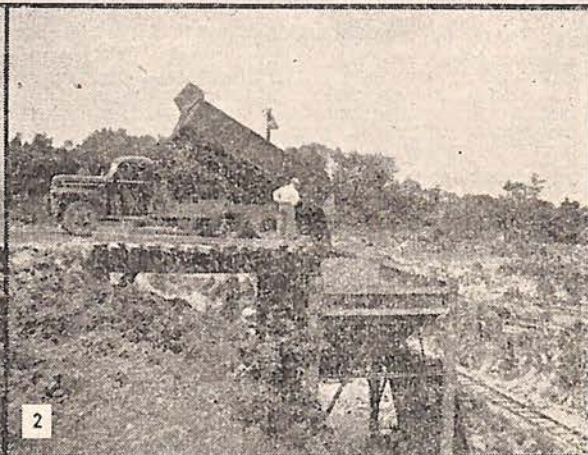
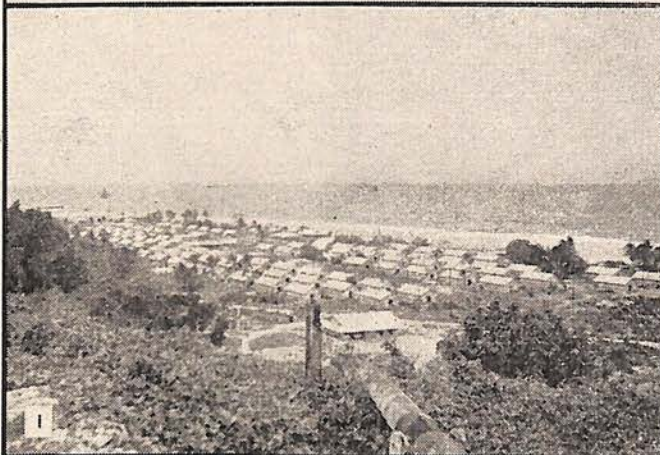
What of the phosphate shipments? Our forecast early in 1946 was to restore the full output capacity in about 4 years from the time of recommencement of shipments. This has been achieved, for during 1949 the shipment figures were:—

	Nauru Tons	Ocean Island Tons	Totals Tons
January-June	290,250	127,750	418,000
July-December	499,150	133,150	632,300
<b>Totals</b>	<b>789,400</b>	<b>260,900</b>	<b>1,050,300</b>

It will be seen that during the latter 6 months the figures were up to our best results in pre-war years.

In conclusion may I express on behalf of my colleagues and myself our warm appreciation of the good efforts put forth by the general manager, our staff, the labour, and all concerned in the great work which is but briefly described in the foregoing.

## REHABILITATION OF NAURU AND OCEAN ISLAND



1. Rebuilt Chinese quarters at Nauru. Japanese gun in foreground. 2. Phosphate quarrying and transport operations at Nauru. Railway trucks load at hopper and thence run to main phosphate unit. 3. The Oakbank loading under the cantilever before the war. 4. Repairs to main phosphate unit at Nauru. In foreground conveyer and crushing building, then artificial driers and conveyer to storage bin of 60,000 tons capacity. In the distance is the cantilever under repair. 5. Quarrying phosphate by power shovel and motor truck in selected country at Nauru. To the left is a typical coral pinnacle. All the vegetation at the back of the illustration is growing in phosphate.

(COPY)

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,  
NAURU, CENTRAL PACIFIC.

18th June, 1946.

Dear Mr. Maynard,

It was exceedingly kind of you to write me such a long and detailed account of your visit to Rabi. I acknowledged receipt of your letter by airmail to Mr. Gaze, via Hongkong, and doubtless he informed you to that effect. He mentioned he wished we had met again while I was stranded in Suva on my return from Rabi for a day or so. At the time I was engaged on getting my report written up and sent off, but in any case I felt it would be much better for you to see things for yourself, without any preconceived ideas. As our opinions about Rabi don't seem quite to dovetail in together, I feel we did well not to discuss the island again after my visit, and before yours.

Of the island itself we are in perfect agreement. I feel so pleased with the possibilities of Rabi that I would advocate the same removal for the Nauruans, if that were possible. Where I differ from you, is in the rosy view you hold as to the final success of this venture. I am very hesitant about putting anything on paper, but I know you will treat my opinion confidentially. And that opinion is that if the Rabi scheme is a success it will not be due to, so much as in spite of the gentleman in charge. As far as the Mission is concerned my report has been acted on, and an appeal has been made for one of our missionaries from the Gilberts, Rev. J. H. Spivey, to spend several months on the island helping to settle the people in. (What the outcome of the appeal is I do not know at present.) On the other hand I think the B.P.C. will have to keep on prodding, and questioning to see that promises are being fulfilled. I took the liberty of suggesting to Mr. Gaze that you should be asked to visit Rabi again, and at not too great an interval.

During my short stay at Ocean Island I was taken round in a jeep, and I certainly feel it would be a tragedy if Rabi failed, and the Banabans desired to return to Ocean after two years. I know the Mission will do all possible to assist them in making the right decision.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) CLIFFORD L. WELCH

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.

No. 2 of 1947.



[L.S.]

A. G. GRANTHAM,  
High Commissioner,

25th February, 1947.

AN ORDINANCE

TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMMUTATION OF CERTAIN  
TAXATION PAYABLE BY THE BRITISH PHOSPHATE  
COMMISSIONERS.

[25th February, 1947.]

BE it enacted by the High Commissioner as follows:—

1. This Ordinance may be cited as the British Phosphate Com-  
missioners Taxation Ordinance, 1947.

SHORT TITLE.

2. In this Ordinance references to other Ordinances shall be  
deemed to include all amendments thereof.

REFERENCES  
TO OTHER  
ORDINANCES.

3.—(1) The British Phosphate Commissioners (hereinafter called  
“ the Commissioners ”) shall not be chargeable in respect of import  
duty payable under the provisions of the Customs Duties Ordinance,  
1934, upon articles of British manufacture or origin as in the said  
Ordinance defined; upon articles of foreign manufacture or origin  
as in the said Ordinance defined the Commissioners shall be liable  
for and shall pay import duty at a rate equal to the difference  
between the duty payable under the preferential rate and the duty  
payable under the general rate as set out respectively in columns  
three and four of the first Schedule to the said Customs Duties  
Ordinance, 1934.

EXEMPTION  
FROM  
CERTAIN  
TAXATION.

NO. 2 OF 1934.

(2) Except as hereinafter in this subsection provided goods  
imported by the Commissioners free of import duty or at reduced  
rate as in this Ordinance provided shall not be shipped to any island  
in the Colony other than Ocean Island unless a permit authorizing  
such shipment shall have been first obtained from the Resident  
Commissioner: Provided always that in the event of the refusal  
of the Resident Commissioner to issue such permit the goods may  
nevertheless be so shipped if not otherwise prohibited and subject  
to the provisions of any other applicable law or regulation in force  
in the Colony upon payment to the proper officer of Customs of  
the amount of the import duty or in the case of goods on which  
reduced duty had already been paid the balance of the duty which  
in the absence of this Ordinance would have been payable upon  
such goods on importation: And provided further that the pro-  
visions of this subsection shall not apply to goods which are bona  
fide the property of any native returning to his home after being  
employed in Ocean Island by the Commissioners.

SHIPMENT  
TO OTHER  
ISLANDS IN  
COLONY.

NO. 2 OF 1912. (3) Any contravention of the provisions of the last preceding subsection shall be treated as smuggling and dealt with as such under the provisions of the Gilbert and Ellice (Customs) Regulation 1912.

FURTHER  
EXEMPTIONS.

4. The Commissioners and all persons bona fide employed by the Commissioners while in the Colony shall be and are hereby exempted from payment of all taxes and fees payable and leviable under the provisions of—

- NO. 5 OF 1913. (a) The Merchant Shipping Fees Regulation, 1913.  
 NO. 1 OF 1915. (b) The Gilbert and Ellice (Labour) Regulation, 1915.  
 NO. 10 OF 1916. (c) The Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1916.  
 NO. 15 OF 1917. (d) The Licences Ordinance, 1917.  
 NO. 14 OF 1917. (e) The Additional Revenue Ordinance, 1917.  
 NO. 1 OF 1927. (f) The Explosives Ordinance, 1927.  
 NO. 5 OF 1927. (g) The Passports Ordinance, 1927.  
 NO. 7 OF 1939. (h) The Wireless Telegraphy Ordinance, 1939.  
 NO. 4 OF 1940. (i) The Native Lands (Leases) Ordinance, 1940.

EXEMPTION  
FROM  
PAYMENT OF  
CAPITATION  
TAX.  
NO. 17 OF 1917.

5. All persons employed in the Colony by the Commissioners are while so employed hereby exempted from the payment of capitation tax under the provisions of Part VII of the Gilbert and Ellice (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1917.

EXEMPTION  
FROM  
INCOME TAX.

NO. 7 OF 1941.

6. The Commissioners and all persons bona fide employed by the Commissioners while in the Colony shall be and are hereby exempted from assessment and payment of all taxes and penalties payable and leviable under the Income Tax Ordinance, 1941, including all such taxes and penalties in respect of their incomes prior to the coming into operation of this Ordinance.

CONDITIONS OF  
EXEMPTIONS.  
SUMS PAYABLE.

£24,000  
ANNUALLY.

7—(1) In consideration of the exemptions granted in the preceding sections the Commissioners shall pay into the Revenue of the Colony in manner hereinafter provided—

ROYALTY.

- (a) an annual sum of twenty-four thousand pounds (£24,000) in Australian currency which shall be paid monthly in advance by twelve equal instalments of two thousand pounds (£2,000) on the first day of each and every month commencing with the 1st day of April, 1946;  
 (b) the normal Government royalty of sixpence (6d.) per ton on delivered weight of all phosphate exported from Ocean Island; and  
 (c) an additional Government royalty at the rate of one shilling and threepence (1s. 3d.) per ton on delivered weight of all phosphate exported from Ocean Island.

COMMISSIONERS  
TO FURNISH  
INFORMATION  
IN RESPECT OF  
IMPORTS.

(2) The Commissioners shall furnish to the Resident Commissioner or the Treasurer of the Colony all or any information in respect of goods imported into Ocean Island as and when they or either of them may at any time require.

AGENTS OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS  
LIABLE AS  
PRINCIPALS.

(3) References to the Commissioners in this section shall be deemed to include their agents in the Colony and if any amount payable under this section is not paid by the Commissioners on or before the due date as hereinbefore provided such amount shall be a debt due to the Crown from such agents and may be sued for and recovered accordingly; and any judgment entered against such agents under this section shall be enforceable against the property of the Commissioners within the Colony but not against the private property of such agents.

PAYMENTS  
TO BE  
MADE TO  
TREASURER OR  
HIS NOMINEE.

(4) All amounts payable by the Commissioners under this Ordinance shall be paid to the Treasurer of the Colony or to such other person in the service of the Colony as the Resident Commissioner may direct.

8. Save as hereinbefore specifically provided nothing in this Ordinance contained shall be deemed to confer exemption from the payment of any royalty or other moneys payable under any Ordinance Regulation Proclamation Rules of Court or other enactment in force from time to time in the Colony or under any licence held by or agreement or understanding with the Commissioners or any charges or fees for specific services, postal or telegraphic charges or Court fees and fines or any fees or charges not imposed or governed by the legislation of the Colony.

LIMITATION OF EXEMPTION.

9. This Ordinance shall be deemed to have had effect as from the 1st day of April, 1946, and shall continue in force for a period of five years unless it shall have been repealed before the expiration of that period: Provided that—

COMMENCEMENT AND CONTINUATION.

(a) the exemptions provided in this Ordinance shall except where otherwise specifically provided in this Ordinance be deemed to be effective from the date of re-occupation of Ocean Island in November, 1945;

PROVISOS.

(b) the repeal or cessation of this Ordinance shall not release the Commissioners from any liability incurred before the date of such repeal or cessation;

LIABILITIES INCURRED BY COMMISSIONERS NOT TO BE AFFECTED BY REPEAL OR CESSATION.

(c) nothing hereinbefore contained shall be deemed to affect in any way the power of the High Commissioner to amend add to or repeal and replace any provision included in this Ordinance.

SAVING POWER TO AMEND OR REPEAL.

(CF. 78/6).

MATTERS DISCUSSED AND AGREED AT RAMBI.

1. Meetings were held with the Banaban Landowners of Ocean Island on the 5th, 6th and 7th of August, 1947, when the proposal of The British Phosphate Commissioners that areas belonging to individual landowners within the 294 and 380 acre areas be located approximately instead of being surveyed in detail and recorded on a plan as previously was accepted unanimously at the meeting held on the 7th August, 1947.

2. The landowners were told that a cash payment of £A7,500 would be made by the Commissioners in recognition of this co-operation and that the cash payment would be made on the return of the Boundary Marking Party to Rambi, on the understanding that the work at Ocean Island would be carried out as fast as possible by the Boundary Marking Party.

3. The Representatives of the landowners will sign a receipt reading:-

"The Banaban Landowners of Ocean Island having accepted the proposal of The British Phosphate Commissioners that areas belonging to individual landowners within the 294 and 380 acre areas be located approximately instead of being surveyed in detail and recorded on a plan as previously hereby acknowledge the receipt of the cash payment of £A7,500 given in recognition of this co-operation."

Note. The allocation of the sum of £A7,500 amongst the landowners holding blocks within the 294 and 380 acre area is a matter for the landowners to decide and arrange.

4. On Friday, 8th August a telegram was sent to COMPTON MELBOURNE:-

"New Phosphate Lands Scheme adopted by landowners Thursday evening. Cash Payment £A7,500 Australian currency payable at Rambi on our return on the understanding that work being carried out as fast as possible by Banaban Boundary Marking Party.

The above telegram was agreed with Major P.G.L. Holland and Rotan.

5. Meetings were held on the 8th and 9th of August, 1947 with Members of the Island Council and Benuban Committee to discuss:-

(a) LEASEHOLD RENTS FOR NEW LEASES:  
Rates for land to be leased on Ocean Island during the visit of the Boundary Marking Party

- (1) approximately 4 acres, to provide additional accommodation for married labourers in houses on sites on north western extension of the married quarters, the extension not to interfere with the Tebiang canoe site or access to beach;
- (11) a further area of approximately 4 acres to provide accommodation additional to (1);
- (111) land for Chinese gardens;
- (1V) land in the Oom Village site area.

6. Rentals for leasehold lands leased prior to 8th August, 1947 are:-

- (1) at the rate of £A1/5/- for each separate area under one road;
- (11) at the rate of £A1/10/- for each separate area of one road and up to and including two roads;
- (111) at the rate of £A3 per acre for each separate area exceeding two roads.

7. It was agreed that rentals for leaseholds entered into after 8th August, 1947 be:-

- (1) at the rate of £A1/10/- for each separate area under one road;
- (11) at the rate of £A1/16/- for each separate area of one road and up to and including two roads;
- (111) at the rate of £A3/12/- per acre for each separate area exceeding two roads with the exception that any FREEHOLD LANDS to be converted to Leaseholds be dealt with in accordance with the note taken at the MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BANABANS held on 2nd May, 1947. This note reads:-

"FREEHOLD LANDS:

Any Freehold Lands now within the 294 and 380 acre areas will be taken up as mining lands and paid for under the terms of the Agreement signed on the 10th April, 1947.

Other Freehold Lands not required by us will be cancelled as from 17th April, 1947.



-2-

Other Freehold Lands required by us will be converted to Leaseholds at present rentals, commencing on 17th April, 1947."

8. Rentals for Freehold Lands required by The British Phosphate Commissioners and converted to Leaseholds will be :-

- (1) at the rate of £A1/5/- for each separate area under one road;
- (11) at the rate of £A1/10/- for each separate area of one road and up to and including two roads;
- (111) at the rate of £A3 per acre for each separate area exceeding two roads.

9. The meeting was told that the transfer from leasehold to mining land of approximately 4.62 acres shown hatched blue on Drawing No. 776 M.O. would be arranged when we were on Ocean Island.

10. (b) BUILDINGS ON OCEAN ISLAND OWNED BY THE BANABAN COMMUNITY:

On 14th April, 1947 Mr. R. G. Keegan, District Officer, Ocean Island wrote to our Ocean Island Manager "that the Banabans have telegraphed to enquire if the Commission is prepared to make an offer for ..... buildings owned by them."

The Banabans said that they would like to hear our offer and would like to know if some payment could be made for Banaban village cisterns. They were told that the Commissioners were prepared to make an offer for the buildings, and the offer was:-

(1)	for the Banaban Store	£A 350
(11)	" " Banaban School and cistern	£A1,020
(111)	" " Banaban Technical School	£A 142
(1V)	" " Banaban Headmaster's House and Cistern	£A1,750
(V)	" " Banaban Hospital	£A1,130
		-----
		£A1,392.
		-----

The consensus of opinion was that the matter of the buildings and the village cisterns should stand over until we arrived at Ocean Island.

11. A meeting was held on the 11th August, 1947 with Members of the Island Council and Banaban Committee to discuss the removal of sand to be used for concrete and other work on Ocean Island.

The Banabans raised no objection to the removal of sand and will agree sites from which sand may be removed when the Boundary Marking Party is at Ocean Island. The Banabans accepted the offer of the Commissioners to pay an annual sum of £A15 in recognition of their co-operation in this matter. The allocation of this sum of £A15 rests with the Banaban Community.

*H.M. Holland*

*A. K. M. Hayward*

*Representative, The British  
Phosphate Commissioners.*

The above is a correct record of the decisions reached at meetings held at Rambi, Fiji, on the 5th to 9th and 11th August, 1947.

*H.M. Holland*

Administrative Officer, Rambi.

13th August, 1947.

*Rambi.*

*11<sup>th</sup> August, 1947*

(COPY)

RAMBI ISLAND,  
Fiji,  
Via Suva.  
7th June, 1948.

Dear Sir Albert Ellis,

The Banabans have submitted lately two requests, for conveyance to you. Their own words were as follows :

" Would you please send our request to Sir Albert Ellis asking him to furnish us with a list of vessels together with the number of tons of phosphate shifted from Ocean Island during the period 1900-1946, and also with the map of Ocean Island, with the names of the land owners on it ? "

I have pointed out strongly the difficulties involved, but the reply then given was "te bubuti". The tonnage required - the list of vessels may be ignored - falls into four parts :

- (a) Total of phosphate exported from Ocean Island from 1900, until the time that the royalty payment to the Government of 6d a ton was started, i.e., to 1st January, 1906.
- (b) Total of phosphate exported from Ocean Island from 1st January, 1906 to 1st July, 1912, i.e., to the date that the additional royalty of 6d was started. This "additional" royalty of course related to the Banabans and not to Government.
- (c) Total of phosphate exported from Ocean Island from 1st January, 1912 to 1931, to the date that the rate of 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d royalty was started.
- (d) Total of phosphate exported from Ocean Island bearing the 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d royalty rate, up to the time that exports ceased in 1942.

2. As regards the map, they state that the one they want is the same as that kept in the B.P.C's Office at Ocean Island, or an improved successor.

3. There is another matter: The Banabans claim that you, Mr Gaze, and Mr Grimble informed them beyond doubt that the goal of £175,000 for the Provident Fund would be reached, with the excavation of the 150 acres acquired in 1931. Their claim was repeated in form as follows: "These gentlemen gave a guarantee that the Banaban Provident Fund would reach £175,000 before operations on the 150 acre area had ceased, and as the area in question is just about exhausted and the Provident Fund, including expenditure from it, adds up to less than £175,000 the British Phosphate Commissioners are under an obligation to make up the difference from their own funds". I have answered with the facts as I know them, and as are self-evident in the circumstances, and have used as illustrations two sums.

(a)	£175,000	
	20	
	3,500,000	shillings
	12	
2d	42,000,000	pence
	21,000,000	tons.

Sum (a) shows that 21,000,000 tons would have to be excavated before royalty at 2d a ton would reach £175,000.

(b)                    30,000 tons for 1 acre  
                          150 acres  
1,500,000  
3,000,000  
4,500,000 tons in 150 acres.  
                                  2d  
12) 9,000,000 pence  
20) 750,000 shillings  
£37,500

Sum (b) shows that the 150 acres by itself could produce  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million tons of phosphate, the 2d royalty on which would be £37,500 only.

4.        The object of the above figures is to show the impossibility of such a promise, as that quoted, being made by yourself or Mr Gaze. The answer have been that, nevertheless, the promise was certainly made and because of this you must pay up. Banabans are held to their promises, they add, so why not white men also.

5.        A copy of this letter will be forwarded to Melbourne.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) F.G.L. Holland.

TELEPHONE 43-816

DILWORTH BUILDING,  
QUEEN STREET,  
AUCKLAND. C.I.

26th October 1948

Major F.G.L. Holland, G.M., O.B.E.  
R A M B I  
via SUVA. F I J I.

Dear Major Holland,

I should have written you before this to advise you of our safe return to Maoriland but as you are aware there is always a heap of work awaiting one after two months absence, also I had a trip down south.

After leaving you we had a good trip per 'CORABANK' though it was quite rough on several occasions. Miss Morris proved a very good sailor and I really think that some credit is due to the excellent Rambi pawpaw which proved most enjoyable throughout and they were also much appreciated in the dining saloon. Though they ripened quickly we had two full baskets for bringing ashore here and these were duly distributed amongst friends and the office staff, meeting with general approval.

Weather was very cold on arrival here, very different from the balmy skies and bright sunshine we experienced at Rambi.

It is almost superfluous to say that the visit to Rambi has left very many pleasant memories, in fact I shall always look on it as one of the highlights of my island career. To be made so genuinely welcome by a native community after being absent from them for a number of years was indeed a remarkable experience and most gratifying withal. I cannot but think it is the best possible evidence that in their heart of hearts they realise that 'the lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places' in the words of Scripture and that 'they have a goodly heritage'. The important part that you have played in bringing them to realisation of those facts cannot be over stated, and when eventually you say farewell to island life, you can safely do so with the feeling that the last job you took on was the best ever. I am sure that despite the worry and vexation at times you will have the happiest memories of your experience on the Island. Needless to say anything you write me will be of the deepest interest. One thing I am particularly hoping for is to hear that the Council meetings have been cut down to one a fortnight at the most.

I have been wondering what I could do in the way of a memento of my visit which would appeal to the Banabans and at the

same time figure in the life of the community. Speaking from memory you did not have a very impressive flagstaff and I would like to make a gift of a really good one and perhaps you would mention it to the Council if you approve of the idea. No doubt the builder who visits the Island at intervals would undertake the erection and in such case I could contribute up to say £50. As to the site, if it was within a hundred yards of the landing place I would be very pleased but you and the Banabans may have some other site in mind, particularly when the building of the village is further advanced. In such case your and their decision would meet my views. For the flagstaff I would send from here a good large Union Jack.

We have just had a good visit from Mr. Gaze following on his return from London where he pulled off on behalf of the Australian and New Zealand Governments the purchase of the valuable Christmas Island phosphate industry. This place was started before Ocean Island and though not developed to the same degree that our two Islands are it is nevertheless a good going concern and will figure largely in supplying phosphate for these two countries. Being close to West Australia most of the output will go to that State but it will release a larger proportion of Nauru and Ocean for Maoriland.

You will be interested to hear that in a letter recently received from Maude he said that the southern Gilbertese are now clamouring to return to their former employ. They had anticipated making their fortunes at copra but not long after their return to the Group a moderate drought set in and the trees ceased to bear, which you and I well know is not surprising. No doubt we shall see the Gilbertese again employed as labour but it will be at a time to suit us.

I trust you have good news of Barbara and the Doctor. What a wonderful experience she will have thus visiting the Old Country.

By the way I am posting to you by surface mail a leather bound copy of my last book. Only a limited number of these presentation copies were printed and if the book is looked on in years to come as referring to some at least of your own worthy doings during the last war I shall be deeply gratified. I promised also to send the Council a set of my books (ordinary binding) and these will be posted by the same opportunity.

Hoping that Mrs. Holland and yourself are in the best of health and with kindest regards in which I know my wife would desire to join.

Yours sincerely,



P.S. Miss Morris asks that her kindest regards to you both be included.

NOTES ON DISCUSSION WITH MR. H. C. WELLS OF DUNEDIN  
REGARDING HIS RECENT VISIT TO RAMBI

---

Mr. Wells called at our office on 3rd August in response to the request of Rotan the leading Banaban at Rambi. The former was touring the Fijian Group in the inter-island vessel 'YANAWAI' which called at Nuku Village Rambi to lift some 400 sacks of copra. He and several other passengers went ashore to look round while the loading was being done.

No white people were seen but the Banabans were friendly and were obviously pleased at having just finished the construction of a two-storey building to serve as a general store, with several rooms as offices. It is a wooden building on a concrete base and is situated near their old store close to the Jetty. Mr. Wells said the construction was excellent. He was much impressed by the way they were handling tools. Other work was going on in the village but he did not examine it, and went for a walk along a new road they are making.

This runs north from the village at least 2 miles and is a really good motor road. They have in use a rather old type grader and a Bedford truck both used in the road making and there were two gangs of 12 to 15 men on the job. The finished road compared favourably with roads out of the towns in Fiji. The Banabans told him they were also making roads in other directions.

Replying to my question Mr. Wells said he formed the impression that they were a happy and contented community and the village impressed him much more than the Fijian native village<sup>s</sup> he had seen. The natives all looked strong and healthy.

I asked if he heard anything in the way of complaints. He replied that they spoke of feeling the cold weather and the rainy season, and had some difficulty in getting suitable clothing for such conditions. Though the 'YANAWAI' calls every six weeks they said they were cut off, as compared with their former life on Ocean Island. Mr. Wells was shown the Stone of Remembrance and its origin explained.

When the 'YANAWAI' proceeded on her voyage Rotan and the Island Scribe, Tito Airu, were passengers for Suva. They told Mr. Wells they were in difficulties regarding supplies of cement and iron as two shipments of the former from Suva merchants were of inferior quality. For this reason they had cabled to our Auckland Office asking if we could help them. Their visit to Suva was on business and they expected to return to Rambi by cutter in a day or two.

They asked Mr. Wells about his occupation and on learning he was a footwear manufacturer they gave him a trial order for strong boots for the road makers, etc. Though pressed with existing orders he was desirous of helping the Banabans and said he would supply the boots. They gave as a reference the Bank of New South Wales at Suva.

Tito Airu was to have written to me while aboard the 'YANAWAI' but she ran into bad weather, and 'stood on end', so Rotan told Mr. Wells the letter would follow his call at our office.

AUCKLAND,

3rd August 1950

*A. J. E.*



DILWORTH BUILDING,  
QUEEN STREET,  
AUCKLAND, C.I.

22nd August 1950

TELEPHONE 43-816

Dear Major Holland,

Since last writing I have not heard further from you but trust that both Mrs. Holland and yourself are well. Before long we should all hope to be enjoying warmer weather conditions. Over here the winter has not been severe but nevertheless spring will be welcome.

I am wondering if you get any news from Rambi for I am sure that you both have warm corners for that island and the little community there. I had a wireless from Rotan not long ago asking for assistance in obtaining supplies of cement and roofing material. We have been able to secure a good quantity of the former and it will be going forward by first boat.

Not long after I had a call from a Dunedin manufacturer who had been touring in the Group per 'YANIWAI' and called at Rambi. I enclose a copy of some notes which I think will interest you. Will you please treat them as confidential.

A few days later I had a letter from Mr. Coode and he speaks somewhat similarly of the progress being made at the Island. He says "however, I have been very pleased on my visits to Rambi (about twice monthly) to see the progress they have been making with road building and housing; they are still a well behaved community, and I believe that their sense of pride in the appearance of their village is increasing." There has been a hitch over the flagstaff but it is now being made and there should not be much further delay.

You will remember our arranging for two metal tablets to be prepared in Melbourne containing inscriptions which you and I agreed. When completed they were sent across here by one of our boats for me to see and they are certainly very fine, particularly the map of Ocean Island in relief. They have been sent to Rambi and Coode has promised to let me have a photo when the whole thing is finished off. I judge that the Stone will be set on a concrete block.

In his letter Coode said that the Banabans had built three cement block houses on their own and a firm has put up 12 houses by contract. They prefer however to do the building themselves and provided they can obtain the cement and roofing material they should make good progress. I think we will be able to help them over this. Apparently the position in Suva regarding house building material is very difficult indeed.

The two-storey building for store and offices which they have just completed is evidently a very fine building. We did not think that their aspirations went quite so high as all that.

At our Central Pacific islands the drought still continues and apparently it is after the old-time style. Bridges says he has never seen Banaba so burnt up. We are able to get plenty of labour from the two Groups now and are not employing coolies at Ocean. Good work is being done at both places and for our last financial year ended 30th June last nearly 1,300,000 tons were shipped of which just over 1,000,000 were from the larger island.

You probably know that Colonel Laxton is stationed at Ocean Island following on Keegan'who is on vacation.

Our General Manager, Mr. Gaze, has been in England for some months but will be leaving shortly for this side travelling via U.S.A. and the Pacific, spending some days here before proceeding to Melbourne.

Our bill of health generally is fairly good. My wife is troubled with fibrositis but managed to look after me very effectively when I was laid aside with flu about a couple of months ago. This put me off going to the islands during the winter but I have since made a very good recovery. My daughter, her husband and family are at present travelling up from Wellington to spend a few days with us. The 28th instant is not only my birthday but the 50th anniversary of the starting of operations at Ocean Island. A lot of water has run under the bridges since then for all of us.

My wife would I know desire to join with me in kindest regards to Mrs. Holland and yourself, and Miss Morris who writes this letter also asks that her warmest greetings be conveyed to you both.

Yours sincerely,

*Alfred G. King*

TELEPHONE 43-816

DILWORTH BUILDING,  
QUEEN STREET,  
AUCKLAND, C.I.

29th August 1950.

My dear Major Holland,

Very many thanks for your kind cable of congratulations and good wishes received yesterday. It is very good of you and Mrs. Holland to have thus thought of me and when I contemplate our long friendship and happy association I appreciate all the more the cordiality of your message.

The "Herald" did me very well in the matter, for a few days ago they rang up to say it was their intention to insert an account of the historic stone in their leader page as being the representative story always appearing in the Saturday issue. They wanted me to go to the Museum and have a photo taken with my hand on the stone. I enclose a copy of the result and gave the reporter a little information which enabled him to bring the 'story' quite up to date.

At Rotary to-day I was duly fined for having my picture in the press but received so many congratulations from old friends that it was really a pleasurable experience.

You will no doubt have received my letter of 22nd by now and there is very little to add. Joan, her husband and the three grandchildren spent a very happy four days with us and left yesterday morning for Wellington. The young people are shooting up and as usual are very thrilling. By now you will have the same feelings regarding Barbara's boy I am sure, and both of you must long to see him and his parents.

My wife would I know desire to unite with me in sending kindest regards to Mrs. Holland and yourself, and with every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

*Alfred Holland*

*Please tell Mrs. Holland  
I often think of the  
'fresh water prawns'  
(in jelly) & more particularly  
of her good care of us.  
A. F. H.*

COPY

RAMBI ISLAND,

FIJI.

11th September 1950

Dear Sir Albert,

Thank you very much for your letter of 22nd August which arrived at Waiyevo on the 7th September. I expect that you will be glad to know that the two memorial plates for the Stone of Remembrance arrived at Rambi on the 30th August, and very fine they are indeed. The Carpenter and his assistants have gone to work, built sheer legs, raised the Stone about four feet from the ground, and built a substantial base for it in cement. The base is extended to one side, and has a gently sloping surface there; the plate in English lies on this. The carpenter is now at work cementing the "Banaba" plate to the side of the Stone itself, in the vertical plane. As the sheer legs are still up, with a tarpaulin over them to protect the cement and the surfacing from the weather until perfectly dry, I am not taking a photograph this trip, but will hope to send one by the end of the month.

We all wondered whether to have the plates facing seawards but decided that they would not be very well seen from that side, so they face landwards and are near to the side of the road where passers by will see them, also strangers visiting Rambi as soon as they have stepped off the wharf and have started coming along the road to the centre of the settlement. The Council has shown great enthusiasm over this work, and is making every effort to make a memorable job of it. Aaron, one of the Councillors, whom I expect you remember, is doing the plastering personally.

I have sent to the British Phosphate Commissioners Melbourne office a Fiji cheque for the Australian currency equivalent of the amount due to the makers of the plates, and hope that that will present no difficulty. I would have preferred to have sent a Bank Draft, but Rambi is so remote from our bank.

Waiyevo is the name of the Government Station on Taveuni, and is 5 miles South of Somosomo on the coast. Somosomo where you landed after touching the reef at Ngele Levu, is the centre of the Fijian provincial administration for the area and the seat of the leading hereditary Chief hereabouts, "Tui Cakau" or "Lord of the Reefs". Somosomo has been important for longer than Waiyevo, which had perhaps only just started its existence when you were at Taveuni. Ngele Levu is in my district, but I have not yet visited it.

You may also be interested to know that the captain of my launch, a Fijian from Lau, seeing the work in progress on the memorial, asked me all about it, and I explained to him that you had discovered the phosphate rock on Ocean Island, and had visited the Banabans at their new home on Rambi during 1948. He then told me that he remembered you on board the 'Kiakia' off Ocean Island at the time of the Japanese surrender; he was at the wheel, and was very surprised when you said to him in Fijian "You are a Fijian, are you not?". He served in the Navy in the war, and had visited Ocean Island and the Gilberts on the 'Kiakia' and

"Awahou".

The two-storey office was built by a firm of contractors for the Banaban Co-operative Society, which is the reason for the high price. The contractors have a part-Gilbertese foreman who has lived in Fiji all his life but can speak Gilbertese, and most of his gang are Banabans. The office was ordered by Rotan just before my being appointed to Rambi, and the ordering was done without the prior knowledge of Major Holland and myself. As may be expected, the terms of the contract favoured the builder, however the finished building is well worth having despite the expense. Both Major Holland and I have tried to encourage the Banabans to learn, under a suitable building foreman, how to construct their own houses, but the difficulty in Fiji is to obtain supplies of materials. If you give a contract to a contractor, the supplies come forward; if you try to purchase them locally, it is most difficult to obtain a steady flow.

Your cement has not yet arrived, but it will help the all-Banaban building gang very greatly when it does come, although we shall have to store such a large quantity carefully.

I have just been spending a week here with a Chartered Accountant who has been examining the books of the first year of the working of the Banaban Funds Trust Board. He is satisfied with the Trust Fund and is going to devise a means of sharing out the interest on the capital of the 1947 land purchase agreement on Ocean Island. When that has been done, I believe that the Banabans should be able, in the coming years, to comprehend a little more of what their funds represent, and learn to spend their riches to good ends.

I will certainly send on the negative of the photograph of the Stone of Remembrance, when I have obtained a good picture of it.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Signed - E.J. COODE.

Sir Albert Ellis, C.M.G.  
care The British Phosphate Commissioners,  
Dilworth Building, Queen Street,  
C.P.O. Box 2, AUCKLAND. N.Z.

11th September 1950

*Stratford  
Confidential*

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Sir Albert Ellis, C.M.G.  
care The British Phosphate Commissioners,  
Dilworth Building, Queen Street,  
C.P.O. Box 2, AUCKLAND. N.Z.

TELEPHONE 43-816

DILWORTH BUILDING,  
QUEEN STREET,  
AUCKLAND, C.I.

16th October 1950

My dear Major Holland,

Many thanks for your letter of 15th ultimo.

Knowing how welcome Rambi news is to you I am sending copy of the last letter from Coode which please treat as being confidential. You will note that the metal tablets for the Stone of Remembrance have met with the Banabans approval and our old friend Aaron was personally taking a hand in the operations which quite amused me. I hope later on to send you a photograph of the completed Stone.

As you were good enough to be interested in the "Herald" publicity recently, I have pleasure in sending you and Mrs. Holland one of their finished photographs.

What you say regarding your probable future movements is noted with very much interest and I appreciate that you are influenced by the value of the Australian £. Unfortunately it is apparent that nothing is being done at present but they say it is just a question of time so we live in hopes of seeing you and Mrs. Holland over this way yet.

Your comments regarding Rotan are noted with interest and appreciation. He is certainly 'all there' but I always had a liking for him and I agree with the remark made to me by young Murdoch (son of our old friend George of Abemama) that when it came to asking the Japs for rice supplies to help the starving Banabans, he was a hero. The Japs slapped his face but he kept at them and obtained some relief. What a shock it must have been to receive such treatment in face of the fact that the white man's hand has never been raised against them!

We had a visit from Mr. Gaze recently when returning from England via U.S.A. He is now in Melbourne but flies to Singapore shortly in connection with the Christmas Island business. He was in good form notwithstanding the strenuous travel from England to here by air.

And now for a bit of special news! Miss Morris is engaged and is to be married on 22nd November. So you can imagine there is a head of subdued excitement in evidence. Her fiancé, Mr. Blomfield, is an Electrician in a big concern here and has been well and favourably known to Miss Morris for a long time so very wisely they are not going in for a long engagement. You will be thinking how about my invaluable Secretary: as to this I am very pleased to say that Mr. Blomfield has suggested that she comes to



me three days a week. This should see me through quite well.

Recent Ocean Island news advises a continuation of the drought which naturally affects the position in the Gilberts. However a turn of the tide has set in there as regards "Nako-Banaba" matters and on our next recruiting trip we will be able to get all the Gilbertese and Ellice Islanders we need. The new plan of having a Kaubure man from each island has worked very well and apparently will make for smoother running in the future at Banaba. In view of the satisfactory running we are not further employing Chinese on the fields at Ocean.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Holland and yourself in which my wife would, I know, desire to join.

Yours sincerely,



Encl.

EXTRACT FROM CIRCULAR LETTER DATED 8TH DECEMBER 1950  
WRITTEN BY REV. J.H. SPIVEY, PRINCIPAL OF L.M.S.  
MISSION INSTITUTE AT BERU, GILBERT ISLANDS.

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What pleased me most about the long stay in Fiji was the opportunity it afforded me to visit the island of Rambi for the first time. I set off on a very good little cargo and passenger ship early on a Saturday morning and reached Rambi on the following Wednesday afternoon, where I was able to stay until the Saturday night when I boarded a miserable little cargo ship which had no passenger accommodation whatsoever, for the return to Suva.

Rambi is the island where a great social experiment has taken place since World War II. Our people, Banabans, whose home was at Ocean Island, (native name Banaba) were all removed by the Japanese to Nauru or Kusaie Islands. Their island was very badly knocked about in the war and could not have supported them again immediately. Not only so but it had been long known that eventually they would have to find a new home when the phosphates from the island would be quite worked out. Hence, the accident of war, which had already made the Banabans a displaced people, was used as a favourable opportunity to settle them in a new place, and Rambi Island was bought for this purpose from Lever Brothers.

The rigours of life under the Japs in islands foreign to them had thinned out their population and some had been deliberately killed, and when the British Government collected the survivors in 1945 and told them they were to be taken not to their old home but to an even more distant and foreign island, there was considerable dissatisfaction. But they had no alternative choice, for Banaba at that time was quite impossible as a place to settle.

Now the experiment which seemed for the first year or two to be doomed to failure, has been found to be a great success. The people have found that Rambi is better in almost every way than Ocean Island. It is bigger, very beautiful, fertile, and has a big water supply, whereas water was a scarce commodity on their old home island. Cattle and horses can be kept at Rambi whilst even at the best of times Ocean Island could have supported neither. Some of the people have learned to care for the cattle and horses of which they were afraid at first, and they find them most valuable. They are thriving in their new surroundings and have become fairly well accustomed now to the damper and at times much colder climate. They seem to be a happy people mostly busy in some way on the various development schemes for their new home island. Mission work is progressing well amongst them and the police have little to do for they are nearly all law abiding.

I doubt if a single one of the Banabans now would choose to return permanently to Ocean Island. I had a most interesting and happy three and a half days with them and we were able to clear up various matters of mission business.

TELEPHONE 43-916

DILWORTH BUILDING,  
QUEEN STREET,  
AUCKLAND, C.I.

5th March 1951.

Dear Major Holland,

Many thanks for your letter of 14th December read with great interest and appreciation. I have been travelling quite a lot otherwise would have replied before this. Please pardon replying by typed letter but there is a big rush on and as usual Maturi is helping me out very nicely.

What you say regarding the Stone of Remembrance and in particular Aaron's mentality is very informative. What a mercy that they all came round as they did. I have never failed to give great credit to yourself in handling the difficult situation. Enclosed are three photographs being reproductions of snaps taken by Mr. Coode. I only wish that there was some native life nearby, not only giving local colour but also showing the size of the erection. We are very pleased with it and I shall be glad to hear just how the whole thing appeals to Mrs. Holland and yourself. I enclose also an extract from the Rev. Spivey's circular. This contains most valuable independent opinions regarding Rambi as I am sure you will admit. Probably you have already seen it.

I left for Ocean and Nauru accompanied by two grandchildren, Jennifer aged 17 and Stewart 14, towards the end of last year. The period of absence fitted in with their school holidays and was a very happy arrangement. They enjoyed every minute of it. We joined up at Ocean Island with Mr. Gaze and a party from Melbourne afterwards going across to Nauru for a conference. We returned to Auckland on 2nd ultimo and now the children are back at their lessons again but I am afraid the 'island bug' still remains with them. Ocean was still looking more drought stricken than I have ever known it though there were signs of better times. The Gilbertese and Ellice Islanders are all in splendid nick and things are going really well at both Islands.

Yes, my valued assistant is now Mrs. Blomfield but I have a special dispensation from her husband to call her Maturi, the origin of which you will doubtless remember.

I leave for Melbourne on 9th instant on a particularly hurried visit and fear it may not be possible to see you much as I would like to do so. Should there be any possibility on my return through Sydney I will drop you a line from Melbourne. Meanwhile I know you will realise that my thoughts frequently turn to you and Mrs. Holland with friendship and esteem. I still live in hopes of your return to Maoriland.

With kindest regards to her and to yourself in which Maturi joins,

Yours sincerely,



14/5/51

9 Argyll St.  
Herne Bay W. 1

Dear Mrs Holland

This is written to you, but I know you will share it with Major Holland and ask him to take it as an answer to his letter (some months ago) that he so kindly wrote & which I fear he will think I did not appreciate - I did - but two words must be my apology. As we say over the crossword puzzles - I something, something, something something & something, something, something i.t.

What's more it "jumps" so fast I can't keep pace with my correspondence - ever since we heard that the Major had to go into hospital you both have been so much in my thoughts - sometimes I think it is easier for the one who has to enter than for the one who "only stands & waits" but the same message will be right for you both & it is this - "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you - let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid". Isn't that just lovely? may you both experience it in the days that lie ahead. We have quite a number of friends in hospital just

now - some doing well, some not so well - poor George Gray (married our niece Jean Stewart - out in India for 14 years) had his knee cap removed & they expected him to be home in 10 days or at the most 3 weeks. Everything didn't go as planned & it is 6 weeks tomorrow but he is now on the mend & has been very brave through it all.

Then a friend who it seems had the same trouble as the Major has come through with flying colours & that is what we are hoping to hear from you. Herio's something we thought rather funny.

Christina aged 13 didn't go to the Islands with Papa as they call him. Jennifer (17) & Stewart (15) enjoyed the trip immensely - especially coming back on the Kelvinbank - both good sailors & given the run of the ship - up on the bridge, keeping a watch, & even steering.

Jennifer is a prefect at Queen Margaret where both the girls go. Christina came home very irate - "Mum Jennifer's making the whole school mad with her chit get herself into trouble one of these days & she won't get any sympathy from me". "Why whatever has she done?" - She will insist on ringing the bell like

a ship's bell" !!

And here's something about Stewart. He is very fond of the Island boys at St. Andrew's (Cher.) + there is a little Solomon Is. boy as black as a coal who likes to hear himself talk. His name is Francis.

They were to go in pairs collecting for Corso, so Stewart who is rather shy, elected to pair with Francis + told them in his letter "he hadn't to say a word". They all have their Grandfather's love for the Islanders.

But I must stop as this is going in Sir Albert's letter. He is keeping very well - + I have lost my fibrositis I am glad to say -

With very kind remembrances to you both  
I am

Yours sincerely  
Kellie Ellis

TELEPHONE 43-916

DILWORTH BUILDING,  
QUEEN STREET,  
AUCKLAND, C.I.

14th May 1951

Major F.G.L. Holland, G.M., O.B.E.  
16 William Street,  
NORTH SYDNEY.

My dear Friend,

Many thanks for your letter of 4th instant received on 8th but we are sorry indeed to hear that it is necessary for you to go into hospital for an op and we earnestly look forward to hearing that it has gone through very successfully possibly accounting for some of the ill health you have had in the past.

It was good to hear your views regarding the Stone of Remembrance and I look on it as an all time record of satisfaction on the part of the Banabans regarding their new home together with the excitement of that momentous visit and the events leading up to the placing of the stone in its first stages. The whole thing was very unique and I don't think I have ever known of a case of natives making up their minds to do something entailing strenuous physical effort, and then getting on the job as quickly as they did. Hearing them yelling down in the village that morning made me realise that something extraordinary was on and I was puzzled. Then later on your Nonouti houseboy came running up so excited that in his attempt to tell me about it I could not really make out what it was all about. I knew however that it was something remarkable.

I was much disappointed when visiting Nauru and Ocean in January that Suva would not let us call there without the formality and expense of going to Suva first. I don't know now if I will ever get along for a final visit for one cannot contemplate the trip in a cutter at my time of life with equanimity.

In my last letter from Coode he mentioned that he and Mrs. Coode would probably be passing through here later on this year and I look forward to talking the whole thing over with him.

You refer to my not having been able to return from Melbourne via Sydney recently. As a matter of fact I did but the plane movements only permitted of about 3 hours in Sydney. I debated whether to advise you so that we could have had a brief chat but decided against it having the feeling that perhaps it would not be convenient to you to come into the City at night. Our plane started off at midnight and that method of travel did not appeal to me at all as I am one of those unfortunates who do not sleep when up in the air.

My two grandchildren who were up at Nauru and Ocean with me still remember their experiences with joy. Jennifer now a Monitor at Queen Margaret College was given the duty once a week of doing the bell ringing for the movements of the classes and introduced the board ship style of striking the bells. She had learned it on the voyage home in the Bank boat besides other seafaring little jobs which naturally appealed to both of them.

You refer to your namesake and the strike tussle on this side. Yes, there can be no doubt that he and his Ministers have done well. I have heard several remarks to the effect that there has been no "slipping up".

The financial position over your side as regards currency remains unchanged to my surprise but I still have hopes that an adjustment will come and that we may have the great pleasure of greeting you and Mrs. Holland on this side again.

With kindest regards in which Maturi joins with me to you both,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alberto J. Ferris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.



OCEAN ISLAND

Remaining phosphate deposit estimated at 12,000,000 tons,

Shipments estimated at 300,000 tons per year

Life of remaining phosphate deposit estimated at :

$$\underline{12,000,000 \div 300,000 = 40 \text{ years.}}$$

ROYALTY of 1s/3d. per ton on shipments of 300,000 tons per year,

AT END OF

	£
1 year	18,750
2 years	37,500
3 "	56,250
4 "	75,000
5 "	93,750
6 "	112,500
7 "	131,250
8 "	150,000
9 "	168,750
10 "	187,500
11 "	206,250
12 "	225,000
13 "	243,750
14 "	262,500
15 "	281,250
16 "	300,000
17 "	318,750
18 "	337,500
19 "	356,250
20 "	375,000
21 "	393,750
22 "	412,500
23 "	431,250
24 "	450,000
25 "	468,750
26 "	487,500
27 "	506,250
28 "	525,000
29 "	543,750
30 "	562,500
31 "	581,250
32 "	600,000
33 "	618,750
34 "	637,500
35 "	656,250
36 "	675,000
37 "	693,750
38 "	712,500
39 "	731,250
40 "	750,000

ROYALTIES (Estimated Payments)

(A) Based on 2d. per ton to Provident Fund.  
 8½d. per ton to Banaban Royalty Trust Fund.

	<u>1946/47</u>	<u>1947/48</u>	<u>1948/49</u>	<u>1949/50</u>	<u>1950/51</u>	
<u>Tonnage</u>	150,000	200,000 / 250,000	250,000/300,000	300,000	300,000	
<u>Amount</u>	£1,250	£1,666-13-4/£2,083-6-8	£2,083-6-8/£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	
<u>per ton</u>	2d.	2d.	2d.	2d.	2d.	
<u>Amount</u>	£5,312-10-0	£7,083-6-8/£8,854-3-4	£8,854-3-4/£10,625	£10,625	£10,625	
<u>per ton</u>	8½d.	8½d.	8½d.	8½d.	8½d.	
<u>Amount</u>	£6,562-10-0	£8,750/£10,937-10-0	£10,937-10-0/£13,125	£13,125	£13,125	
<u>per ton</u>	10½d.	10½d.	10½d.	10½d.	10½d.	: A Royalty of 10½d. (Current : Royalty)

ROYALTIES (Estimated Payments) - cont.

(B) Based on 2d. per ton to Provident Fund.  
10d. per ton to Banaban Royalty Trust Fund.

	<u>1946/47</u>	<u>1947/48</u>	<u>1948/49</u>	<u>1949/50</u>	<u>1950/51</u>	
<u>Tonnage</u>	150,000	200,000/250,000	250,000/300,000	300,000	300,000	From the date of acquisition of new land above the 170' contour is arranged we commence paying 1/- per ton royalty instead of 10½d. per ton.
<u>Amount</u>	£1,250	£1,666-13-4/£2,083-6-8	£2,083-6-8/£2,500	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	
<u>per ton</u>	2d.	2d.	2d.	2d.	2d.	
<u>Amount</u>	£6,250	£8,333-6-8/£10,416-13-4	£10,416-13-4/£12,500	£12,500	£12,500	Our offer in July, 1940 2d. and 10d. = 1/-
<u>per ton</u>	10d.	10d.	10d.	10d.	10d.	
<u>Amount</u>	£7,500	£10,000/£12,500	£12,500/£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	<u>A Royalty of 1/-</u>
<u>per ton</u>	12d.	12d.	12d.	12d.	12d.	
(C)						
<u>Amount</u>	£1,875	£2,500/£3,125	£3,125/£3,750	£ 3,750	£ 3,750	Effect of additional 3d.
<u>per ton</u>	3d.	3d.	3d.	3d.	3d.	
<u>Total Amount</u>	£9,375	£12,500/£15,625	£15,625/£18,750	£18,750	£18,750	<u>A Royalty of 1/3d.</u> (Proportion to be cred- ited to the Provident Fund and the Royalty Trust Fund not allocated)
<u>per ton</u>	15d.	15d.	15d.	15d.	15d.	

*M. M. M. Jones July 1946*