

# Missionaries as Humanitarians? Opposition to The Recruitment of Indentured Labour For Queensland in the 1860s and 70s

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## MISSIONARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PACIFIC LABOUR TRADE

In this paper I shall be focusing on Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides (modern Vanuatu), the main, though not the only recruiting ground for indentured labourers. Three missions covered the area of the Pacific, which the labour traders used as their main recruiting grounds.

The **London Missionary Society** had been first in the field in its attempts to move from Samoa to the southern New Hebrides. But the murder of John Williams in 1839 marked the failure of this strategy. The LMS managed to gain a foothold in the Loyalty Islands, which, despite the French occupation of the islands in 1864, it retained tenaciously until 1884. The LMS also selflessly assisted the re-establishment of the mission on the New Hebrides in Presbyterian guise in 1848. The LMS sent Thomas Powell from Samoa to accompany John Geddie and to remain with him on Aneiteum until he was settled. After Powell's return to Samoa and the arrival of John Inglis in 1852, the **New Hebrides Mission** was a purely Presbyterian affair, though the

missionaries who came to the islands as the mission developed were from a number of different Presbyterian churches in Scotland, New Zealand and Nova Scotia. The **Melanesian Mission** was the last on the scene, developing out of the Anglican diocese of New Zealand in 1849 and becoming a separate missionary diocese in 1861. Missionary evidence of the abuses in the labour trade was vital in vast areas of the Pacific where there were no resident British consuls and where Royal Navy patrols were few and far between. Though taking different views on the principle of indentured labour, all three missions opposed the labour trade, but to different degrees and in practical terms reacted to it in different ways. From their bases in Samoa and the Loyalty Islands, the LMS encountered the trade far less than the other two societies, though it was on Samoa that the notorious recruiter 'Bully' Hayes was first arrested and then escaped from custody in 1870. The veteran missionary, Thomas Powell, commented:

It will be a lamentable inconsistency on the parts of the British and French governments if this iniquitous traffic be allowed under their flags after their intervention, only a few years ago to put a stop to Peruvian proceedings of the same character. [1]

And he added:

I hope the Directors of the London Missionary Society will use their influence with the responsible authorities to get this new form of slavery - or rather slavery under a new name - "*labour*" - put to an end.

Samuel McFarlane, from the Loyalty Islands and later Papua New Guinea, took a less doctrinaire view:

I have always maintained, I said so in Brisbane as long ago as 1863, that recruiting is to the benefit of natives and planters alike ... but I should not like to see the traffic carried on as it is in the South Seas [2]

## **NEW HEBRIDES MISSION,**

The New Hebrides Mission found itself in the thick of the arguments over the labour trade and took a robust line in opposition. They held that the trade could never be effectively regulated and that it would always hinder their work

by taking native converts away from missionary influence. With dogged determination they opposed the trade root and branch and took every opportunity to denigrate it publicly. In early October 1868,[3] a kidnapping incident involving the Queensland-licensed recruiting vessel *Lyttona* on the New Hebrides island of Erromanga resulted in a letter of complaint from the local missionary, James McNair, to the senior naval officer of the Australian Squadron [4] McNair alleged that Captain George Smith of the *Lyttona* had been responsible for the kidnapping of nine Erromangans and that despite his efforts to rescue them by temporarily impounding the landing boat, the recruiters had, by deception, regained their vessel and put to sea without returning the islanders as promised. The *Lyttona* case was probably no worse than many other 'blackbirding' incidents, and although human liberty was infringed, no human life was lost. But three factors make it particularly interesting for this study. *Firstly*, it was the earliest major case of missionary opposition to, the labour trade. *Secondly*, the stir caused in official circles by McNair's allegations of kidnapping showed just how important missionary evidence could be and how much pressure the missionaries could exert in the corridors of power by the judicious use of their influence. *Thirdly*, it also showed how easily the missionaries' righteous enthusiasm for the cause could result in them overplaying their hand and undermining their own credibility. Moreover the *Lyttona* case showed the weakness of current legal sanctions. As William Dealtry observed in an oft-quoted minute in the Colonial Office files, 'I am afraid that the Colonies possess no legal power to punish those engaged in this trade for the mere act of kidnapping if unaccompanied with acts of atrocity'. [5]

Commodore Lambert, the senior naval officer on the Australasian station, had informed the Governor of Queensland of McNair's complaint,

It has always been a difficult matter to separate the religious and secular forces behind Britain's empire, especially in its infancy. Early dissenters and evangelicals 'sought not just to preserve the empire through toleration, but to change it fundamentally by transforming it into an instrument of God's purposes on earth'. [6] and Governor Blackall, after dutifully making enquiries about the matter, reported back to the Colonial Office. [7] McNair, however,

had not waited for the wheels of officialdom to grind, but neatly short-circuited the system by sending a copy of his letter (probably by way of the mission's agent in Sydney, Dr Robert Steel) to the Revd John Kay in Coatbridge, Scotland. Kay, the Secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, passed McNair's letter to the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, Liberal Member for Perth, and a highly influential supporter of the missionary movement. Kinnaird's influence at the Foreign Office meant that he had only to present them with the information for it to be forwarded, now with all the authority of the Foreign Office, to the Colonial Office.

Thus the papers detailing Mc Nair's complaint arrived in the Colonial Office a fortnight *before* the official despatch from the Governor of Queensland and it was the first the Colonial Office had heard of the matter [8] Having been warned that the matter would be raised in the House of Commons, the Colonial Office gave it prompt attention [9] The high profile given to McNair's allegations and the subsequent investigations into the *Lyttona* case in two Parliamentary Papers is perhaps indicative of the way in which the Colonial Office had been caught off guard and sought to atone for this by being conspicuously open in agreeing to the requests for the publication of the correspondence. [10] It was the Quaker P.A. Taylor, Radical Member of Parliament for Leicester, who had forewarned the Colonial Office of the question he asked in the House on 28 June 1869 [11]

It was an important tactical *coup* for the missionary movement, though any jubilation was short-lived. For the arrival of the official despatch from the Governor of Queensland cast some doubt on the accuracy of McNair's allegations. [12] The papers were examined in London by Sir Clinton Murdoch of the Emigration Board. Murdoch summarized the case put by McNair, contrasted it with the enquiry made by the Queensland Immigration Agent, and concluded significantly: 'it is clear that either Mr McNair or the Immigration Agent was deceived in the matter; and the circumstances appear to make it more probable that it was Mr McNair than the Immigration Agent'. [13]

There is no evidence; indeed it is highly improbable, that McNair sought, by deceit or inaccuracy, to prod the Colonial Office into action against the labour

trade. The effect, however, was the same and Owen Parnaby's comment that 'McNair's purpose in stirring the Colonial Office to action ... was accomplished before the inaccuracy of his report was known', is substantially correct. [14] It later became a common feature of attacks on reports by the New Hebrides missionaries that they appeared to be excessively credulous in believing what they were told by the islanders and in repeating these accusations as though they represented the whole truth. [15] To have been more discriminating in their use of native evidence and to have been more sparing in their accusations would have enhanced their influence.

The practical outcome of the enquiry into the *Lyttona* case was that public meetings held in Sydney and Brisbane in February and March 1869 showed considerable public disquiet with the working of the Act. At the meeting on 8 February, speakers included the LMS representative in Australia, J.P. Sunderland, and the Bishop of Sydney. In his address the latter quoted from a letter of Bishop Patteson. A letter from McNair was also read out [16] The meetings and their attendant publicity aroused public opinion to the extent that the Queensland government accepted amendments to the Polynesian Labourers Act. A Select Committee, which reported in September 1869, made seven recommendations for better enforcement of the Act, including the appointment of Government Agents to sail on each recruiting ship and the admissibility of the unsworn evidence of native islanders in court cases. [17] This apparent tightening up of the regulations cut no ice with the New Hebrides missionaries, however. John Inglis commented that, 'it looks as if Acts were passed rather with a view to blind the public than to operate as a means of protecting the poor natives'. [18]

The moral seemed to be that what was most effective in shaping opinion and forming official action was not so much the quality of missionary evidence as the way in which that evidence was presented. This lesson was not lost on John Paton, McNair's Presbyterian colleague. As McNair faded from the limelight after the *Lyttona* case his mantle fell, even before his premature death in 1872, upon Paton who turned opposition against the labour trade into a cottage industry. Paton, first Presbyterian missionary on the New Hebridean island of Tanna, had been driven off that island in 1862 and had subsequently

taken up residence with the less aggressive inhabitants of Aniwa, where he served for thirty years, constantly battling against the labour trade and all who supported it. A man of patriarchal appearance with his flowing beard and strident manner, Paton seemed to arouse intense feelings in those who encountered him. Anger or adulation, never indifference, seemed to be the order of the day.

Paton's fame - or notoriety - began with another complaint against the *Lyttona*, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 13 February 1871. In the same letter he accused the captain of the *Spunkie* of kidnapping and, for good measure, he also involved himself in the controversy over the *Jason*. [19] Paton's *modus operandi* seemed to be that where a manifest injustice needed to be righted, accuracy in matters of detail was a luxury not to be indulged in. It was not so much that Paton was economical with the truth, rather that he was profligate with his accusations. As one contemporary Melbourne clergyman put it, Paton 'appears to combine enthusiasm in a good cause with a perfect genius for scandal-mongering and the imputation of bad motives'. [20] The labour trader William Wawn chronicled three separate occasions when he clashed with Paton, commenting drily about one of them:

I suppose it was not worth his while to sift the matter properly, so long as he could get a good story to tell against a "slaver". Many of the stories told by this gentleman about "labour" vessels have just as good a foundation and no better. [21]

An able publicist, frequently using Robert Steel in Sydney as his intermediary, Paton variously used letters both to individuals and to the press (especially the sympathetic Congregationalist-owned *Sydney Morning Herald*), petitions, meetings, lobbying politicians, making common cause with trade unions and deputation work in Australia and Great Britain to whip up support against the labour trade. His reputation was, however, double-edged. Though he was a figure of heroic stature to his own supporters, his campaign, which continued unabated until the turn of the century, merely antagonised the authorities and failed to move them. Protesting vociferously at every possible opportunity only had the effect of making the authorities deaf to his complaints. [22] E W Docker referred to Paton's 'staggering verbosity' and his 'utter disregard for

fact', concluding that 'for most of the time he harmed his own cause more than those he opposed' [23] Even an observer as objective as Niel Gunson does not hesitate to label Paton 'an agitator frequently deluded by his own propaganda' [24] With John Paton in full flow, 'evidence' of malpractice and kidnapping by the labour traders was becoming indistinguishable from abolitionist propaganda. James McNair, in his one foray against the labour trade, had brought the matter forcefully to the attention of the Colonial Office and begun a train of events which led in time to the passing of the Pacific Islanders' Protection Act. John Paton, however, in thirty years of vociferous campaigning achieved little more than a dubious personal reputation and countless column inches in the colonial press.

Another Presbyterian missionary, Peter Milne of Nguna, found himself in the media spotlight after Captain Coath and J.C. Irving of the *Jason* turned the tables on the missionaries and lodged a complaint against Milne claiming that he had incited Nguna natives to fire on the *Jason*. [25] In the ensuing controversy the Aborigines Protection Society supported the missionaries. [26] Not surprisingly, Commander Markham of HMS *Rosario* took Milne's side [27] and, after claim and counter-claim, the Queensland government eventually accepted that the charges against Milne were worthless. [28] But it is interesting to note that Commander Markham, normally a staunch defender of the missions, assumed that the alleged attack *had* taken place but that it was a justifiable retaliation.

The *Jason* case was significant because it came after government agents had been appointed to labour recruiting vessels. Investigations showed that Captain Coath and the agent Meiklejohn had been at odds with one another throughout the voyage in question and the integrity and authority of the latter had been put in doubt. Whether or not he had, as he claimed, been locked in the hold and threatened by the captain, the agent's presence had clearly had no effect whatsoever on the recruiting practices of that particular vessel. The presence of a government agent was shown to be no guarantee of lawful recruiting. The view of William Dealtry of the Colonial Office that the appointment of government agents would check recruiting abuses appeared to be over optimistic and unduly complacent. [29]

A virtually identical incident took place on Aniwa in 1879. This time the ship's captain made a complaint against John Paton. For once the latter does not appear to have made any political capital out of the affair and it came to light only through the published letters of his second wife. [30] One can only speculate as to why the habitually verbose Paton remained uncharacteristically silent on this occasion.

## **BISHOP PATTESON**

Without doubt the most influential of all missionaries in the south-west Pacific in this period was John Coleridge Patteson, missionary Bishop of Melanesia from 1861 to his untimely but ultimately highly propitious death in September 1871. Patteson was held in high regard for three reasons. First, he was an Anglican and a bishop - most other missionaries in the area were neither. Secondly, whereas most missionaries in this period were from the artisan classes, Patteson's pedigree and connections were impeccable: scion of a wealthy family, educated at Eton and Oxford, he was a friend of Gladstone and other establishment figures while his cousin, Sir John Duke Coleridge, was Attorney General in Gladstone's first cabinet. Thirdly, Patteson had such a warm personality and saintly aura and exuded so little episcopal pomp that he was loved and respected even by those who would normally have little truck with Anglican bishops. John Geddie, for example, greatly respected Patteson, describing him as 'a man of the most lovely Christian character and singular devotedness. [31] John Paton's views on Patteson are not recorded, but Patteson records his visit to the fiery Scot on Tanna shortly after the death of his first wife and child and expresses feelings of heart-felt sympathy and humility. [32]

Few missionaries were more fair-minded with regard to the labour trade than Patteson and therefore his views deserve especial attention. Because of his peripatetic episcopal ministry over the countless islands of his vast diocese, he was in the position to view the labour trade in its broader context, not merely its effect on one island or group of islands. His phenomenal gift for



acquiring native languages also gave him a wider perspective as to what was going on over a large area of the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides. [33] With a greater breadth of vision and a more educated and subtle mind than many of the Pacific missionaries, Patteson was hesitant in condemning the labour trade out of hand. His cousin and biographer, Charlotte Yonge, believed he 'was not at all averse to the employment of natives, well knowing how great an agent in improvement is civilisation. But to have them carried off without understanding what they were about, and then set to hard labour, was quite a different thing'. [34] The tension Patteson felt between the possibilities for advancement offered by plantation life and the brutal realities of the labour trade is nowhere made clearer than in a letter written in 1868:

... I feel almost sure that there is, or will be, injuries done to the natives, who (I am sure) are taken away under false pretences. The traders don't know the Tannese language, and have no means of making the people understand any terms, and to talk of any contract is absurd. Yet, a large number of Tanna men, living on really well-conducted plantations, owned by good men, might lead to a nucleus of Christian Tannese. [35]

His often repeated dictum was, 'I do not advocate the suppression but the regulation of this traffic'.

Whereas the evidence of the Presbyterian missionaries against the labour traders usually relied on native accounts of malpractice, Patteson was more cautious and less credulous: 'it is not possible to obtain from the great majority of the islanders of the Western Pacific any trustworthy account of what may have taken place among them'. He was similarly disbelieving of the point of view put forward by the labour traders themselves. [36] As time progressed, Patteson increasingly saw for himself the effects of the labour trade in depopulating islands and leaving violence and distrust in its wake, disrupting and even destroying the everyday life of families and whole communities. His views began to harden and he became particularly angry when his name was used by the traders to entice gullible islanders on board their ships. [37] By the year of his death his views had hardened further but still retained their characteristic moderation and balance. In a memorandum to the General Synod of the Anglican Church in New Zealand, he refused to condemn

indentured labour as such but attacked the cruelties of the labour trade and the ill effect it had on the islanders of his diocese. He commended law-abiding labour ships, called for imperial legislation to regulate the trade effectively and for two Royal Navy ships to cruise in the islands and enforce the regulations. Whether unenforced or unenforceable, current regulations were 'absolutely no check whatever' on the trade. He called for no retaliation against islanders who attacked labour ships, 'until it is clearly shown that these acts are not done in the way of retribution for outrages first committed by white men'. He now accused many of the labour traders, 'whether they are technically or legally slavers or not', of 'acting in the spirit of slavery'. [38] Five months later, he spoke of 'the general suspicion and distrust admitted to exist by the traders themselves' as being 'sufficient proof that there are lawless practices going on', and continued gloomily, 'it was not so a few years ago in many places where I see with my own eyes that it is now so'. But even at this late stage Patteson refused to issue a blanket condemnation. The problem was not treatment of the labourers on the plantations, nor even recruiting *per se*, but 'the mode of procuring the labourers which is practised by *some* of the traders'. [39]

Patteson knew that revenge for the activities of the labour traders might well be exacted on missionaries and his last, unfinished, letter had a prophetic, even fatalistic, ring to it:

I am fully alive to the probability that some outrage has been committed here by one or more vessels. I am quite aware that we may be exposed to considerable risk on this account.... If any violence has been used, it will make it impossible for us to go thither now. It would simply be provoking retaliation.... It is very sad. But the Evil One is everywhere and always stirs up opposition and hindrance to every attempt to do good. [40]

The circumstances of Patteson's death - regarded by many as a martyrdom - are well known. [41]

Landing on the island of Nukapu in the Santa Cruz Islands on 20 September 1871, he was clubbed to death while resting in a native hut. When the body was later recovered by his companions, it was found to bear five wounds clearly caused after death, and the hands held a palm branch with five knots.

To the faithful, a comparison with the *stigmata* of Christ was irresistible; to the more practically minded, the signs that Patteson had been killed in revenge for the recent kidnapping of five natives from Nukapu were clear. Deryck Scarr's researches have indicated that the *Emma Bell* was the ship responsible and that five men of rank on Nukapu had been kidnapped when they came aboard the ship as visitors. [42] David Hilliard is unhappy with what he calls the 'revenge theory', suggesting that 'it was...born...out of a desire to condemn the activities of labour recruiters'. He favours the idea that Patteson may have been murdered after unintentionally violating a local custom. This theory was first put forward some twenty years after the event by lay missionary A.E.C. Forrest. He opined that Patteson was actually murdered by Santa Cruz natives who felt slighted that the bishop's gift to the chief of Nukapu was greater than that to their chief, who considered himself a more important personage. This however fails to adequately explain either the presence of Santa Cruz men on Nukapau, or their formulation of a murder plot when the bishop's visit was not known in advance. Neither does it explain how they gained access to such an important guest or why there was no apparent retribution against them or even their naming and shaming by the people of Nukapu by way of exonerating themselves from the deed. Perhaps Hilliard is most accurate when he admits that 'the truth is far from clear'. [43]

But perhaps no one should have been really surprised by the death of a white missionary. Patteson's peripatetic ministry among many imperfectly known islanders probably made him far more vulnerable than those who laboured continually amongst the same people. In this context it must be remembered that every year, following the strategy long established by Selwyn, Patteson himself carried off a steady number of the ablest native boys from the islands for training at the mission school on Norfolk Island. He was known to describe this work as 'recruiting' and in effect, if not always in method and certainly not in motive, it closely resembled what the labour recruiters were doing. Clearly, here was further scope for confusion about the motives of white men in the minds of the Melanesian peoples. [44]

Patteson's deputy, Robert Codrington, was quick to apportion the blame:

There is very little doubt that the slave trade which is desolating these islands was the cause of this attack.... Bishop Patteson was known throughout the islands as a friend, and now even he is killed to revenge the outrages of his countrymen. The guilt surely does not lie upon the savages who executed, but on the traders who provoked the deed. [45]

Commander Markham, the first naval officer on the scene, concurred.[46] Ironically, Patteson did more in turning public opinion against the labour trade by the circumstances of his death than he, or any other missionary, had done during their lifetime. The brutal death of a revered and saintly figure caused a wave of horror in the colonies and in Britain. This resulted in a near universal desire to control a trade that was seen as the prime cause of Patteson's death.

## OTHER WITNESSES

### 1. NAVAL OFFICERS

That naval officers tended to be strong supporters of the missionaries in their robust opposition to the labour trade has already been alluded to. And in her chapter on 'gunboat diplomacy' Jane Samson explores the evangelical and humanitarian influences on naval officers of this period. Having wide experience of pursuing slaving ships between Zanzibar and the east coast of Africa, naval officers had a tendency to see the Pacific labour trade in the as just another form of the slave trade. Because successive governments had declined to pay for naval bases and regular patrols in the area, the navy had to be content with sending the occasional warship from Sydney. But such voyages were so infrequent that they made little impression on the abuses inherent in the labour trade. To examine the writings of those naval officers involved with the missionaries and the labour traders in this period is to observe their uncritical endorsement of the work of the missionaries and their abhorrence of the labour trade and those involved in it. Two successive captains of the naval patrol ship, HMS *Rosario*, George Palmer and Albert

Markham, both of whom rushed to publish their experiences immediately after their tour of duty was over, appear to speak with a single voice, but Markham is perhaps the more thoughtful and perceptive of the two. George Palmer's partiality was never in doubt when he spoke of the missionaries and their reaction to the labour trade in the following terms:

these noble men and women, who have in every age gone forth from their country and friends, often bearing their lives in their hands, to do their Master's bidding, and preach the glorious gospel of Christ to the heathen... What concerns them most is to see the little work they have been permitted to do among these savages, after weeks and months of prayer and patience dashed to the ground and indefinitely thrown back by the shameful acts of their own countrymen. [47]

He suggested that without the interference of the 'slavers' the Tannese, for example, would soon come under effective missionary control, [48] a seemingly over-optimistic assessment since missionaries Paton and Mathieson had been driven off that island in 1862 *before* the labour trade became established. To Palmer, the problem for the missionaries was that their converts would 'get contaminated with the mean whites of Queensland'. [49]

Palmer achieved fame by his arrest of the Queensland-licensed labour ship *Daphne* on charges of slave trading. Licensed to transport fifty New Hebridean labourers to Queensland, Palmer found it in Fiji with twice that number on board. In Sydney both the Water Police Court and the Vice-Admiralty Court threw out the charge of slave trading and awarded costs against Palmer. The failure of Palmer's prosecution of the *Daphne* was significant. It showed that the Slave Trade Acts [50] did not cover this kind of recruiting when the islanders had been lured on board by deceit and tricked into signing 'contracts'. It showed that the Queensland Act was largely ineffective (as the missionaries had claimed all along) and cast doubt on the sincerity of the Queensland authorities to make the Act work in anything more than a cosmetic sense. Further, following the *Daphne* judgment, naval officers would be reluctant to act against labour ships. The truth of Bishop Patteson's assertion that 'imperial legislation is required to put an end to this miserable state of things' was becoming increasingly clear. [51]

As far as his personal circumstances were concerned, Palmer was clearly aware how much influence the parliamentary supporters of the missionary and humanitarian societies were able to exert. He wrote for help to his brother-in-law, one Captain King. King duly wrote to Kinnaird to enlist his support. Kinnaird wrote to Colonial Secretary Earl Granville and followed this up with a question to the First Lord of the Admiralty in the House of Commons. As a result the Admiralty reimbursed Palmer's costs of £179.5s.5d. and promoted him to captain. [52] But his campaign did not stop there. In 1871 he published his book, *Kidnapping in the South Seas*, in which he expressed sympathy and admiration for the missionaries and contempt and outrage for the labour traders and their trade. So outspoken were his statements that they occasioned a correspondence between Kimberley and the Governor of New South Wales, which was published in 1872 as a Parliamentary Paper. [53] In the interests of objectivity, however, Palmer might profitably have reflected on the Duke of Newcastle's words of advice to Colonel Smythe prior to his mission to Fiji in 1862: 'I must caution you not to suffer your sympathy with the missionaries or your admiration of their achievements to affect your judgment...'. [54]

Albert Markham, who succeeded Palmer as captain of HMS *Rosario* in October 1871, less than a month after the murder of Bishop Patteson, took the same line as his predecessor in robustly supporting the missionaries against the labour traders. He spoke of 'the almost unheard-of enormities committed by those involved in the so-called "Labour trade" and its attendant organised system of kidnapping' and condemned 'the deeds perpetrated by the lawless and unscrupulous ruffians who infest these beautiful islands for the purpose of procuring natives ... [which] are unparalleled for cruelty and treachery'. [55] Markham was the first naval officer to visit the headquarters of the Melanesian Mission after Patteson's death. He both accepted and propagated Archdeacon Codrington's view that the Bishop's murder was retaliation for a kidnapping incident:

The only reason that can be given for this treacherous and wholesale attack upon the Bishop and his party by the islanders of Nukapu - and unhappily this reason is verified by all that we hear - is that a 'labour vessel' had some short time previously visited the island for the

purpose of adding to her human cargo, and that probably some outrage had been committed upon the natives, who had in consequence resolved to attack and take the lives of the first white men that happened to fall into their power. [56]

But Markham was sufficiently experienced to realise that this was not just arbitrary savagery, but a measured response strictly according to the way the islanders approached the avenging of wrongs committed against them:

It is their law, when a man belonging to a *tribe* commits any offence, to punish the guilty tribe and not as in our law the guilty *individual* ... they look upon all white men as belonging to one tribe. [57]

## 2. LABOUR TRADERS

Unlike the missionaries and naval officers, who were inveterate writers and able publicists of their respective points of view, the men who were actually involved in the labour trade were, not surprisingly, virtually silent in stating their position. Coming from the least respectable sections of the Queensland merchant fleet, sailing close to the wind legally as well as nautically, they were not eager to go into print; some indeed would have been barely literate [58] Some were forced to defend their actions in legal depositions, but only one voluntarily produced a book devoted to his role in the Queensland labour trade. For this reason William Wawn, who was involved in the labour trade from 1875 to 1891 (by which time the trade had come under government regulation) as the master of a number of recruiting ships, must be regarded as less than typical of the labour traders. Although his seems to be the acceptable face of 'blackbirding', since he represents himself as a humane man, his account of his experiences, however sanitized (he is known to have been debarred several times by the Immigration Department for recruiting misdemeanours), [59] provides an eye-witness account from a position diametrically opposed to that of the

missionaries. Though much maligned by Paton, Wawn had cause to be grateful to at least one missionary. As master of the *Bobtail Nag* on its last voyage from Brisbane in September 1877, [60] he was shipwrecked the following January at Vila in the New Hebrides. The local missionary got his people to provide food for the crew. Wawn, in his warmest remarks about any missionary, commented, 'He was as good as his word, and better. I am glad to have it in my power to express my sense of gratitude to this good man and his "worshippers".' [61] Otherwise, his comments on missionaries tend to be negative ones, not surprisingly, since their aim was the extirpation of his livelihood. Nevertheless he commented:

I do not wish to create the impression that I 'have a down' on missionaries. During my travels I have only become personally acquainted ... with eight. Four of these were Presbyterians, the others belonged to English church missions. The latter were, I believe, good earnest men, though not angels. They were men willing to give and take; not devoid of some weaknesses, or even faults, for which we laymen could make allowance, since they did the same for our frailties. The Presbyterian missionaries, as far as I could judge, were, with one exception, narrow-minded, bigoted and intolerant. They were men who looked only to one side of a disputed question, *which was invariably that side which suited their own interests; while to gain their own ends they would rush into exaggeration, sometimes even to the extent of downright untruth.* [my italics] [62]

Wawn argued strongly that a spell working on a plantation in Queensland actually had a beneficial effect on Polynesian labourers, leaving them stronger, fitter, less gullible and more experienced than their fellows who stayed at home. He criticised the proprietary attitude of missionaries to their converts and their dislike of returnees: 'It is this last fact which has made some missionaries so bitter against us. The raw untravelled "nig" is a very pliable article in their hands.' [63]



To counter missionary charges of 'buying' or 'stealing' recruits from their villages, Wawn claimed a misunderstanding of native terminology. [64] The practice of giving presents to relatives of the recruits or their village elders (forbidden by the Queensland government in 1878) was but a recognition of the Melanesian custom of reciprocity [65] 'The term "steal"', he opined, 'is frequently misunderstood. If you take away a recruit from his home without "buying" or "paying" for him ... they will say you "steal" him. This free use of the term "steal" among the islanders accounts for numbers of unfounded charges of kidnapping made against us'. However, he conceded, apparently without irony, that 'kidnapping has been occasionally perpetrated in these waters'. [66]

Wawn, then, provides valuable insights into the labour trade from a recruiter's perspective and an irreverent alternative view of the missionaries far removed from the near sycophantic line taken by the naval officers. Though he himself was clearly literate and, by his own account, humane and decent to the men he transported, he provides no account of the illegalities and cruelties practised by other recruiters, other than the occasional admission that irregularities in the trade were not unknown. Wawn claimed to have personally always acted with perfect propriety. Docker describes him as 'honest William Wawn', [67] though not without implying a certain naïvety. It should also be remembered that Bishop Patteson referred approvingly to 'some two or three vessels honourably distinguished from the rest by fair and generous treatment of the natives'. [68]

# HUMANITARIAN CONTACTS AND PRESSURE ON THE COLONIAL OFFICE AND PARLIAMENT

Supporting the missionary societies in seeking to press the government to action on the abuses in the labour trade were two pressure groups, the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society. In order to obtain information about the labour trade and its abuses both societies were obliged to rely on the missionaries who resided in the south-west Pacific and, inevitably, this resulted in the humanitarian societies often receiving evidence with an in-built missionary bias. Supporters in Britain of the Aborigines Protection Society and of the missionary movement were often the same people. The Anti-Slavery Society also attempted to develop closer links with the missionaries in the Pacific. In 1870, in order to get first-hand information about the abuses in the labour trade, the society sent out a questionnaire to the missionaries in the New Hebrides [69] The Presbyterian missionaries availed themselves of this opportunity to gain publicity and wider support for their campaign against the labour trade. Their replies were instrumental in providing the humanitarians with abundant accounts of kidnapping in the islands. [70]

Even before the replies to the questionnaires were received and processed by the Anti-Slavery Society, the Aborigines Protection Society was busy using missionary evidence in its own campaign. A letter of 3 January 1871 to William Monsell, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, made further charges against the *Lyttona* and a letter to Lord Kimberley of 14 August 1871 made accusations against the *Jason*. [71] At a meeting of the

Royal Colonial Institute on 1 May 1871, F.W. Chesson, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, read a paper on 'The Polynesian Labour Question in relation to the Fiji Islands and Queensland'. Several Members of Parliament attended the meeting, including Arthur Kinnaird. The council of the Royal Colonial Institute were clearly concerned about the outspoken nature of Chesson's paper, inserting a disclaimer at the foot of the first page of the printed edition. [72] The fact that both Chesson's paper and the letter to Kimberley were obviously based on evidence provided by John Geddie and John Paton is an indication that the humanitarians generally accepted missionary evidence at face value without necessarily being aware of possible prejudice. The pressure groups continued to press the Colonial Office. On 10 September 1873, long after the Pacific Islanders' Protection Act had become law, Kimberley wearily minuted, 'No one would even dream of being able to "satisfy" these gentlemen', but conceded, 'they perform a useful function as a perpetual "opposition"'. [73]

The *modus operandi* of the humanitarians was both to bombard the Colonial Office with evidence of malpractice and to use influential supporters in Parliament. There is no evidence that the former was of great avail. The only missionary who tried this method, John Paton, also had little effect, since constant repetition from the same source tended to deaden the Colonial Office's response. The latter approach, on the other hand, was much more effective, but it must be noted that the missionaries also used parliamentary pressure, *often by the same people*, since several MPs supported both groups.

In her unpublished thesis on the role of the Aborigines Protection Society as a pressure group, Susan Willmington contends that, irrespective of the murder of Bishop Patteson and its effect on informed opinion in Britain, 'there is more than a

probability that the Aborigines Protection Society would have intervened successfully in this situation and forced the Colonial Office into legislation . . . [74]

This sweeping assertion appears to reflect an understandable vested interest in establishing the importance of that Society. Clearly, it must be questioned. It must be remembered that public opinion was shocked to an almost unprecedented degree by the bishop's death, which gave the Colonial Office new resolve and shook the opposition of the Treasury to the necessary expenditure. More to the point, what grounds are there to suggest that the Aborigines Protection Society alone could, or indeed did, force the Colonial Office to legislate against the labour trade? Lord Kimberley's minute about a 'perpetual opposition' was, after all, written on a letter from the Anti-Slavery Society. It must be borne in mind that the missions were equally involved in pressing the Colonial Office and when that pressure came from the floor of the House of Commons it was impossible to tell whether some members, like Kinnaird and the M'Arthur brothers, were wearing humanitarian or missionary hats, or indeed (since a distinction between the two is more likely to occur in the mind of the historian than it was in theirs) both simultaneously. Willmington cannot therefore justifiably cite the influence of the parliamentary pressure group as a factor which helped only the Aborigines Protection Society in its opposition to the labour trade. [75] It must not be forgotten that but for the willing co-operation of the missionaries the humanitarians would have had precious little evidence of irregularities in the labour trade to complain about.

Indeed, it is possible to argue that the missionary movement actually had more effect on the Colonial Office than the humanitarians, since McNair's complaint about the *Lyttona* began a train of events which culminated in the tragic death of

the senior British missionary in the south-west Pacific and this impelled the Colonial Office into a renewed determination to legislate, this time speedily and successfully. That point, however, will not be argued here since the evidence points not to competition but to harmonious co-operation between the missionary and humanitarian lobbies to press for legislation to end abuses in the labour trade. For the Colonial Office the problem caused by the labour trade was similar to that elsewhere in the mid-Victorian period - the problem of lawlessness on the imperial frontier, where the interaction of Europeans and indigenous peoples was unsupervised by a legal framework; where Britain had much influence, often military or naval power, but no legal authority; and where lawlessness threatened to destabilise nearby British colonies. The ultimate solution to the problem was annexation, but this was generally avoided unless there was no alternative. [76] In the Pacific islands, Britain had for some years pursued a policy, dubbed 'minimum intervention' by J.M.Ward, which by the early 1870s was beginning to break down under the pressure of calls for action to prevent abuses in the labour trade and to annex or establish a protectorate over Fiji. The missionary movement and its supporters were much involved in both issues. [77]

Minimum intervention was a well-established policy at the Colonial Office where there was an inherent reluctance to act unless pressed to do so. For example, it was only the advance notice of Taylor's question to Monsell for 18 February 1870 that persuaded the Colonial Office to grant belated approval for the Queensland 1868 Polynesian Labourers Act, judgement on which had been suspended in June 1868. [78] There was also a somewhat complacent tendency to assume that all was well in the colonies unless a considerable weight of evidence proved otherwise. [79] Willmington admits that, 'right up to the time of

Patteson's death the Colonial Office displayed no urgency in its dealings with the kidnapping problem'. [80]

As Parnaby pointed out, any regulation of the labour trade by the imperial Parliament was inhibited by two factors: the advent of responsible government in the colonies - it came to Queensland in 1859, and by the long-established Whitehall practice of the Treasury holding the purse strings of expenditure by government departments. [81] That the latter was the more intractable problem is illustrated by the fact that the issue of controlling the labour trade was not being raised for the first time. In 1861, following the *Two Brothers* incident, a bill to 'facilitate the conviction of persons guilty of criminal offences in the Australian Colonies and in the Islands of the Pacific' was drafted by the Colonial Office and agreed by the Foreign Office. [82] But the draft bill got no further than the Treasury, which refused to sanction expenditure for the transport of witnesses to Australia. [83] Rogers complained on 30 June 1863 about 'this bill, which has been asleep at the Treasury since 4 April 1862' [84] and, six weeks later, Dealtry referred to the Treasury objections to the proposed bill, commenting that 'the matter appears to be at a stand still'. [85]

The matter was still 'asleep' at the Treasury seven years later and an attempt by Kimberley, the new Secretary of State, to awaken it late in 1870 met with the same response. [86] Once again 'the refusal of the Treasury' made the bill 'impossible to proceed with'. [87] Ironically, H.C. Rothery, the Treasury's adviser on the slave trade, reported at this time that kidnapping from the Pacific islands was 'slave trading in the largest sense of the term'. But his comments were either ignored or overruled at the Treasury. [88]

When Robert Herbert, the former Premier of Queensland, arrived at the Colonial Office the following year as Permanent Under-Secretary, he minuted on 20 October that 'owing to the difficulties unfortunately raised as to paying of expenses of prosecutions the proposed imperial enactment ... for the punishment of kidnapping has not been passed and these kidnapers having consequently escaped with impunity, it may be expected that the trade will be carried on with increased vigour'. [89] But exactly one month earlier and unknown to Herbert as he wrote those words, Bishop Patteson had been murdered in the Santa Cruz Islands. The news of his death eventually reached London at the end of November 1871.

The news of the bishop's murder was greeted with an uproar in London and at last moral outrage overcame fiscal rectitude. 'It was only the shock of the murder of Bishop Patteson ... which broke through this Treasury opposition, and brought the Bill before Parliament in 1872.' [90] Knatchbull-Hugessen, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, introduced the 'Bill for the prevention and punishment of criminal outrages upon natives of the islands in the Pacific Ocean' into the Commons on 15 February 1872. It was not without significance that the Bill's drafters gave it the short title of 'The Kidnapping Act, 1872'. [91] Knatchbull-Hugessen claimed Patteson as an old friend from Eton days and quoted the bishop's dictum that he advocated the regulation and not the suppression of the traffic. 'The bill was not intended to suppress the labour trade', he said, 'as some of the missionary societies and the Anti-Slavery Society desired, but to rid of abuse an essentially useful and good system of labour'. 'It was', said Knatchbull-Hugessen, 'impossible to deny that the importation of South Sea Islanders into our Australian colonies would be most advantageous if properly managed'. [92] Not everyone agreed, and Admiral

Erskine complained that the bill did not go far enough. In the Committee Stage on 22 April he proposed an unsuccessful amendment to extend the provisions of the bill. [93] Erskine, Liberal Member for Stirlingshire, a supporter of both the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Anti-Slavery Society, is a perfect example in his own person of how the missionary and humanitarian lobbies frequently overlapped, worked in harness, and are often impossible to disentangle.

The Bill's parliamentary progress was rapid and it had overwhelming support. At the second reading in the Lords on 3 May, Kimberley, too, claimed Patteson's friendship [94] Patteson's former mentor Bishop Selwyn, having returned from New Zealand to become Bishop of Lichfield, also spoke in the debate and called for no retribution for the murder of Patteson, who was aware of the risks he was taking. Retribution, he said, should be left to God. Conservative colonial spokesmen Lord Carnarvon, ill on 3 May, missed the debate, but four days later he appeared in the House and disagreed with Bishop Selwyn. 'Murder required punishment and he did not think it well that in such a case the State should do nothing, but leave the matter to the vengeance of God'. [95] The Lords gave the bill a third reading on 13 May and it received the Royal Assent on 27 June 1872.

## **THE END OF THE TRADE & CONCLUSIONS**

The regulated labour trade reached its height in the early 1880s and then declined until its eventual abolition in Queensland in



1906. The formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 and the move to a White Australia policy meant that those islanders who remained were quickly and not always willingly deported. It has recently been calculated that a total of 62,000 south sea islanders were recruited to Queensland, about 40,000 of whom came from the New Hebrides and 18,000 from the Solomon Islands. [96] By the early 1890s the missions were finally at work among the South Sea islanders on the Queensland plantations. [97] Long after the Act came into force, missionaries continued to report alleged kidnapping incidents and other irregularities. But even John Inglis, writing in 1886 and complaining that, in his opinion, 'the spirit of the kidnapping Act has been largely evaded', conceded that 'the outrageous buccaneering character of the traffic has to a large extent disappeared'. [98] In that the worst abuses of the traffic were largely checked, the Act appeared, to all but its most hostile opponents, to be serving its purpose.

In conclusion, three points need to be considered concerning the labour trade: the experience of the labourers, the nature of the evidence and the role of the missionaries. The trade itself needs to be carefully distinguished from life on the plantations. Needless to say, the evidence of the treatment of labourers on the Queensland plantations is mixed and contradictory.

Statements by J.P. Sunderland of the LMS (and a correspondent of the Aborigines Protection Society) condemning plantation life as slavery, [99] and of the Acting Governor of Queensland stating that all is well on the plantations, [100] may be taken to cancel one another out. Indeed, Sunderland's attack on plantation treatment of South-Sea island labourers both in the Australian press and via LMS headquarters to the Colonial Office in London, was challenged by the Revd Edward Griffith of Brisbane, who wrote to Dr Mullens in London to complain of

Sunderland's activities and especially his 'grave mistakes in unguarded speeches'. According to Griffith, Sunderland had surprisingly failed to accede to a request made two years previously to provide a native teacher for the islanders on the Queensland plantations. He had clearly failed to report this request to LMS headquarters in London as Dr Mullens offered to provide the same in his letter to Granville in April 1869. [101] Griffith reported that 'there are upwards of thirty [islanders] who are engaged sufficiently close to Brisbane who attend my service every Sabbath day - they are well dressed and very attentive although not understanding much...'. [102]

True, the mortality rate was unacceptably high,[103] but this in itself is no evidence of cruelty or maltreatment and it would seem to be due to a change in climate and diet and, most importantly, exposure to the diseases of 'civilisation' to which islanders had little or no immunity. Melanesian labourers in Queensland seem to have been treated as well as many rural labourers in Europe and probably much better than many manual workers in the mills and factories of British cities at that time.

Plantation life was one thing; how the labourers came to be there was quite another. F.A. Campbell, son of the Revd A.J. Campbell of Geelong, spent most of the year 1872 in the New Hebrides and encountered the labour trade at first hand. In seeking to answer the question 'Why do natives leave their own islands?' he came to the following conclusions:

10% are taken by force.

20% are obtained by deceit ... by masters of labour vessels.

20% are bought from chiefs or relatives.

10% are defeated in war and driven off their land.

15% are returned labourers, who, finding their plantations destroyed, wives gone, etc., return in disgust.

5% accompany their chiefs when they go.

20% go from curiosity, or for a desire to get European goods.[104]

Though there is no indication as to whether this was based on a statistically significant sample or is merely a piece of guesswork, it is at least an interesting illustration of the diverse motives for emigration from the New Hebrides. Clearly Campbell was of the opinion that half the islanders who emigrated did so for reasons that could be legitimately described as 'kidnapping'. Peter Milne regarded the trade in 1872 as being 'in reality a modified slave-trade, so far as the obtaining of the natives is concerned' [105] Bishop Patteson, as already noted, in his last, unfinished, letter, accused many of the labour traders of 'acting in the spirit of slavery'. It is vital to understand the nature of the labour trade: labourers were often well cared-for on the plantations, but were often brutally treated in order to get them there [106] Kidnapping was frequent and widespread, though not universal. [107] It was emotionally understandable but inaccurate and misleading of some missionaries to refer to slavery on the plantations. The disproportionately large number of Parliamentary Papers published on the subject of the labour trade is indicative of an intense interest, at least among Members of Parliament and those who lobbied them, in this subject.

A major problem in analysing the labour trade and missionary opposition to it is the difficulty of getting at the truth, for the tendency to see the issue from one side only and to exaggerate in order to score a debating point was almost overwhelming. It is very difficult to disentangle conflicting statements, for missionaries were not the only ones prone to painting a one-sided picture of the trade, as Knatchbull-Hugessen came to realise: 'Great caution is to be exercised in believing the statements either of the missionaries or those interested in the trade [108] The labour traders were well aware that, plying their

trade far from any effective legal framework, they could get away with most things other than outright atrocity. As they were often the only witnesses to their illegalities there was clearly no incentive for them to tell the truth about their recruiting practices. Plantation owners, though generally treating their native labourers fairly and humanely, tended not to ask too many questions about the recruiting methods that had been employed on their behalf to get the labourers to Queensland in the first place. From the Presbyterian quarter and particularly where John Paton was concerned, missionary 'evidence' of irregularities in the labour trade was often indistinguishable from abolitionist propaganda. To them any form of indentured labour was tantamount to slavery. Royal Navy officers tended to endorse this view uncritically. The missionaries did their cause a disservice by a tendency to accept native accounts of native accounts of kidnapping and atrocity without troubling to establish the facts accurately. These highly coloured accounts were then reported to the authorities as if they represented the whole truth. The New Hebrides missionaries were not alone in this respect. J.P. Sunderland in Sydney was a tireless propagandist, and LMS headquarters in London often took his words at face value and recycled them uncritically. [109]

The Colonial Office was well aware of exaggeration by the Presbyterian missionaries. Knatchbull- Huggessen, for example, in April 1871 wrote of 'making allowance for possible exaggeration' in missionary accounts of kidnapping, and the following month of 'the exaggerated form in which statements relating to native deportation are made by missionary or other enthusiasts'. [110]

The most recent writer in this field, Jane Samson, in her excellent study *Imperial benevolence: making British authority in the Pacific Islands*, in my view underestimates the negative

effects of the labour trade on island communities. And this she justifies largely on the grounds of missionary exaggeration of its deleterious effects. The missionaries, particularly the Presbyterians & especially John Paton undoubtedly did exaggerate to make a point - but there was undoubtedly a point to be made. But they were not alone as the writings of Robert Codrington of the Melanesian Mission indicate. Recruiting labourers was not a cosy trade. The recruiters had a ready and demanding market for their wares. It was a cut-throat business - sometimes in more ways than one. Most indentured labourers went willingly and most returned safely, but there was too much violence and too many lives lost for this to be regarded as mere missionary exaggeration. The murder of Bishop Patteson is clear indication of the grudge against white men held on islands where less unscrupulous labour traders had landed. Whether the end of the trade justified the means of missionary exaggeration is another matter.

A vested interest in the destruction of the labour trade was indirectly acknowledged by John Inglis. When giving three reasons for urging the 'complete suppression' of the trade, Inglis candidly gives his primary reason as 'the injury that it is doing to mission [111] Clearly information of labour trade malpractice from the New Hebrides missionaries has to be seen more as part of a political campaign than as reliable evidence. Undoubtedly there was exaggeration by some missionaries, particularly by members of the Presbyterian New Hebrides Mission. But this must not be allowed to conceal the truth, frequently shocking but somewhat less lurid than it was often portrayed. The development in the thinking of Bishop Patteson, who was always willing to sift the evidence and moderate his pronouncements until convinced otherwise, is particularly important for, unlike some others, Patteson had never

mortgaged his credibility by 'crying wolf' on countless previous occasions. When Patteson spoke of kidnapping, or 'acting in the spirit of slavery', he was certainly near to the truth.

Can the missionaries be said to have been solely instrumental in bringing pressure to bear on the Colonial Office to end the abuses in the labour trade? No. Opposition to the labour trade was clearly a *corporate* though not always orchestrated effort by both humanitarian and missionary movements. However, the missionaries, being the Europeans nearest to the injustices that were perpetrated in the islands, played an important part in bringing them to the attention of the authorities. Their supporters in Britain and particularly in Parliament used their considerable influence to keep the matter before the Colonial Office. But the most influential factor was the death of the best known of the South Seas missionaries, Bishop J.C. Patteson, in September 1871. The reverberations caused by his murder cut through the discussions, the reports, the letters, the petitions and the despatches and brought him posthumous success in the shape of the imperial legislation to regulate the labour trade for which he had long called. Missionary humanitarianism prevailed - but at a cost.

**Notes:**

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i[1] Powell to Mullens, 20 January 1870. *London Missionary Society South Seas Letters* 32/5/A. School of Oriental and African Studies, London University.

i[2] McFarlane to Wide Bay Farmers' & Planters' Association, 14 February 1883. Quoted in E.W. Docker, *The Blackbirders: the recruiting of South Sea labour for Queensland, 1863-1907* (Sydney, 1970). p.172. See also William T. Wawn, *The South*

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Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade  
(London., 1893) p.350.

i[3]Parnaby incorrectly dates the incident as July 1868. O.W.  
Parnaby, *Britain and the Labor Trade in the Southwest  
Pacific*, (Durham, NC, 1964), p.16.

i[4]McNair to Lambert, 22 October 1868. CO 234/23.

i[5]Min., 10 June 1869, by Dealtry on FO to CO, 5 June 1869.  
CO 234/23.

i[6]Lambert to Blackall, 28 January 1869. Parliamentary Papers  
[hereafter PP] 1868-9, XLIII [408].

i[7]Blackall to Granville, 16 April 1869. CO 234/22.

i[8]'Mr McNair's complaint has already been received through  
the Foreign Office.' Min. by Dealtry, 21 June 1869, on Blackall to  
Granville, 16 April 1869. CO 234/22.

i[9] *Ibid.*, 'I understand from Mr Monsell that a question is to be  
asked in the House respecting these labourers on Friday next'.

i[10] See PP 1868-9, XLIII [408, 438].

i[11] *Hansard*, Third Series, CXCVII, cols.633-48.

i[12] '...a searching enquiry throws considerable doubt on the  
correctness of the Rev Mr McNair's statement'. See Blackall to  
Granville, 16 April 1869, and encs. CO 234/22.

i[13]Murdoch to Rogers, 27 July 1869. PP 1868-9, XLIII [408].

i[14]Parnaby, 'Aspects of British Policy in the Pacific', 59 n.27.

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i[15]See, for example, Agent General for Queensland to Kimberley, 10 May 1871: 'Mr Paton seems willing to take the bare word of any of them [i.e. islanders] as it tells on that side of the question he wishes to establish'. PP 1871, XLVIII [468].

i[16]Extract from *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 February 1869, enc. in Belmore to Granville, 26 February 1869. PP 1868-9, XLIII [408].

i[17] Rogers to Kinnaird, 30 March 1870. PP 1871, XLVIII [468]. Also see F.W. Chesson, 'The Polynesian Labour Question in Relation to the Islands and Queensland', *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, III (1871-2), 38-39.

i[18] Inglis to Steel, 15 June 1871. Printed in John Kay (ed.), *The Slave Trade in the New Hebrides* (Edinburgh, 1872), p.6.

i[19] See Immigration Agent to Colonial Secretary of Queensland, 21 February 1871. PP 1871, XLVIII [468].

i[20] *Brisbane Courier*, n.d., quoted in Wawn, p.267

i[21] *Ibid.*, p.29.

i[22] 'I cannot help thinking that if the other statements in Mr Paton's letter are made with as little regard to the truth as this one, the Government should hesitate before giving credence to any of them.' Immigration Agent to Colonial Secretary of Queensland, 21 February 1871. P.P.1871, XLVIII [468]. See also Min., 3 June, by Knatchbull-Hugessen on O'Connell to Kimberley, 20 March 1871. CO 234/26.

i[23] Docker, p.244.



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i[24] W.N. Gunson, 'Victorian Christianity in the South Seas: a survey', *Journal of Religious History VIII (1974)*, 189.

i[25] Statements by Master and Chief Officer of Jason enc. in Agent General for Queensland to Under- Secretary for the Colonies, 25 May 1871. PP 1871 XLVIII [468]. For a detailed account of the incident see Robert Steel, *The New Hebrides and Christian Missions* (London, 1880) pp. 243-50. For Milne's account see Alexander Don, *Peter Milne of Nguna* (Dunedin, 1927) pp.101-4.

i[26] Aborigines Protection Society to Kimberley, 14 August 1871. PP 1871 XLVIII [468].

i[27] A.H. Markham, *The Cruise of the 'Rosario' amongst the New Hebrides and Santa Cruz Islands* (London, 1873) pp.97-98; Markham to Commodore Stirling, 14 November 1871. PP 1872 XXXIX [C.542].

i[28] Normanby to Kimberley, 21 March 1872. CO 234/26.

i[33] Min., n.d., by Dealtry on Blackall to Kimberley, 27 December 1870. CO 234/24.

i[30] Margaret W. Paton, *Letters and Sketches from the New Hebrides* (London, 1896), pp.311-12. .

i[31] Quoted in Patterson, p.420.

i[32] Patteson to Bishop of Wellington, 9 October 1859, quoted in Charlotte M. Yonge, *Life of John Coleridge Patteson, Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands*, 2 vols. (London, 1874), I, p.420

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i[33] 'Patteson spoke twenty-four languages and reduced many of them to writing'. Darrell Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries* (Pasadena, 1983), p.119.

i[34] Yonge, II, p.438.

i[35] Patteson to ?, 6 May 1868. Quoted in Yonge, II, p.321.

i[36] Patteson to Bowen, 4 July 1870. PP 1871, XLVIII [468].

i[37] *Ibid.* Extract from Southern Cross, 6 November 1869.

i[38] Memorandum, 11 January 1871. PP 1872 XLIII [C.496].

i[39] Patteson to Floyd, 26 May 1871. *Melanesian Mission Archives*. School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. Bishop Patteson Letters. Mel/M 2/8.

i[40] Patteson, unfinished letter, 16 September 1871, quoted in Yonge, II, p.560.

i[41] For Patteson's death, see PP 1872 XLIII [C.496]. Docker, p.90; Yonge, II, pp.566-572; David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: a history of the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1942* (St Lucia, Queensland, 1978) pp.66-71. .

i[42] Deryck Scarr, 'Recruits and Recruiters', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, II (1967), 5-6. The Methodist missionary Lorimer Fison was of the opinion that the five knots might indicate that five days had elapsed since the kidnapping rather than that five persons had been kidnapped. Belmore to Kimberley, 22 November 1871. PP 1872 XLIII [C.496]. Either way, Patteson's death was clearly bound up with abuses in the labour trade.

i[43] Hilliard, pp.68-69.

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i[44] Docker, p.88.

i[45] R.H. Codrington. Letter in *Hobart Mercury*, 18 Nov 1871, quoted in Whiteman, p.21. See also Codrington to Belmore, 17 October 1871. PP 1872 XLIII [C.496].

i[46] See n.92, below.

i[47] Palmer, p.57.

i[48] Palmer to Lambert, 5 April 1869. CO234/23.

i[49] Palmer, p.160.

i[50] 5 George IV c.113; 6 and 7 Victoria c.98.

i[51] Patteson's Memorandum to Synod of Anglican Church in New Zealand, 11 January 1871. PP 1872, XLIII [C.496].

i[52] See Palmer to King, 3 December 1869; King to Kinnaird, 12 March 1870; Kinnaird to Granville, 18 March 1870; all in PP1871, XLVIII [468]. *Hansard*, CC col.1427, 7 April 1870. Palmer, p.152.

i[53] PP 1872, XLIII [C.479].

i[54] Newcastle to Smythe, 23 December 1859. PP 1862, XXXVI [2995].

i[55] Markham, p.67.

i[56] *Ibid.*, p. vi.

i[57] *Ibid.*, p.98.

i[58] A naval officer remarked that the masters of labour ships were mostly 'men of inferior character, generally drunkards, and

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not unfrequently (sic) of the worst possible moral habits'.

'Remarks on the Labour Traffic etc., by Commander W. Dyke Ackland, RN', 20 October 1884, quoted in Scarr, 10.

i[59] Scarr, 11.

i[60] Not 1878. Wawn, p.119 is incorrect.

i[61] *Ibid.*, p.145.

i[62] *Ibid.*, pp.271-2.

i[63] *Ibid.*, p.17.

i[64] See, e.g., Reply of Peter Milne to Anti-Slavery Society Questionnaire. Kay, pp.64-65.

i[65] Scarr, 'Recruits and recruiters', 15. Missionaries in Central Africa had similar problems with the custom of brideprice or dowry, known as lobola, the payment of cattle or services to a bride's family, which they frequently interpreted as wife purchase. See H.A.C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890* (London, 1965).p.177.

i[66] Wawn, pp.11-12.

i[67] Docker, p.192.

i[68] Memorandum to Synod of Anglican Church in New Zealand, 11 January 1871. PP 1872, XLIII [C.496].

i[69] Printed in Kay, p.48.

i[70] *Ibid.*, pp.48-65; S.M.K. Willmington, 'The Activities of the Aborigines Protection Society as a pressure group on the

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formulation of colonial policy, 1868-1880', unpublished PhD thesis (Wales: Lampeter, 1973), pp.45-46.

i[71]Aborigines Protection Society to Monsell, 3 January 1871. PP 1871, XLVIII [468]. *Ibid.* Aborigines Protection Society to Kimberley, 14 August 1871.

i[72] Chesson, 'Polynesian Labour Question', 34-56.

i[73]Min., 10 September, on Anti-Slavery Society to Kimberley, 6 September 1873. CO 234/26.

i[74] Willmington, p.84.

i[75]Willmington, p.85.

i[76]See W. David McIntyre, McIntyre, *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865-75: a study of British Colonial Policy in West Africa, Malaya and the South Pacific in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli* (London, 1967) esp. pp.3-9.

i[77]See J.M. Ward, *British Policy in the South Pacific* (Sydney, 1948), Chap XVIII.

i[78]Mins. on Murdoch to Rogers, 16 June 1868. CO234/21; min. by Dealtry, 12 February 1870, on Notice of Questions for 18 February 1870. CO 201/560.

i[79] Rogers to Kinnaird, 30 March 1870. PP 1871, XLVIII [468].

i[80] Willmington, pp.82-83.

i[81] Parnaby, *Labor Trade*, p. vii.

i[82] FO to CO, 24 August 1860. CO 201/514. .

i[83] Treasury to Colonial Office, 27 June 1863. CO 201/529.

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i[84] *Ibid.*, min. by Rogers 30 June 1863.

i[85] Min. by Dealtry, 17 August, on Young to Newcastle, 22 June 1863. CO 201/526.

i[86] Treasury to Colonial Office, 3 December 1870. CO 201/560.

i[87] *Ibid.*, Draft CO to FO, 29 December, 1870

i[88] Report by Rothery, 15 October 1870, in FO to CO, 7 December 1870. CO 201/560, quoted in McIntyre, p.243.

i[89] Min. by Herbert, 20 October 1871, on Belmore to Kimberley, 9 August 1871. CO201/564. Herbert was referring to the escape of 'Bully' Hayes, arrested by the British consul at Samoa at the instigation of LMS missionary Thomas Powell. But with the lack of any legal framework to support his action the Consul was unable to detain Hayes for long before he was able to escape. See Thomas Powell to Dr Mullens, 20 January 1870, and 5 August 1870 and Powell's Deposition of 6 January 1870, in LMS South Seas Letters, Box 32.

i[90] O.W. Parnaby, 'Aspects of British Policy in the Pacific', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, VIII (1957), 55.

i[91] The Bill is printed in PP 1872, III.

i[92] *Hansard*, Third Series, CCIX, cols.522-23.

i[93] *Ibid.*, cols.1615-1616.

i[94] *Hansard*, CCXI, cols.184-89.

i[95] *Ibid.*, cols.368-70.

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i[96] Patricia Mercer, *White Australia Defied* (Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University, 1995), quoted in Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: OUP, 2001) p.223.

i[97] Scarr, 5 & 23.

i[98] John Inglis, In the *New Hebrides* (London, 1887) p.208.

i[99] See Walcott to Rogers, 12 October 1869. PP 1871, XLVIII [468].

i[100] *Ibid.*, O'Connell to Kimberley, 21 March 1871.

i[101] Secretary of LMS to Granville, 6 April 1869. CO 234/23.

i[102] Griffith to Mullens, 10 June 1869. LMS Australian Correspondence Box 7. See also *ibid.*, Griffith's letter to the *Brisbane Courier*, 10 July 1869.

i[103] *Queensland Evangelical Standard*, 16 October 1885, quoted in Inglis, p.218. See also D.C. Gordon, *The Australian Frontier in New Guinea, 1870-1885* (New York, 1951), pp.154-55.

i[104] F.A. Campbell, 'A Year in the New Hebrides', quoted in Steel, p.407.

i[105] Don, p.34.

i[106] Patteson to (cousin) Arthur, 6 August 1871. *Melanesian Mission Archives*. Bishop Patteson papers, Mel/M 2/8.

i[107] Patteson to (cousin) Arthur, 6 August 1871. *Melanesian Mission Archives*. Bishop Patteson papers, Mel/M 2/8.

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i[108] Min. by Knatchbull-Hugessen, 3 June 1871, on O'Connell to Kimberley, 20 March 1871. CO 234/26.

i[109] See, for example, Mullens to Granville, 6 April 1869. CO 234/23.

i[110] Min., 27 April, on Belmore to Kimberley, 14 February 1871, and min., 4 May, on Belmore to Kimberley, 27 February 1871. CO 201/563.

i[111] Inglis, p.208.