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'She imported Tommy Tanna': An Evaluation of Media
Representations of the Deportation of Pacific Peoples
from Australia in New Zealand and British Newspapers
c. 1880-1910

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*In dedication to my grandfather Gilbert 'Peter' Hopewell: Suva, Fiji 18.09.1932- Te
Puke, New Zealand 19-01-2015*

And

In dedication to my two children Peter Boon-nam and Bua Christina

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Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari kē he toa takitini

My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, it was not individual success but the success of a collective

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ABSTRACT

The Pacific Island Labour Trade, most commonly called the “Blackbirding Trade” has been extensively studied both in New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific. However, little research has been conducted on how New Zealand, British and Fijian newspapers discussed the 1901 Pacific Island Labourers Act, which was enacted by the Australian Government to deport those Pacific Islanders that came over during the “Blackbirding” era. This thesis examines what people were told about the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland, their expulsion from sugar plantations and what happened to them during this time using newspaper articles published during the period under review. It argues that newspaper coverage of the deportations was generally positive because it was seen as a 'solution' on how to deal with non-white labour, an issue which was then topical in a number of colonies in the British Empire. It identifies three key themes in newspaper coverage. First, with regard to economic motivations it argues that to the extent there was criticism of the deportations, it related to concerns that it would compromise the economic development of Australia. These concerns, however, were countered by arguments that white labour could now work in sugar plantations and that improved technology had made Pacific Island labour unnecessary. With regard to humanitarian arguments against the deportations, it identifies a range of opinion among Churches. Some opposed the deportations on the grounds of the harm it may cause deportees, but other Church leaders argued deportees could be safely accommodated and that the deportation process may also aid the Christianisation of the Islands. Finally, it argues with regard to race that the deportations were framed as a desirable measure to uphold the position of white workers and that they were framed as one part of a wider 'coloured labour' issue in the British Empire.

INTRODUCTION

Between the mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth century approximately 60,000 Pacific Islanders worked in the Queensland sugarcane industry, with Doug Munro suggesting that there were “some 62,475 contracts of indenture [with] Pacific Islanders”.¹ Most were kidnapped, lured, forced or coerced onto the ships bound for the sugar fields, but it is also suggested some may have come voluntarily to the ships bound for the Queensland sugar fields.² After this mass surge in Pacific labour in the mid nineteenth century, attitudes towards non-white labour became more hostile in Australia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1901 two key pieces of legislation were passed in order to deport any indentured Pacific Islanders back to the Islands, namely the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 and the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901. The Federal Register of Legislation for Australia³ states that the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 was:

An Act to place certain restrictions on immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited Immigrants [Assented to 23rd December 1901].⁴

Finex Ndhlovu assessed the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 as follows:

The determination of the federal government to pursue racist policies was backed by legislation such as the Pacific Islanders Labourers Act 1901 (Cth), which was designed to facilitate the mass deportation of nearly all Pacific Islanders working mostly as indentured labourers in the sugar cane plantations of Australia. The Act specifically prohibited any Pacific Islanders from entering Australia after 31 March 1904, and required all those entering before then to have a license. It further stipulated that any Pacific Islander found in Australia, who had not been employed under an indentured labour agreement at any time in the preceding month, could be deported immediately. Under this Act it became an offence to employ a Pacific Islander in any other way than through an indentured labour agreement.⁵

¹ Doug Munro, “The Labor Trade in Melanesians to Queensland: An Historiographic Essay,” *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 3 (1995): 609.

² Munro, “Indenture, Deportation, Survival: Recent Books on Australian South Seas,” *Journal of Social History* 31, no. 4 (1998): 931-948.

³ Federal Register of Legislation. Immigration Restriction Act 1901.No.17 of 1901. accessed October 29, 2021, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1901A00017>

⁴ Immigration Restriction Act 1901.No.17 of 1901

⁵ Finex Ndhlovu, “A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Language Question in Australia’s Immigration Policies: 1901-1957,” *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association (ACRAWSA), e-journal*, 4, no. 2, (2008): 2. For a contemporary account see, for example, “House of Commons”. *The Times* (London, England). 25 March 1904, 4.

Between 1901 and 1908 a mass deportation was conducted to return any remaining Islanders in Queensland back to the Pacific Islands. It was estimated that by the end of 1901 the Pacific Island population left working in Queensland was around 10,000.⁶ The reason behind the deportations was the so-called 'White Australia Policy'. Tracey Flanagan, Meredith Wilkie and Susanna Luliano wrote in their 2003 publication for the Australian Human Rights Commission "between 1904 and 1908 deportation of Islanders started in an effort to 'racially purify' the new Australian nation and 'protect' White Australian workers".⁷ Contrary to initial expectations, the deportation process proved contentious, with a variety of groups making representations on behalf of the Pacific Islanders and securing some concessions in the process. Although there has been some discussion of this in previous scholarship -including some analysis of how they were depicted in Australian newspapers; there has been little detailed exploration of how these deportations and the changing attitudes towards Pacific Island peoples that they represented were discussed in British, New Zealand and Fijian newspapers.⁸

In assessing the newspaper accounts of the deportation of the Pacific Islanders from Queensland, it is imperative that the role of race is considered. The deportations occurred at a time when the issue of so-called 'Coloured Labour' was topical in many British colonies⁹, a number of whom adopted discriminatory policies towards non-White peoples.¹⁰ The White

⁶ Tracey Flanagan, Meredith Wilkie and Susanna Luliano, *Australian South Sea Islanders: A Century of Race Discrimination under Australian law*, 2003. Published by the Australian Human Rights Commission. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/australian-south-sea-islanders-century-race>

⁷ Flanagan, Wilkie and Luliano, *Australian South Sea Islanders*, 2003.

⁸ Corris and Harris, among others, evaluate Australian newspaper coverage of the deportations - this will be further discussed in chapter one. See, Peter Corris, "White Australia in Action: The Repatriation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland," *Australian Historical Studies*, 15, 58, (1972): 237-250 and Joe Harris, "The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902," *Labour History*, no. 15 (1968): 40-48.

⁹ See, for example, D. Atkinson, *The White Australia Policy, the British Empire, and the World*, Department of History Faculty Publications. Paper 4, Purdue University, 2015; Verity Burgmann, "Capital and Labour," *Labour History*, no. 35. (1978): 20-34; Laura Tabili, "The Construct of Racial Difference in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925," *Journal of British Studies*, 33. no. 1(1994): 54-98; John Garrard, *The English and Immigration 1880-1910*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971; Chamion Caballero "Interraciality in Early Twentieth Century Britain: Challenging Traditional Conceptualisations Through Accounts of 'Ordinariness,'" *Genealogy*, 3, (2019): 21.

¹⁰ See for example, Miles Fairburn, "What best explains the Discrimination against the Chinese in New Zealand, 1860-1950," *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 2/3 (2004): 65-85; Liana Macdonald. "Silencing and Institutional Racism in Settler-Colonial Education" (PhD diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 2018); Andre Siegfried *Democracy in New Zealand*, (London, 1914, reprinted Victoria University Press, Price Milburn and Company, Wellington, 1982), 216-228; Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse, "Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of

Australia Policy was highly influential and reflected the viewpoint of many white-Australians and their view on the Pacific Island labourers. In the New Zealand context, race was also a particularly complicated issue. On the one hand, many New Zealanders in the period under review believed that New Zealand had excellent race relations with Māori because of the Treaty of Waitangi and the granting of parliamentary representation to Māori¹¹ in 1867.¹² However, like Australia, New Zealand governments and many New Zealanders were opposed to non-white immigration on the grounds that it would undermine racial purity and also because it could compromise the status and incomes of workers, something the Liberals had worked very hard to address.¹³ These issues will be further discussed in relation to how these views influenced the news coverage of the deportation of Pacific Islanders.

Views on hierarchies and racial prejudice were openly discussed throughout Britain and indeed the wider British world. As an imperial power Britain had to manage concerns about non-white immigration to its colonies on the one hand and its strategic priorities on the other hand. Britain had signed an alliance with Japan in 1901 and its government was at times embarrassed by the anti-Asian legislation of its colonies, some of whom (Australia, New Zealand and Canada) had been granted the status of being self-governing dominions in 1907. Neville Bennett argued New Zealand and Australia caused Britain difficulty due to their exclusionary legislation against Asians. Between 1900 and 1950, he asserted, 'Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders were as "racist" towards Japan as were Californians'.¹⁴ In the minds of many at that time there was no contradiction between the view that Britain was a progressive nation that had abolished slavery and brought Christianity to the world and the

Filth. New Zealanders and the Oriental "other": 1850-1920." *New Zealand Journal of History* 33, no. 1, (1999): 43-64.

¹¹ Peter Meihana, "The Paradox of Māori Privilege: Historical Constructions of Māori Privilege c. 1769-1840," PhD Diss, Massey University, 2015; 90-109; 140-46.

¹² New Zealand History, "The Treaty in Brief." <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/the-treaty-in-brief> [accessed 14th August 2021].

Mark Derby, "Māori-Pakeha Relations." <https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-pakeha-relations/print>. [accessed 14th August 2021].

¹³ Moloughney and Stenhouse, "Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth", 48-50.

¹⁴ Neville Bennett, "White Discrimination Against Japan: Britain, the Dominions and The United States, 1908-1928," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 3, no.2, (2001): 91.

racial hierarchies and racist thinking evident in their views and treatment of non-white peoples. It was seen as Britain's responsibility to uplift these peoples.¹⁵

The nature of these interconnected relationships between Britain and its Empire has been discussed extensively in recent scholarship. One particularly influential work is Tony Ballantyne's *Webs of Empire*.¹⁶ In this work Ballantyne identifies a variety of means, particularly the circulation of peoples and ideas throughout the empire, through which the centre (Britain) and its periphery (the Empire) interacted with each other, creating a shared sense of identity in so doing. He further argues the media played an important role in these networks, by sharing stories on remote parts of the British Empire to their readers.¹⁷

The wider community resulting from these networks is sometimes referred to as 'British World' in recent scholarship and has been used geographically to describe Britain and its former colonies, and sometimes the United States and indeed communities where there was a significant presence of English-speaking peoples. While acknowledging national differences, the "British World" reflects the contemporary sense in which many people thought of themselves, irrespective of geographical location, as being essentially part of a wider Anglo-Saxon community of shared values and identity.¹⁸ This concept is particularly relevant to New Zealand. James Belich suggests New Zealand consciously presented itself as a 'Better Britain' and the period under review is part of what he refers to as 'recolonisation' when New Zealand linked itself economically and culturally to Britain.¹⁹ Giselle Brynes has also argued that it is important to consider the development from outside of New Zealand in understating the wider forces that have shaped New Zealand history²⁰ Where relevant, these broader notions of Empire are discussed in the analysis of newspaper coverage of the deportations.

¹⁵ See, for example, Greg Fry, *Framing the Islands: Power and Diplomatic Agency in Pacific Regionalism*, (Canberra, ANU Press, 2019), 43–60. S.S.K, Davie and T. McLean 'Accounting, cultural hybridization and colonial globalization: A case of British civilizing mission in Fiji', *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 30, no. 4 (2017): page 1-37.

¹⁶ Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past*, (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012).

¹⁷ Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire*, 39-40.

¹⁸ Erik Nielsen, *Sport and the British World, 1900-1930: Amateuism and National Identity in Australasia and Beyond*, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014), 15-21.

¹⁹ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, (Auckland: Allen Lane, 2001), 46-52.

²⁰ Giselle Brynes, (ed.) *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*. South Melbourne. Oxford University Press, 2009. 1-17.

The nature of New Zealand's imperial connections has come in for renewed attention recently. They are one element of the recently released Aotearoa history curriculum which will teach New Zealand history in Years 1 to 10 and some of the material discussed in this thesis is relevant to understanding both broader processes of colonisation and New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific.²¹

Scope of the Thesis

This research will focus on the accounts of the deportation period published in New Zealand, British and Fijian newspapers between 1900 and 1910. This period has been selected because debates on deportation took place from the 1880s and the legislative process to enact deportation legislation process occurred during the 1900s with the Pacific Islands Labourers Act coming into effect in 1901. After considerable debate it was formally concluded by 1910 but the pushback by the remaining members of Pacific Island communities lasted until around 1920. As noted, the 1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act is widely considered a product of the 'White Australia Policy', with the intent behind it being to ensure that the 'White Australians' could work in jobs previously viewed as unsuitable for men of European ancestry.²²

The principal research questions this thesis investigates are:

- 1/ How was the deportation of Pacific Islanders represented in New Zealand, British and Fijian newspapers?
- 2/ To what extent do newspaper accounts in New Zealand, Britain and Fiji of the deportation of Pacific Islanders provide insight into histories of race relations and imperialism more broadly?

Motivation for the Research

²¹ Ministry of Education, New Zealand, *Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in the New Zealand Curriculum*, 2022, 2.

²² House of Representatives and Attorney Generals Department. "Pacific Islands Labourers Act 1901" 1901. A1559. 1901/16. Published on the National Archives of Australia, 2014. Date of Access 13th August 2021. <https://www.naa.gov.au/learn/learning-resources/learning-resource-themes/society-and-culture/migration-and-multiculturalism/pacific-island-labourers-act-1901>

The motivation for this master's thesis stems from my post-graduate research report entitled "Accounts of Blackbirding in New Zealand Newspapers c. 1860-1910".²³ During the research I found that the practice of 'Blackbirding' - the name by which the Pacific Labour trade was commonly known - was widely criticised in New Zealand newspapers on humanitarian grounds and because it set a precedent for non-white immigration into British colonies. There were, however, some articles in New Zealand newspapers, many of which included articles sourced from Australian newspapers, which argued in favour of the Pacific Labour trade on the basis that white men could not work in the tropical heat of Queensland and that some of the Pacific Islanders in Australia were becoming Christianised.

The research on both the blackbirding trade and the subsequent deportation stems from taking a Pacific History undergraduate course at Victoria University. During the whole semester we learnt about Pacific History, but only one lesson covered the blackbirding trade and its significance, at the same time I was taking an undergraduate course on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and I thought how can the blackbirding trade and its consequence such as the deportation be covered in one lesson out of a whole semester. The blackbirding and deportation are very prevalent in today's understanding of Pacific History and why is it not a main topic of discussion. It was the subject of considerable scholarly attention between the 1970 and 1990s and also in some subsequent works such as Griffiths' thesis in 2006. There has, however, been little attention on New Zealand and British perspectives, on an event which impacted the lives of so many in the Australasia/Pacific region, either directly or indirectly.

My research report examined two principal questions. First, how was 'blackbirding' represented in New Zealand newspapers? Second, to what extent, if at all, did newspaper accounts of blackbirding in New Zealand provide insights into New Zealand history more broadly? In regard to the first question, it argued that, for the most part, New Zealand newspaper articles were highly critical of the trade on moral grounds. The death of Bishop Patteson in 1871, who was killed by residents on the Island of Nukapu, shortly after blackbirders had raided the Island and abducted five men and murdered another, was an

²³ Talei Wirunrat. "Accounts of Blackbirding in New Zealand Newspapers c. 1860-1910," 148.799 Research Report, Massey University, Palmerston North, 2021.

important catalyst for this criticism.²⁴ His death was seen as avoidable and highlighted the concerns many in New Zealand had about blackbirding and the role the plantation owners back in Australia played, as their desire for cheap and imported labour was seen as the root cause of the practice. The New Zealand news agencies also reported for the most part in a critical manner about the trade and of Patteson's²⁵ death.²⁶ The general tenor of reporting on blackbirding in New Zealand newspapers was that many considered it a slave trade and that it did not align with New Zealand's favourable treatment of Māori. Some accounts cited the trade as a reason New Zealand should be wary of federating with Australia. In addition to examining New Zealand perspectives on blackbirding, the research report also examined articles on the topic in New Zealand newspapers that were sourced from Britain and Australia. Most of the articles that came from Britain were critical of the practice. Arguably, British criticism reflected its national pride in the abolition of slavery and many sympathetic to abolitionists regarded the trade in Australia as a form of slavery.²⁷ On the other hand, articles sourced from Australian newspapers, especially Queensland newspapers, tended to be more positive about the trade. A number claimed that the Islanders came of their own free will, were treated well and were working in positive conditions, however, some newspaper reports from Victoria and New South Wales were critical of Queensland's treatment of Pacific labourers.²⁸ During this time New Zealand newspapers printed some accounts from New Zealanders in Australia who had witnessed the trade. These accounts were a mixture of opinions and were influenced by what the writers had been shown during their time in Queensland. The findings of the research report aligned with Damon Salesa's argument that New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific has been broader than generally

²⁴ See: Wirunrat, "Accounts of Blackbirding in New Zealand Newspapers c. 1860-1910", 39-41.

David Hilliard, 'Patterson, John Coleridge', <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p10/patteson-john-coleridge>

²⁵ See for examples: "Wednesday, November 1, 1871," *The Daily Southern Cross*. Wednesday, November 1, 1871, 4; "Arrival of the Missionary Schooner 'Southern Cross': Murder of Bishop Patteson, The Rev.J. Atkin and Three Natives," *Daily Southern Cross*, 1 November 1871; "Murder of Bishop Patteson," *Otago Witness*. 4 November 1871, 13.

²⁶ See for example, S.F. Letts, "New Zealand and the Labour Traffic, 1868-1870" (MA diss., University of Otago, 1966); P. Marshall, "New Zealand's Trade with the Pacific Islands, 1870-1900" (MA diss., University of Otago 1960); A.D. McIntosh, "New Zealand Interest and Participation in the Labour Traffic prior to Bishop Patteson's Death, 21 September 1871" (MA Diss., University of Otago, 1961).

²⁷ Wirunrat, "Accounts of Blackbirding in New Zealand Newspapers c. 1860-1910", p.g. 51-54.

See also: O. W. Parnaby. *Britain and the Labour Trade in the Southwest Pacific*, (Durham: Duke University Press), 1964), 155-79.

²⁸ See for example: "Deporting Kanakas: Possibility of Trouble A Grave Situation," *The Argus (Melbourne, Victoria)*, 14 April 1906, 11; "Question of the Pacific," *The Sydney Morning Herald*. 28 April 1904, 6.

recognised.²⁹ “Blackbirding” played an important role in shaping New Zealanders view on the Pacific Islands, criticism of the trade contrasting with the often-critical depictions of Pacific peoples. Arguably it encouraged New Zealand and New Zealanders to see that they had a role to play in the South Pacific, something which became a practical reality in 1901 when the Cook Islands and Niue became colonies of New Zealand. The investigation of New Zealand’s reporting of the labour trade also showed that New Zealanders were more engaged with blackbirding and the Pacific Islands more broadly than many previous accounts have recognised. The deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia was a longer-term consequence of “Blackbirding” and I was interested to see how this particular topic was discussed in contemporary media.

My second motivation, which was also my motivation behind the research report, is from wanting to reconnect with my Pacific Island (Fijian) heritage, through which I am connected through my mother and her father (my grandfather). For myself I do not look like an Islander nor do I speak Fijian, however my name is Fijian with Talei meaning precious. This has always meant that in some ways I identify as a Pacific Islander descendant. Through Pacific history and in particular researching the histories on Pacific Island indentured labourers and their deportation I have been able to connect more to the Islands, through examining these pivotal moments in Pacific history. My great great grandfather who originally came from Scotland, went with JC Carpenters as an apprentice to Fiji. He and my great great grandmother had a copra plantation named Matana on the island of Koru in the Koru sea. Information given to me by my great uncle Bill was that the head Fijian who helped run the plantation came from Ra which is on the North Coast of Viti Levu, while the other workers were from the Island of Koro. The Hopewell/Carpenters Matana plantation employed indentured Indians who arrived on the SS Ganges in early 1913 up until 1916, the term of the indenture was 5 years, but many stayed on for years after. The Matana plantation ran from 1906 until 1929. One personal aim of this masters research was to understand something of the wider historical context within which plantations like this were established in both Australia and the Pacific Islands and to also learn something of the experiences of those who worked on them. I remember growing up hearing stories from my grandfather about the plantation. This has

²⁹ Damon Salesa, “New Zealand’s Pacific,” In *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press), 2009, 149-72.

always stayed in my mind and in many ways has fuelled my path in seeking out information on the ways in which people were taken from Pacific Islands to work in Queensland plantations, only to be subsequently deported from Australia, with some being relocated to Fiji in the process.

Another important motivation, is that I live in Te Puke which is an agricultural community in the Bay of Plenty, where Pacific Island labourers, typically on short-term visas, are employed in the kiwifruit packhouse and on the kiwifruit orchards.³⁰ I know through my own experience that they live in small housing with overcrowding, and that at the supermarket I have seen them purchase clearance food items, reflecting the low wages they receive. Limitations of space prevent a detailed comparison of the experiences of these Pacific Islanders with those who worked in Queensland, but this research has given some insight into the historical background into their employment in this sector.

Primary and Secondary Sources

The focus of this thesis is on what people were told about the deportation of Pacific Island Labourers so newspapers are the main primary source. This is because newspapers played an important part in informing citizens of what was happening locally and internationally.³¹ The main newspapers for this research were British and New Zealand newspapers sourced from digital archives and microfilmed copies of the Fijian newspaper the *Suva Times*. Some reference is made to Australian media perspectives on the deportations, but as these have been discussed at some length in existing scholarship such as Philip Griffiths dissertation³² and the works of Joe Harris³³ and Peter Corris, they are not the principal focus of this thesis.³⁴

³⁰ See: Immigration New Zealand, 'Employing Migrants Already in New Zealand', <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/covid-19-information-for-employers/migrant-employer-info#:~:text=Recognised%20Seasonal%20Employer%20scheme&text=To%20qualify%2C%20workers%20must%20apply,of%2030%20hours%20an%20week>

³¹ Ian Grant, *Lasting Impressions: The Story of New Zealand Newspapers, 1840-1920* (Masterton: Fraser Books, 2018).

³² Philip Griffiths, "The Making of White Australia: Ruling Class Agendas, 1876-1888" (PhD Diss, Australian National University, 2006).

³³ Harris, "The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902", *Labour History*, no. 15 (1968): 40-48.

³⁴ Corris, "White Australia in Action: The repatriation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland", *Australian Historical Studies*, 15, no. 58, (1972): 237-250.

Newspapers were the first source by which most people received news during the nineteenth century and would have been the means by which most of the wider public learned about the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland.³⁵ In his doctoral thesis on New Zealand perceptions of France between 1918 and 1935 Alistair Watts further highlighted the importance of newspapers observing “newspapers reported matters of general interest and then became part of local discussion on the issues of the day”.³⁶ The newspaper industry underwent a major transformation during the nineteenth century during which time a majority of the Anglo-Saxon population learned to read and write.³⁷

Newspapers were an essential part of how New Zealanders received news about what was happening outside of New Zealand as well as domestic news. Ian Grant’s 2018 book *Lasting Impressions: The Story of New Zealand Newspapers, 1840-1920*, cites Ivan Asquith’s observation that, “in the early nineteenth century there was a notable growth in the spirit of political independence among newspapers proprietors, and they developed the classical liberal roles of the press; the impartial dissemination of news and the expression of public opinion”.³⁸ Grant then asserted that there was a “widespread belief among publishers, editors and journalist that newspapers had a role beyond the commercial, occupying a pivotal place in the democratic system, safeguarding freedom and serving the public good”.³⁹

The telegraph was a vital creation in connecting New Zealand immediately with news from the wider world, particularly British newspapers which were extensively cited in local media. Palenski states that “the advent of the telegraph ... transformed coverage from localised into national”.⁴⁰ Palenski is referring to the way news coverage became more uniform with the introduction of the telegraph and how it had a significant impact in generating shared identities at national and provincial levels within New Zealand. When the United Press

³⁵ Ron Palenski, *The Making of New Zealanders* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012), 47-88.

³⁶ Watts, “Options and Opportunities for New Zealand and France 1918-1936: Les Liaisons dangereuses?” (PhD diss., Massey University, 2019), 14.

³⁷ Amy J Lloyd, “Education, Literacy and the Reading Public”, *British Library Newspapers*. Detroit: Gale, 2007. W.B. Stephens, “Literacy in England, Scotland and Wales, 1500-1900”, *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no.4 (1990): 545-71.

³⁸ Ivan Asquith, “Advertising and the Press in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries”, *Historical Journal* 18, no. 4, (1975), 703, cited in Grant, *Lasting Impressions*, x.

³⁹ Grant, *Lasting Impressions*, xi.

⁴⁰ Palenski, *The Making of New Zealanders*, 58.

Association (later the New Zealand Press Association) was formed in 1879 it allowed for a new way in which news was delivered to readers throughout New Zealand. The New Zealand Press Association (NZPA) became the biggest news agency in New Zealand, they supplied the news to main newspapers throughout New Zealand. Therefore, it is important to note that when searching Papers Past, multiple reports of the same event can be found throughout different newspapers with either similar or identical wordings, as most used NZPA as their source of news.⁴¹

The changing role of newspapers in New Zealand reflected developments in Britain. From 1880 British newspapers experienced a shift, which Donald Matheson described as a “historical moment”.⁴² Matheson argues that as literacy rates increased many newspapers changed to a more simplified style of writing. He notes the significant role played by Alfred Harmsworth who started and launched the *Daily Mail*.⁴³ Matheson states that Harmsworth believed the reason for the *Daily Mail's* success was because ‘he told his staff to write plain, easy, digested text for the papers lower-middle class audience.’⁴⁴ Paul Harris in his 2013 research on the *Daily Mail* highlighted some key figures showing its success:

The initial circulation estimate was 100,000. By the time the last news-vendor had sold his final copy, the *Daily Mail* was a sell-out at 397,215. The public had never seen anything like it. Not least among its innovations was that it began its first issue with a women’s page, arousing derision from other journals which regarded female readers as beneath consideration.⁴⁵

Matheson argued that the success of the *Daily Mail* had been mainly due to its compactness and brevity.⁴⁶ He went on to highlight three major changes to newspapers:

⁴¹ Mark Derby, “Newspapers”, *Te Ara- The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*.

<http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/newspapers>

⁴² Donald Matheson, “The Birth of News discourse: Change in News Language in British Newspapers, 1880-1930,” *Media, Culture and Society*, 22, no. 5. (2000): 557-73, quote from page 558.

⁴³ Alfred Harmsworth was considered an early developer of journalism. He developed several newspapers over his time most notably the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. In 1918 he became the Viscount Northcliffe. Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, Viscount Northcliffe,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. August 2022, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-Charles-William-Harmsworth-Viscount-Northcliffe-of-Saint-Peter> Better to cite Dictionary of National Biography

⁴⁴ Created in 1896 by Alfred Harmsworth and his brother Harold and it was considered right-wing due to its political sympathy with the Conservative Party. “Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, Viscount Northcliffe” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. August 2022

⁴⁵ Paul Harris, “The Story of the *Daily Mail*”, *Daily Mail Historical Archive 1896- 2004*. Cengage, Learning, 2013. Retrieved from: gale.com/intl/essays/paul-harris-story-daily-mail

⁴⁶ Matheson, “The Birth of News discourse”, 558.

First, the wide range of styles in the Victorian newspapers all became subsumed under a single news style as a distinct and particular discourse of the news took shape. Second, the epistemological status of the news text changed from that of a collection of raw information to that of a form of knowledge in itself, not dependent on other discourses to be able to make statements about the world. Third, the news developed an independent social status, which did not need to have regard for the social conventions of public discourse.⁴⁷

This highlights how the British newspapers changed and the important factors in creating that change and influencing the new style of writing. Matheson also noted the evolving nature of journalism asserting: “the journalists role changed from a gatherer and recorder of news to a storyteller”.⁴⁸ Matheson concluded his article by stating “a particular news style was emerging that was able to contain and communicate meaning in its own right.”⁴⁹

Complementing Matheson’s assessment of the new journalism, Ed King argued they also reflected social change in regards to gender and political concerns.⁵⁰ King noted of W.T. Stead, an editor *The Pall Mall Gazette*, that “he employed women journalists, even paying them salaries equal to that of men”.⁵¹ King also cited Mathew Arnold who was a poet and writer in England, who described new journalism as “Government by Journalism”.⁵² Here King stated:

In Arnold's view, this amounted to the establishment of a process which would communicate the will of the people. Newspapers would create campaigns to agitate for change, to force the government to pay attention and to make legislation to do what the people wanted (or needed).⁵³

King also reflected on the change in the newspapers, observing:

The content of newspapers also reflected change; there were women's pages, gossip columns, sports coverage, parliamentary sketches, political commentary, extensive use of illustrations, sensational exposés and 'occasional notes' columns. Other innovations included: brief leaders, descriptive parliamentary sketches, the 'London Letter', the American-style interview and human-interest story, a stress on news rather than

⁴⁷ Matheson, “The Birth of News discourse,” 559.

⁴⁸ Matheson, “The Birth of News discourse,” 570.

⁴⁹ Matheson, “The Birth of News discourse,” 570.

⁵⁰ Ed King, “British Newspapers 1860-1900.” *British Library Newspapers*. Detroit: Gale, 2007. Retrieved from: <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/ed-king-british-newspapers-1860-1900> No Page Number (N.P.N).

⁵¹ King, “British Newspapers 1860-1900.” N.P.N.

⁵² King, “British Newspapers 1860-1900.” N.P.N.

⁵³ King, “British Newspapers 1860-1900.” N.P.N.

interpretative commentaries, more but concise foreign news reports and edited versions of political speeches (rather than verbatim reports). In the 1880s and 1890s, there was more emphasis on sport, a reflection of the increased leisure of all classes. Long passages of parliamentary debate gave way to more space devoted to sensational revelations.⁵⁴

Both King and Matheson argue British newspapers went through an evolution from 1880. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, some of these wider trends are evident in the discussion of the deportation of Pacific Islanders. Interestingly, the deportations only received minimal coverage in *The Times* (as indicated in table one) which was a widely considered a newspaper of record in Britain, although they were more extensively discussed in other mainstream papers such as the *Globe* and a number of provincial newspapers such as the *Teignmouth Post and Gazette*.⁵⁵

Newspaper articles are the main primary source used in this thesis, as well as government publications and records. The digital newspaper source Papers past (New Zealand) is a vital search engine for news articles. The British Newspaper Archives is another digital newspapers repository used in this research. Digital repositories of newspapers are of significant benefit to researchers because they allow relevant articles to be quickly located via their search functions but, as a number of scholars have noted, also need to be used with some care. Alistair Watts, who made extensive use of Papers Past in his Masters and Doctoral theses on New Zealand perceptions of France, argued “newspapers are the foundation source used to identify what was in the public mind at the time”.⁵⁶ In so doing he endorsed the argument of André Siegfried, who visited New Zealand in 1904 and observed: “The press of a country generally reveals accurately enough the public mind for, after all, it is representative and a people has only these newspapers which it needs”.⁵⁷ Siegfried also noted in *Democracy in New Zealand* that “as in all new countries, the newspaper has a very high place in New Zealand. Everybody reads it, and there are few people ignorant or old-

⁵⁴ King, "British Newspapers 1860-1900". N.P.N.

⁵⁵ See also: Martin Conboy, *Journalism: A Critical History* (London: Sage, 2008), 112-119
A search of the British National Newspaper Archives between 1900-1910 for the terms “Kanaka Deportation” and Pacific Island Labourers Act in the *Globe* yielded 14 and 1,571 results respectively. The equivalent figures for *The Times* were six and five results.

⁵⁶ Watts, “Options and Opportunities for New Zealand and France 1918-1936,” 14.

⁵⁷ Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, cited in Watts, “Options and Opportunities for New Zealand and France 1918-1936,” 14.

fashioned enough not to be interested in news”.⁵⁸ This signifies the important role newspapers played in New Zealand and how accessible they were to the general public.⁵⁹ In terms of attitudes towards race within newspapers, Siegfried contrasted the way the American press described non-whites during the period under review with New Zealand reporting asserting “that yellow press which makes so much noise with its extraordinary telegrams, its various improbable or scandalous reports, the vulgarity of its tone, has not crossed the Pacific”.⁶⁰ This reflects a view that the openly racist nature in American newspapers, had not yet been seen in New Zealand newspapers. Siegfried went on to discuss New Zealander’s perceptions of immigration in the chapter entitled “The Government and The Yellow Peril”.⁶¹ There he wrote “Chinese immigration raises absolute disgust and public opinion had demanded and obtain the most Draconian measure against it”.⁶² Scholars who have examined New Zealand public opinions on Chinese immigration argue that the concerns around Chinese immigration need to be considered in the broader context of sustained campaigning by labour organisations and labour government to improve conditions for workers in the last decade of the nineteenth century.⁶³ Another important observation by Siegfried was how influential British newspapers were within New Zealand and to New Zealanders. “The principles and attitudes of the English press” he wrote “are also those which rule in the New Zealand papers”.⁶⁴

Papers past results are dependent on the keywords used. Accordingly, it is important to use a number of variations.⁶⁵ When examining race relations in New Zealand, for example, articles on “the Asiatic question” occur more frequently than those on Pacific Islanders, reflecting Siegfried’s

⁵⁸ Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, 323.

⁵⁹ Speaking on New Zealand, Siegfried writes “in their customs, their talk, their papers, this influence is striking. Every morning the Colony knows what London did the day before; each week, each month, brings detailed accounts of what the people in the mother-country did and said. Political tendencies, new economic ideas, movement in religious thought are thus rapidly echoed at the Antipodes. A strange example of the intellectual domination by telegraph, right across the world! But natural enough domination, when we remember that the New Zealanders are English”. Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, 330.

⁶⁰ Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, 326.

⁶¹ Siegfried *Democracy in New Zealand*, 216-228.

⁶² Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, 216.

⁶³ Moloughney and Stenhouse, “Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth”,

⁶⁴ Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, 325.

⁶⁵ Watts, “Options and Opportunities for New Zealand and France 1918-1936”, 14.

view New Zealanders “looked on in disfavour” on Asian immigration whereas at that time very few Pacific Islanders lived in New Zealand.⁶⁶ One hindrance that Watts noted is:

Before digital archives became readily available newspaper searches by resource constrained historians were limited by their ability to refine their searches. For this reason, searches of hardcopy newspapers tended to find what was sought rather than using broader scans with filters to see what could be found. Referenced newspaper clippings were often used to illustrate a point, but the limitation of a priori selection meant they were not necessarily representative.⁶⁷

Ashley Marshall and Robert, D. Hume in “The Joys, Possibilities, and perils of the British Library’s Digital Burney Newspaper Collection”⁶⁸ also examined the potential drawback of online newspaper databases stating.

Newspapers have long been a key resource for historians but they have also been problematic. Whether we use the original hard copies, bound in dusty volumes, or fully searchable digested versions, newspapers remain a ‘dodgy source’. There are questions of authorship, ownership, accuracy and silence. What was covered and how, need to be examined with caution: likewise issues of audience, reception and impact. With the rise of the digital repository, new questions, considerations and problems emerge.⁶⁹

This thesis, unlike Watts, did not take a random sample of newspaper coverage. Rather, it is primarily a qualitative thesis, which used multiple search terms to determine general patterns in newspaper coverage which are represented below in tables. Search results were then assessed to determine dominant trends in newspaper coverage and representative examples of these articles are discussed in the following chapters. Below is a table indicating search results for the period 1900-10.⁷⁰

SEARCH ENGINE	SEARCH TERMS	1900-1910
British Newspaper Archives	1901 Pacific Island Labourers Act Queensland	46,304
British Newspaper Archives	Queensland Labourers Act 1901	104,638
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Islands Labourers Bill 1900	18,616
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Island Labourers Bill Queensland	10,126
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Island Labourers Bill Queensland 1900	24,968
Papers past	1901 Pacific Island Labourers Act Queensland	32
Papers past	Queensland Labourers Act 1901	167
Papers past	Pacific Islands Labourers Bill 1900	48

⁶⁶ Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, 216.

⁶⁷ Watts, “Options and Opportunities for New Zealand and France 1918-1936”, 15.

⁶⁸ Ashley Marshall and Robert, D. Hume, “The Joys, Possibilities, and perils of the British Library’s Digital Burney Newspaper Collection,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America (PBSA)* 104, no. 1 (March 2010).

⁶⁹ Marshall and Hume, “The Joys, Possibilities, and perils of the British Library’s Digital Burney Newspaper Collection,” 34.

⁷⁰ See also Appendix Two for a table on these search terms for the period 1904-1910.

Papers past	Pacific Island Labourers Bill Queensland	140
Papers past	Pacific Island Labourers Bill Queensland 1900	22
SEARCH ENGINE	SEARCH TERMS	1900-1910
Papers past	Kanaka Deportation	479
Papers past	Pacific Island Deportation	264
Papers past	Deportation	16,244
Papers past	Pacific Islands Labourers Act	828
Papers past	Coloured Labour	14,514
Papers past	Pacific Islands Labourers Petition	182
Papers past	War	2,653,049
Papers past	Queensland Deportation	1,005
Papers past	Pacific Islanders Labourers Act	102
Papers past	1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act	69
Papers past	Chinese Immigration	6472
Papers past	'Asiatic Question'	6429
British Newspaper Archives	Kanaka Deportation	323
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Island Deportation	144,946
British Newspaper Archives	Deportation	213,336
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Islands Labourers Act	137,834
British Newspaper Archives	Coloured Labour	373,510
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Islands Labourers Petition	39,527
British Newspaper Archives	War	7,874,293
British Newspaper Archives	Queensland Deportation	1
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Islanders Labourers Act	1,418,067
British Newspaper Archives	1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act	24,558
British Newspaper Archives	Chinese Immigration	18,165
British Newspaper Archives	'Asiatic Question'	36,385
TROVE	Kanaka Deportation	9,027
TROVE	Pacific Island Deportation	3,853
TROVE	Deportation	74,189
TROVE	Pacific Islands Labourers Act	9,081
TROVE	Coloured Labour	107,090
TROVE	Pacific Islands Labourers Petition	1,487
TROVE	War	2,107,436
TROVE	Queensland Deportation	17,410
TROVE	Pacific Islanders Labourers Act	9,083
TROVE	1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act	2,335
TROVE	Chinese Immigration	27,818
TROVE	'Asiatic Question'	24,804
Times Digital Archives ⁷¹	Kanaka Deportation	6
Times Digital Archives	Pacific Island Deportation	1

⁷¹ The Times Digital archives was also used, searching the same terms during the period in review.

Times Digital Archives	Deportation	1,785
Times Digital Archives	Pacific Islands Labourers Act	5
Times Digital Archives	Coloured Labour	229
Times Digital Archives	Pacific Islands Labourers Petition	1
Times Digital Archives	War	62,197
Times Digital Archives	Queensland Deportation	1
Times Digital Archives	Pacific Islanders Labourers Act	0
Times Digital Archives	1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act	0
Times Digital Archives	Chinese Immigration	80
Times Digital Archives	'Asiatic Question'	146

The above tables give an indication of the extent of newspaper discussion of the deportation of Pacific Islanders and how it compares to other topics. By using year, and search terms to distinguish how many articles appeared for that search, allowed to show what was the main topics within newspapers during each period. Relatively speaking, the deportation of Pacific Islanders received less discussion than related topics such as Chinese immigration and 'Coloured Labour'. In terms of overall coverage in both British and New Zealand newspapers, War was a dominant theme, with 2,653,049 articles connecting to war in Papers past, 7,874,293 in the British Newspaper Archives and 2,107,436 in Trove. This reflects the extent to which international conflict dominated the period under review, with Britain being involved in the Anglo-Boer War between 1899 and 1902 and other prominent conflicts including the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. Discussion of the deportation in newspapers peaked between 1904 and 1906⁷² and then, relatively speaking, tailed off. This is the general trend between British Newspaper Archives, TROVE and Papers past. After 1906, the deportation was less mentioned, but "coloured labour" continued to be a general topic of discussion that stays consistent throughout 1904-1910.

These tables do not include material from the *Suva Times*, as these articles were sourced from microfilm from the Massey University Library, instead of an internet search engine. The numbers in the above tables reflect the number of articles resulting from the search terminology. Not all of these articles, however, related to the topic, as some of the results responded to one or several of the words used.

⁷² See Appendix Two. "[1904-1910 SEARCH ENGINES: British Newspaper Archives, Papers past and TROVE- Target Search](#)"

Structure of Thesis

This thesis comprises four main chapters. Chapter one provides an historical overview into the background and scholarship of the Pacific Islanders being deported and the wider context in which it took place. The following chapters discuss three key themes which emerged when examining newspaper coverage of the deportations. Chapter Two discusses how the perceived economic and political costs and benefits of the 1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act were represented to readers. Chapter Three focuses on religious and humanitarian perspectives of the deportations. Chapter Four evaluates discussions of race and labour in newspaper accounts, including analysis of how accounts of the deportations of Pacific Islanders were reported within the wider context of debates over coloured labour. The conclusion summarises the overall findings of the research.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

This chapter commences with a brief overview of the Pacific labour trade, often known as “Blackbirding”, prior to the 1901 Pacific Islands Labourer Act. It then gives an overview of the deportation period and its accompanying controversies. The ideological underpinning for this legislation, the so-called “White Australia Policy” is also discussed. It then proceeds to evaluate various scholarly perspectives in relation to deportation. Different scholars have characterised the process in different ways, all of which contribute to how the deportation of Pacific Islanders has been viewed. The chapter will also evaluate the historical context in which deportation occurred. An important feature of this was contemporary attitudes towards race and immigration policies both in Australia and New Zealand between 1880 and 1920 which be outlined so as to illustrate the wider context in which newspaper accounts of the deportation period were published.

Definition and Overview of Blackbirding

To understand the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia, it is important to understand how they got there in the first place. This means understanding the “Blackbirding” trade, which was the term used to define the process which Islanders were recruited or taken and then transported to Australia to work on agricultural plantations such as the sugar cane plantations and pineapple plantations. Clive Moore states that:

The majority were from eighty islands in Melanesia, mainly those included in the New Hebrides (present day Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands, but also from Loyalty Islands off New Caledonia and the eastern archipelagos of Papua New Guinea.⁷³

This trade has been variously characterised as indentured labour or slavery depending on the perspective of the author. Doug Munro states that:

The essential institutional features of the Pacific labour trade were determined by it post-dating the abolition of slavery in Britain coupled with Britain being the dominating influence in the Pacific at the time. When set up

⁷³ Clive Moore. “The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia”, in Judith M. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Endangered Peoples of Oceania: Struggles to Survive and Thrive*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 167-81, 1.

in the 1860s this labour trade hinged on the legal formula of indenture, a system of unfree labour whereby individuals entered into contracts that bound them to an employer for a stipulated period of time in return for wages and other specified conditions of labour. Indentured service usually derived its legal authority from the various Masters and Servants Acts, such as those of Queensland and Hawaii, which ostensibly set out mutual rights and obligations but, in reality, provided criminal punishment for breaches of contract by workers - hence the indenture system sometimes being called the penal contract system.⁷⁴

Other scholars, however, have equated 'blackbirding' with slavery. Farzana Gounder's *Narrative and Identity Construction in the Pacific Islands* stated that the word "blackbirding" is from the African slave trade, meaning to steal black labour.⁷⁵ Teresa Fatnowna, writing about the experiences of those taken to Queensland as part of the trade, argued that in a Pacific context the term applied to:⁷⁶

A person especially a South Sea Islander, who was kidnapped and sold as a slave especially in Australia. Someone who is taken against their own freewill from their homeland and forced to work without choice, or without the person's permission.⁷⁷

The Pacific Islanders taken to Australia were often referred to by the generic name "Kanakas" in Australian, New Zealand, British and Fijian newspapers.⁷⁸ In practice, however, as Moore noted, they came from all over the Pacific. The government of Queensland was certainly

⁷⁴ Doug Munro, "The Pacific Islands Labour Trade: Approaches, Methodologies, Debates," *Slavery and Abolition* 14, no. 2, (1993): 89.

⁷⁵ Farzana Gounder, *Narrative and Identity Construction in the Pacific Islands* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), 156.

⁷⁶ Teresa Fatnowna, *Faith of our Fathers: A Journey of Three Fatnowna, 1866-1999* (Solomon Islands, Malaita: Info Publishing, 2002).

⁷⁷ Fatnowna, *Faith of our Fathers*, v.

⁷⁸ Examples of use of the term "Kanakas" in New Zealand Newspapers:

"Fight with Kanakas," *Gisborne Times*, 21 January, 1901, 3.

"Execution of Two Kanakas," *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 21 May, 1895, 3.

"Murdered by Kanakas," *Hawkes Bay Herald*, 28 December, 1900, 3.

Examples of use of the term "Kanakas" in Australian Newspapers:

"Drunken Kanakas," *Telegraph* (Brisbane) 29 May 1897, 2.

"Troublesome Kanakas," *Armidale Chronicle*, 29 July 1899, 5.

"Vanishing Kanakas," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1909, 12.

Examples of use of the term "Kanakas" in British Newspapers:

"Kanakas in Queensland," *Preston Herald*, 29 October 1904, 10.

"The Queensland Kanaka," *Globe*, 19 July 1905, 9.

Examples of use of the term "Kanakas" in Fijian Newspapers:

"The Queensland Kanaka," *Suva Times* 25 July 1906, (N.P.N)

"Repatriation of Kanakas," *Suva Times* 4 August 1906, p.g. 3 No 4084

aware of the conditions under which Pacific Island labourers were employed. In 1868 it introduced the Polynesian Labourers Act in order to try and limit the exploitation of Islanders on both the transport ships and in the fields by providing for government oversight of the trade but in practice this act had a limited impact.⁷⁹

The legacy of blackbirding is evident in present day debates on race relations and Australia's colonial past.⁸⁰ Emelda Davis, who is the president and co-founder of the Australian South Sea Islanders-Port Jackson, stated that her grandfather was forcibly kidnapped aged 12 from Vanuatu's Island Tanna. She recalls "he was put on a boat with no say- couldn't say goodbye to his family- and sent to Australia to work on the Queensland sugar farms".⁸¹ As will be discussed later, her ancestral homeland would feature in public debate on the deportations, the term "Tommy Tanna" being a pejorative name generally applied to Pacific Island labourers.

The decision to deport Pacific Islanders was, historians argue, motivated by a combination of economic and ideological factors, particularly views on race. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there were changes in the racial thinking in regards to how whites perceived themselves, rather than an attitude shift towards different ethnicities, including Pacific Islanders. The white population of Australia still viewed themselves as the superior race, however the shift that occurred was that this white population now believed they could cultivate sugar and work in hot climates whereas some had previously argued otherwise.⁸² To some degree, the changing attitudes towards non-white Labour were influenced by economic concerns. In 1890 the Australian nation faced a serious financial crash. "In the early 1890s," Merrett noted "financial crises occurred in many countries, most of which were

⁷⁹ Deryck Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters: A Portrait of the Pacific Islands Labour trade", *Journal of Pacific History* 2, no. 1 (1967): 5-6.

⁸⁰ See : Ben Doherty. "Full Truth: Decedents of Australia's 'Blackbirded' Islanders want Pioneer Status Amended," *Guardian*, 24 August 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/australia_news/2017/aug/24/full-truth-needs-to-be-told-decedents-of-blackbirded-south-sea-islanders-want-memorials-amended.

⁸¹ Emelda Davis quoted in W. Higginbotham, "Blackbirding: Australia's history of luring, tricking and kidnapping Pacific Islanders," *ABC News*, 17 September, 2017. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-17/blackbirding-australias-history-of-kidnapping-pacific-islanders/8860754>

⁸² Review by Gregory D.B. Smithers of Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History: Volume One. Van Diemen's Land 1803-47*, in the *Journal of Social History* 37, no 2 (2003): 493-505; K. Saunders, *Workers in Bondage: The Origins and Base of Unfree Labour in Queensland 1824-1916*. (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1982). G. C. Bolton *A Thousand Miles Away: A history of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972).

connected to international capital flows. Australia, a major importer of capital, had difficulty borrowing after the Baring crisis of 1890".⁸³ Because of this many white families became financially strapped, and some came to resent Pacific Islanders working in jobs that they (white Australians) believed they could do better.⁸⁴ It was on this basis that the 1901 Pacific Islander Labourers Act was formulated, the government of the day appealed to struggling middle-class families who believed they could now do jobs previously seen as beneath them.

The application of the term 'deportation' to this period is problematic in some respects. On the one hand it was commonly used at the time and it reflects the legal process then used. On the other hand, deportation is typically applied to the forcible repatriation of non-citizens who have broken the laws of another country while residing in that country. This did not apply to the majority of Pacific Islanders who were forced to leave Australia. Many of the Pacific peoples in Queensland had either been brought to Australia to work either by the blackbirding trade or via contracts recognised by the government of Queensland. Moreover, many of them had not broken any laws, rather the deportations were driven by political motives.

Scholarly Perspectives on Deportation

Doug Munro⁸⁵ Peter Corris⁸⁶ Patricia Mercer⁸⁷ and Carol Gistitin⁸⁸ are prominent among scholars who have investigated the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland, who had been brought voluntarily or involuntarily to work on the sugarcane plantations. Munro

⁸³ David Tolmie Merrett, "The Australia Bank Crashes of the 1890s Revisited," *Business History Review* 87, no. 3 (Autumn 2013), 406.

⁸⁴ Merrett, "The Australia Bank Crashes of the 1890s Revisited," 406.

Paul Hamer, "Unsophisticated and unsuited". National Library of New Zealand. 2015. Retrieved from: natlib.govt.nz/blog/post/unsophisticated-and-unsuited

⁸⁵ Doug Munro is a New Zealand historian who has written extensively on Pacific history and is currently an Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland. The Australia National University Press website states Munro "was a historian of the Pacific Islands with specialisms in trade and traders, indentured labour, and the role of Island pastors" Australia National University, "Doug Munro", N.D. Retrieved from: <https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/authors-editors/doug-munro>

⁸⁶ Peter Corris, "White Australia in Action: The repatriation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland," *Australian Historical Studies*, 15, no. 58, (1972): 237-250.

⁸⁷ Patricia Mercer. "White Australia Defined: Pacific Islander Settlement in North Queensland". Studies in North Queensland History No.21 (Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University, 1995). 97. Cited in Munro "Indenture, Deportation, Survival", 935

⁸⁸ Carol Gistitin. *Quite a Colony: South Sea Islanders in Central Queensland, 1867-1993* (Fortitude Valley, QLD: AEbis Publishing, 1995).

argued concerns from organised labour underpinned the deportations, stating “the new century had barely commenced before they fell afoul of the White Australia Policy and the ‘White men only need apply’ practices of trade unions”, highlighting how the deportation period was well and truly on its way before the turn of the twentieth century.⁸⁹ The racial thinking had changed during this time from the belief that white men could not work in the tropics to the belief that these jobs (sugar cultivation/plantation work) should be done by the white worker. A lot of these changes reflected the economic impact caused by a sharp fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1890, “the depression, which saw real GDP fall 17 percent over 1892 and 1893, and the accompanying financial crisis, which reached peak in 1893, were the most severe in Australian history”.⁹⁰

In 1901 the Pacific Island Immigration Act was introduced by the Parliament of Australia, designed to enact mass deportation of the Pacific Islanders in Australia. The legislation was supported by all major political parties.⁹¹ Al Grassby and Silvia Ordonez stated “the idea of racial superiority was all pervasive at the time. The only voices questioning this were idealists and big employers who were interested in importing cheap labour”.⁹² The Act meant that there was to be no recruiting after 1904, that Pacific Islanders were prohibited from entering Australia after March 31 1904, and all Pacific Islanders resident in Australia were to be deported by 1906; with the exception of those born in Australia or who had continuously resided there since 1879.⁹³ Corris suggested that 9324 Pacific Islanders were in Queensland by 1901, with about 3000 of that number having come in the previous three years.⁹⁴ During this time the Government proposed subsidies (sometimes referred to as bounties) to be paid to those plantation owners who were willing to lose their Pacific Island workers and hire white labourers. However, there were also many opposing the Act, and in 1902 there was a

⁸⁹ Munro, “Indenture, Deportation, Survival”, 931,

⁹⁰ Bryan Fitz-Gibbon and Marianne Gizycki. “A History of Last of Last-Resort Lending and Other Support for Troubled Financial Institutions in Australia”. Research Discussion Paper 2001. Reserve Bank of Australia.

⁹¹ Al Grassby and Silvia Ordonez, *The Man Time Forgot: The life and times of John Christian Watson, Australia’s First Labor Prime Minister*, (Pluto Press: Australia 1999), 62-67, 82-83.

⁹² Grassby and Ordonez, *The Man Time Forgot*, 64.

⁹³ National Archives of Australia. “Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901”. Retrieved from <http://www.naa.gov.au/learn/learning-resources/learning-resource-themes/society-and-culture/migration-and-multiculturalism/pacific-island-labourers-act-1901>

⁹⁴ Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 237-250.

petition to the King of England⁹⁵ with 3000 signatures protesting the deportation and in 1906 there was a petition to Prime Minister Deakin by the recently formed Pacific Islanders Association which was seeking a reconsideration on the 'mandatory' deportation. They were partially successful to the extent that the 1906 Pacific Islander Labourers Act had some amendments which made certain categories exempt from deportation. In 1906, a proposal was put to Premier Deakin to allow Pacific Islanders to stay, and the 1906 Royal Commission suggested some moderation of the legislation. There has been some contention over the number of Islanders deported. Corris suggests that around 4269 were actually deported. He also mentioned that Fiji became a suggested destination to send those Islanders being deported, which is one reason why the *Suva Times* has been consulted in this research.⁹⁶

The impact of the deportation process on Pacific Islanders and the extent to which they and their advocates were able to contest the process of deportation has also been debated. Munro believes that Patricia Mercer⁹⁷ and Carol Gistitin⁹⁸ reflected the then intellectual trend to highlight the 'agency' of Pacific Islanders compared to Moore. He also believes Mercer and Gistitin minimised both the harshness of plantation life for Pacific Islanders and also minimised the impact of the deportation on the Pacific island community by emphasising resistance to it. Munro has critiqued Mercer's 'fairy-tale' interpretation of the deportations. He believed her account of the deportation highlighted the achievements of Pacific Islanders advocacy and their campaign against deportation in which approximately 2,500 Pacific Islanders remained while the greater majority of around 4,269 were deported and downplayed its impact on the peoples concerned. Munro quotes Mercer in which she wrote "the actual deportation went relatively smoothly".⁹⁹ Which is a view Munro does not share:

To compare Mercer with Gistitin is to realize the force of Stanley Elkins' "two arguments" view, expressed in the mid-1970s, with respect to ante-bellum

⁹⁵ See Example in Newspaper: "The Kanaka in Queensland Protest Against Deportation," *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 24 March 1902, 4.

⁹⁶ Corris, "White Australia in Action," 245-246.

⁹⁷ Patricia Mercer. "White Australia Defined: Pacific Islander Settlement in North Queensland". Studies in North Queensland History No.21 (Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University, 1995). 97. Cited in Munro "Indenture, Deportation, Survival" 1998, 935

⁹⁸ Carol, Gistitin. *Quite a Colony: South Sea Islanders in Central Queensland, 1867-1993* (Fortitude Valley: AEBis Publishing, 1995).

⁹⁹ Patricia Mercer. "White Australia Defined: Pacific Islander Settlement in North Queensland". Studies in North Queensland History No.21 (Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University, 1995). 97. Cited in Munro "Indenture, Deportation, Survival" 1998, 935.

slavery. At the time the two competing paradigms, broadly speaking, were “damage” and “resistance”. The dilemma was that neither could account sufficiently for the other. To stress damage was to downplay resistance; but “as resistance looms larger...the damage steadily shrinks....[and] it begins to look as though things generally were not so bad after all”¹⁰⁰. Even when the paradigms alter (e.g. resistance/accommodation), an oppositional duality persists; this is very evident when Mercer and Gistitin are read together.¹⁰¹

To some degree these differing interpretations in scholarly discussion reflected contemporary debates, with, as will be discussed, some dismissing criticism of the deportations on the grounds Pacific Islanders had become ‘civilised’ while in Australia and could safely return home.

Race Relations and their Impact on Deportation

Race relations are an important factor to consider when assessing media representations of Pacific Island deportation and the 1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act. Mark Peel and Christina Twomey¹⁰² Clive Moore¹⁰³ Joe Harris¹⁰⁴ and Philippa Mein Smith¹⁰⁵ are among the scholars who have discussed how race relations played an important part in the deportations and the impact they had. Mark Peel and Christina Twomey assessed the ideology that surrounded white Australians’ perceptions’ on coloured labour. They pointed out that the reason for Pacific Islanders being brought to Queensland was because of the belief White Australians were not made to work in such hot conditions. This was based on “scientific speculation that Australian inferior soil and hot climate would lead to an inevitable degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon stock”.¹⁰⁶ These concerns were also expressed in New Zealand, showing how the attitudes felt by white Anglo-Saxons in Australia resonated across the Tasman. The *Mt Ida Chronicle*, for example, stated in relation to labour in tropical places “it is almost impossible

¹⁰⁰ Stanley M, Elkins. “Two Arguments of Slavery,” in Elkins, *Slavery: A problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*. 3rd Ed. (Chicago, 1976), 267-68 cited in Munro, “Indenture, Deportation, Survival,” 938.

¹⁰¹ Munro, “Indenture, Deportation, Survival,” 938.

¹⁰² Mark Peel and Christina Twomey, *A History of Australia*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2011).

¹⁰³ Clive Moore, “The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia,” in *Endangered Peoples of Oceania: Struggles to Survive and Thrive*, Judith M. Fitzpatrick ed., (Westport (Ct), Greenwood Press, 2001), 167-81.

¹⁰⁴ Joe, Harris, “The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902,” *Labour History*, no. 15 (1968): 40-48.

¹⁰⁵ Philippa, Mein, Smith ‘The Tasman World’ in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, Giselle Byrnes ed. (Oxford University Press: South Melbourne. 2009), 297-319.

¹⁰⁶ Peel and Twomey, *A History of Australia*, 89.

for Europeans to undertake field labour owing to the frightful heat of the climate.”¹⁰⁷ In the same year the *Auckland Star* discussed a debate that had taken place within the New Zealand Parliament, in which one of the themes discussed was the use of Kanakas as labourers and whether New Zealand ought to object to their treatment in Australia:

Kanakan labour, recently under discussion in the New Zealand Parliament, is a far-reaching question. At first sight, it would appear to be a matter which does not concern us, except from a sentimental point of view, because, happily, this colony has a climate in which white men can work in the open air throughout the year at any employment. But seeing that one-third of Australians cannot, under any circumstances, develop its resources by white labour, it follows that unless coloured labour be employed in tropical Australia, a vast area- about one million square miles- of the richest land in the Empire must remain unproductive and useless.¹⁰⁸

Sir George Grey (Governor of New Zealand 1845-53 and 1861-68) stated that “it could not be cultivated by a European race- that is, that the climate there was so warm that it would be impossible for Europeans to continue for any time field labour in that part of Australia”.¹⁰⁹ Within a decade, this racial ideology changed to the idea that the White man could work the land and the Islanders were just “cheap and nasty”.¹¹⁰ Peel and Twomey¹¹¹ and Joe Harris¹¹² both explore the change in perceptions. Peel and Twomey explain this change within the context of the longstanding history of racial discrimination in Australia towards the Indigenous Aboriginal peoples. They argue that the negative perceptions of the Aborigines were transferred to coloured Pacific Islanders. Harris discusses a shift in emphasis of the labour trade leading to the deportation period of 1901-1908. Harris notes that the 1844 bill prevented Island labourers from working any jobs except for tropical agriculture such as sugarcane plantations and pineapple plantations. With reference to the early struggles with ‘coloured labour’, Harris noted negative sentiment was initially oriented more towards the Chinese who came to Australia as goldminers than Pacific Islanders. But in the early 1890s there was a shift that included Pacific Islanders under the struggle with ‘coloured labour’, notably concern at “the illegal extension of the use of the Pacific Islanders outside tropical

¹⁰⁷ “The Kanaka Question,” *Mt Ida Chronicle*, May 1892, 3.

¹⁰⁸ “The Evening Star”, *Auckland Star*, 14 July 1892, 4.

¹⁰⁹ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament. Legislative Council and House of Representatives. Seventy-fifth Volume. June 23 to July 20 1892. 343.

¹¹⁰ Harris, “The Struggle against Pacific Islander Labour 1868-1902,” 41.

¹¹¹ Peel and Twomey, *A History of Australia*, N.P.N.

¹¹² Harris, “The Struggle against Pacific Islander Labour 1868-1902”.

agriculture".¹¹³ It was argued that approximately one quarter were not working on plantations, but newspapers such as the *Worker*¹¹⁴ stated they "were otherwise competing against white labour".¹¹⁵

Peel and Twomey, argue white Australian men felt that the Pacific Islander labourers were undermining their wages and the ideology of mixing races was economically and socially backwards and by the Pacific Islanders working it was taking the White Australian men's right to "live dignified lives".¹¹⁶ They develop this notion by stating "in that sense purity underpinned progress and protection".¹¹⁷ They also note that until Pacific Islanders became the focus in 1901, racial intolerance in Australia was predominantly directed towards the Chinese.¹¹⁸ They recount an 1899 article written by *The Bulletin* editor A.G. Stephens titled "A word for Australia" in which he listed three essentials for living a nationalist life. The second essential was "the preservation of the race [and] the purification of national blood, which means the permanent exclusion of Asiatic and South Sea Islanders".¹¹⁹ The *Bulletin* was a leading Australian journal devoted to political thought, and sat mostly on the side of the white middle class Australian.¹²⁰ "In its early heyday" the National Museum of Australia records, "the weekly publication became known as the 'bushman's bible', printing specifically Australian and often controversial material".¹²¹ Clive Moore's perspective aligns with Peel and Twomey.¹²² He emphasises the racism experienced by Pacific Islanders from colonial Australians stating "the Pacific Islanders always faced a racist colonial society in Australia, which regarded them as inferior and legislated to control and eventually deport them".¹²³ Moore argued that the newly formed federal government of Australia had a central and vital

¹¹³ Harris, "The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902," 41.

¹¹⁴ *Worker*, April 16 1892, cited in Harris, "The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902," 41.

¹¹⁵ *Worker*, April 16 1892, cited in Harris, "The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902," 41.

¹¹⁶ Peel and Twomey, *A History of Australia*, 118.

¹¹⁷ Peel and Twomey, *A History of Australia*, 118.

¹¹⁸ Peel and Twomey. *A History of Australia*, 109.

¹¹⁹ A. G. Stephens, "A word for Australia". *The Bulletin*, December 9, 1899 cited in Peel and Twomey. *A History of Australia*, 116-17.

¹²⁰ See for example: Patricia Rolfe, *The Journalistic Javelin 1880–1980: An Illustrated History of the Bulletin*, Wildcat Press, Sydney, 1979; Garry Wotherspoon. "The Bulletin", *The Dictionary of Sydney State Library*. 2010. https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/the_bulletin [1st November 2022].

¹²¹ National Museum Australia. "Defining Moments: The Bulletin" <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/the-bulletin> [1st November 2022]

¹²² Moore, "The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia".

¹²³ Moore, "The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia," 2.

role in the mindset of keeping Australia white, highlighting that Australia wanted “to conduct a bold experiment for the world: creation of a nation for white people”.¹²⁴ Harris made similar observations, noting that “the basis of opposition being the workers to low-wage ‘coloured labourer’ and to mass migration... was economical, but it’s expression was chauvinistic”.¹²⁵

By 1900 a growing number of Australians, including labour organisations, were taking action against South Sea Island workers. Harris reported that “by 1900 the Townsville General Labourers Union had made it one of its chief concerns to prosecute employers for breaches of the ‘Polynesian Act’”.¹²⁶ This highlights how not only were the Islanders being targeted by the White Australia Policy but employers were also under investigation for employing Island labourers. Another important shift highlighted by Harris is that from the 1890s newspapers such as the *Worker* began referring to the Islanders in derogatory terms such as “Cheap and Nasty”. Harris explained that “it was claimed that the Kanaka crime rate was two and a half times that of the White population and Mackay was dubbed the ‘Murder Metropolis’”.¹²⁷

Although the ‘White Australia Policy’ was primarily concerned with Australia, elements of its underlying ideology were also apparent in New Zealand. Philippa Mein Smith¹²⁸ discussed the notion of a “White New Zealand” with regard to Australia and New Zealand’s relations stating: “historians generally perceive that while ‘White Australia’ and ‘White New Zealand’ converged in substance, it was important for the image of relations that New Zealand be different”.¹²⁹ She also stated that New Zealand and Richard Seddon (Premier of New Zealand 1893-1906) prided themselves on having great race-relations with non-whites. Mein Smith cites Seddon speaking to the Australian Prime Minister stating that they had “the same desire to preserve the ‘European’ and ‘white’ character”.¹³⁰ A further tension was Seddon’s aspiration to be an administrator of non-white countries in the Pacific and reconciling this

¹²⁴ Moore, “The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia,” 3.

¹²⁵ Harris, “The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902,” 47.

¹²⁶ Harris, “The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902,” 41.

¹²⁷ Harris, “The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902,” 41.

¹²⁸ Philippa, Mein, Smith, ‘The Tasman World’ in Giselle Byrnes ed. *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Oxford University Press: South Melbourne. 2009), 297-319.

¹²⁹ Mein Smith, ‘The Tasman World’, 307.

¹³⁰ Mein Smith, ‘The Tasman World’, 307.

with their notion of positive race-relations with Māori. Smith discusses the tensions within the 'Tasman World' where there was at one level a high degree of interaction and commonality between New Zealand and Australia but also an emerging sense of national distinctiveness among both.¹³¹

The issues of race and "coloured labour"¹³² were also topics of considerable discussion in Britain during the period under review. Scholars have argued that the notion of racial hierarchies became more prominent during the second half of the nineteenth century. The notion of social Darwinism was one expression of this and resulted in a racial hierarchy where whites, especially peoples of Anglo-Saxon descent were placed at the top and, to varying degrees, non-whites ranked below them.¹³³ The racial hierarchies developed during this period by the Anglo-Saxon and Europeans placed themselves above other races. There were a range of views in regard to the employment of non-white Labour. Some in Britain were in favour of allowing non-white labour for the specific reason of working, albeit with restrictions. On the other hand there were many in Britain opposed to "coloured labour".¹³⁴ It was in this context that Britain's status as an imperial power was significant. Britain administered non-white countries such as India who, as members of the British Empire, believed their citizens ought to have freedom of movement within the Empire.¹³⁵ As previously discussed, a further complicating factor during this period was that Britain was developing a relationship with Japan, as they were then allies prior to World War One. As

¹³¹ The term "'Tasman world', denotes a region "defined by a history of traffic in ideas, policies, objects and people." University of Canterbury. "Remaking the Tasman World". 2008. Retrieved from: <https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/engage/cup/catalogue/books/remaking-the-tasman-world.html>

¹³² See for example, Paul B. Rich (1984) "Doctrines of racial segregation in Britain: 1900–1944," *New Community* 12, vno. 1, (1984): 75-88. DOI: [10.1080/1369183X.1984.9975871](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.1984.9975871); Eunjae Park, (2017) "British Labour Party's Patriotic Politics on Immigration and Race, 1900-1968" PhD diss, University of York, 2017.

¹³³ Geoff Watson, "Representation of Central Asian Ethnicities in British Literature c. 1830-1914," *Asian Ethnicity* 3, no. 2 (2002): 141-44.

¹³⁴ See for example: Laura Tabili, "The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925," *Journal of British Studies* 33, no. 1 (1994): 54–98; James Winston, "The Black Experience in Twentieth-Century Britain," in Philip D. Morgan, and Sean Hawkins (eds), *Black Experience and the Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); online edn, Oxford Academic, 3 Oct. 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199290673.003.0013>, accessed 18 Dec. 2022.

¹³⁵ Jacqueline Leckie, *Invisible: New Zealand's History of Excluding Kiwi-Indians* (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2021), 13-35.

previously noted, Neville Bennett argued that Britain's government was embarrassed by the anti-Asian legislation in the colonies.¹³⁶

In some British colonies, however, non-white Labour was actively recruited to perform tasks it was believed the indigenous peoples were unsuited to doing. In Fiji, for example, indentured labour was extensively used by plantation owners stationed around the Islands.¹³⁷ In order to boost the Fijian economy, which was driven to a considerable degree by the growth and expansion of Fiji tropical plantations from the 1830's, Fijian Governor Sir Arthur Gordon sought labourers from outside Fiji.¹³⁸ Originally labourers from Vanuatu, Gilbert and Ellis Islands had come but due to abuse of the Islanders and also because the Queensland labour trade which was a high-paying competition for the Fijian plantations, Gordon started to bring British colonial Indians to Fiji in 1879. Jacqueline Leckie¹³⁹ suggests the number of Indians who came to Fiji to work on the sugarcane plantations was approximately 60,000.¹⁴⁰ As will be discussed later some of the deported Islanders from Queensland were offered sanctuary in Fiji and subsequently worked on Fijian plantations

The Intersection of "Coloured Labour" Debates and the White Australia Policy

The 'Coloured Labour' debate and the White Australia Policy are two notions that were at the forefront of the deportations. Philip Griffiths¹⁴¹, Robert Huttenback¹⁴² and Peter Corris

¹³⁶ Neville Bennett, "White Discrimination Against Japan: Britain, the Dominions and The United States, 1908-1928," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 3, no.2, (2001): 91.

¹³⁷ Judith A. Bennett, "Holland, Britain and Germany in Melanesia," in *Tides of History: The Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century*, eds K, R Howe, Robert, C. Kriste and Brij.V. Lal (Allen and Unwin, Australia, 1994): 40-45.

¹³⁸ Arthur Hamilton Gordon was born in London England in 1829. His father was the 4th Earl of Aberdeen and the British Prime Minister from 1852-1855. Gordon held several titles Lieutenant governor of New Brunswick (1861-1866), Governor of Trinidad (1866-1870), Governor of Mauritius (1871-1874). First Governor of Fiji (1875-1880), High Commissioner and Consul General for the Western Pacific (1877-1883), Governor of New Zealand (1880-1882) and governor of Ceylon (1883-1890) He died in 1912 in London. W. P. N. Tyler. 'Gordon, Arthur Hamilton', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1993. Te Ara- The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2g12/gordon-arthur-hamilton> (accessed 19 December 2022) (1880-1882) and

¹³⁹ Jacqueline Leckie, "Indians in the South Pacific: Recentred diasporas" in *Recentring Asia: Histories, Encounters, Identities*, eds Jacob Edmond, Henry Johnson and Jacqueline Leckie (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 54-84.

¹⁴⁰ National Library of Australia, "Indian emigration passes to Fiji 1879-1916". Retrieved from: <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/indian-emigration-passes-to-fiji-1879-1916#>

¹⁴¹ Philip Griffiths, "The Making of White Australia: Ruling Class Agendas, 1876-1888" PhD Diss, Australia National University, 2006.

¹⁴² Robert A. Huttenback. *Racism and Empire: White Settlers And Colored Immigrants In The British Self Governing Colonies 1830-1910*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976.

discuss the important role the notion of 'Coloured Labour' and the Australian White Policy played in both Australia and other Pacific countries such as Fiji.¹⁴³

Philip Griffiths' doctoral thesis 'The Making of White Australia: Ruling class Agendas, 1876-1888',¹⁴⁴ looks at the ruling white class of Australia and the role they played in both the indenturing trade and the deportation. He argues that it is important to understand the wider context of racial thinking in Australia and describes how the ideology of White Australia was influential in creating the Australian working class shaping Australian Nationalism. Griffiths identified three ruling class agendas, the first was focused on anti-Chinese activity, whilst the second and third were aimed at Pacific Indentured labour. "The second ruling class agenda" he argues "was the building of a modern industrial economy, which might be threatened by industries resting on indentured labour in the North".¹⁴⁵ The third "was the desire to construct an homogenous people".¹⁴⁶ The White Australia policy was a defining ideology which dominated Australian politics for nearly two-thirds of the twentieth century, playing a leading role in shaping the everyday lives of those in Australia. Griffiths discusses the notion that the White Australia Policy was motivated in part by a desire to stop exploitation of non-white Labour. The emergence of a White Australia was seen as a product of a class struggle between pastoralists and sugar planters, who wanted to exploit "cheap coloured labour" and the working people who fought to stop them. Thus it was argued the working class had successfully advocated for the policy against exploitative employers. He also notes that politicians, squatters, different religious leaders, newspapers, school teachers and business people were all major supporters of the White Australia Policy.¹⁴⁷ Huttenback had a slightly different perspective. He argued that the hatred towards non-whites was the main force behind the legislation, rather than other reasons such as the working-class trying to stop the exploitation of 'cheap labour'¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴³ Corris, "White Australia in Action". 9.

¹⁴⁴ Griffiths, "The Making of White Australia: Ruling Class Agendas, 1876-1888".

¹⁴⁵ Griffiths, "The Making of White Australia", xv.

¹⁴⁶ Griffiths, "The Making of White Australia", xv.

¹⁴⁷ Griffiths, "The Making of White Australia", 8.

¹⁴⁸ Huttenback, Robert A, *Racism and empire: White settlers and colored immigrants in the British self-governing colonies 1830-1910*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1976.

One differentiating element of the deportation of Pacific Islanders, in regard to the labour trade within the British Empire, is that unlike the anti-Chinese sentiment, some colonies were prepared to take the deportees. Corris noted that the Fijian government offered to take some of the deported labourers.¹⁴⁹ He observes “It was fortunate, therefore, that a safety valve was opened in 1907 when 427 Melanesians were enabled to go directly from Australia to Fiji”.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Corris highlights the role of Fiji and her government by stating that:

Sir Everard Im Thurn, High Commissioner for the Western Pacific and Governor of Fiji, informed the Governor of Queensland that if satisfactory arrangements could be worked out at the Queensland end the Crown Colony would be willing to take directly from Queensland a number of Pacific Islanders who did not wish to return home.¹⁵¹

Corris, also refers to the *General Register of Polynesians Labourers Introduced to Fiji:1870-1911* in which it states that 337 of those that went to Fiji from Australia were Solomon Islanders with 80 percent of the number being Malaitans.¹⁵² However, Corris also makes the claim that those from the New Hebrides were given preference, as they were seen as more “tractable” than those from the Solomon Islands.¹⁵³ As will be discussed, some Fijian newspapers saw the deportations as an opportunity for plantation owners to acquire skilled and relatively cheap labour.

Deportation and Religion

Religion played an important role in discussions of the deportation of Pacific Islanders. Peter Corris and Patricia Mercer¹⁵⁴ have both discussed this issue. Corris noted how certain denominations played a role in helping and supporting the Pacific Islanders such as giving support to the various petitions. Corris noted that “an Anglican clergyman pointed out that some of them paid rates and were literate and that all long-term Rockhampton Islanders

¹⁴⁹ Corris, “White Australia in Action”.

¹⁵⁰ Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 245.

¹⁵¹ Im Thurn to Elgin, 28 May 1905, C.O. 225/72 cited in Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 245.

¹⁵² General Register of Polynesian Labourers Introduced to Fiji, 1870-1911, 3 vols., Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva. Cited in Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 246.

¹⁵³ Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 246.

¹⁵⁴ Patricia Mary Mercer. “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940”. PhD Thesis. 1981. The Australian National University.

were quiet and well behaved”.¹⁵⁵ Corris also discussed how the Anglican church in Suva set up a village in Kalekana which provided land houses and a church.¹⁵⁶ Patricia Mercer¹⁵⁷ discusses the role of religion on humanitarian grounds, and identified a range of views held among the different denominations.

Corris demonstrated that the church not only advocated for Pacific Islanders facing deportation but also looked after those who had been deported and could not return home. Corris noted “many Islanders who feared a hostile reception at their original homes, elected to enter the Christian settlements”.¹⁵⁸ Mercer suggested churches “were deeply concerned at the potential cruelty and hardships which would be incurred if most Pacific Islanders, especially those who had converted, were sent back to their ‘uncivilised’ homes”.¹⁵⁹ She further noted the 1906 Presbyterian General Assembly “passed a resolution’ which was written and delivered to the Premier and the Prime Minister urging “that those who were long standing residents or married should be allowed to stay”.¹⁶⁰ However both also note that some Churches felt that the deportation was a positive and would allow those that had become Christians to then go back home and speak about God.

New Zealand and the Pacific

To help understand how the 1901 Pacific Island Immigration Act in Australia was interpreted in New Zealand newspapers it is useful to understand New Zealand’s role in the Pacific. Salesa¹⁶¹, Ballantyne¹⁶² and Brooking¹⁶³ argue that New Zealand actively sought a Pacific Empire, between 1880’s and 1920’s. There were some critics of these aspirations. Nicholas

¹⁵⁵ Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 238

See also: Hopkins to Chermerside, 15 March 1903. (ibid)

¹⁵⁶ Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 247.

¹⁵⁷ Patricia Mercer. “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940,” 104-105

¹⁵⁸ Corris, “White Australia in Action,” 247.

¹⁵⁹ Patricia Mercer. “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940,” 104-105

¹⁶⁰ See *Kerr to Deakin*. 31 May 1906, A1 06/3763. 3 May 1906, Presbyterian General Assembly. Cited in Patricia Mercer. “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940”, 105

¹⁶¹ Damon Salesa, “New Zealand’s Pacific” in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed Giselle Byrnes (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press), 149-172.

¹⁶² Tony Ballantyne, “The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893” in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* ed. Giselle Byrnes (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 99-124.

¹⁶³ Tom Brooking, “A noisy sub-Imperialist: Richard Seddon and the attempt to establish a New Zealand empire in the Pacific, 1894-1901,” *Journal of New Zealand and Pacific Studies* 2, no. 2, (2014), 121-22.

Hoare's Master's thesis notes there were many critics of New Zealand seeking a Pacific empire on the grounds of impracticality and also that they were uncivilised places.¹⁶⁴

Overall, there has been very little discussion has been on the deportations. Mary Boyd¹⁶⁵ and Angus Ross¹⁶⁶ do not mention the deportations in Boyd's chapter in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, and Ross' *New Zealand's Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*. The focus of these works is on the political aspects of New Zealand's Pacific policies and they do not discuss New Zealand media perspectives on the deportation of Pacific Islanders in any detail.

Damon Salesa's chapter in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, argues New Zealand's role as a colonising power in the Pacific has been overlooked by its historians.¹⁶⁷ He argues "New Zealand was an Empire as well as a colony. New Zealand gathered and ruled over dozens of overseas Pacific Islands".¹⁶⁸ He argues New Zealand consistently sought influence in the Pacific between the 1880s and 1920s. In 1884 there was a passing of the Confederation and Annexation Bill. Salesa stated that "this was effectively an open invitation to Island leaders to seek out New Zealand as an ally or ruler, and promised a new era of empire for New Zealand. But the Bill was vetoed in Britain, as a potentially dangerous licence for unilateral action - the imperial ambitions of New Zealand".¹⁶⁹ Ballantyne made similar observations arguing that the 1883 Bill did "reflect the imperial desires that motivated successive generations of settler politicians".¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, when New Zealand officially became a Dominion in 1907 it had a "fully fledged overseas empire of its own".¹⁷¹ In addition to Niue and the Cook Islands, New Zealand's pacific territories also included the Kermadec Islands, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands and Stewart Island.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁴ Nicholas Hoare, "New Zealand's 'Critics of Empire'. Domestic Opposition to New Zealand's Pacific Empire 1883-1948," MA Diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, 23-28, 85-90.

¹⁶⁵ Boyd, Mary. "New Zealand and the Other Pacific." in *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand* edited by Keith Sinclair. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990.

¹⁶⁶ Ross, Angus. *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific In the Nineteenth Century*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1964.

¹⁶⁷ Salesa, "New Zealand's Pacific", 149.

¹⁶⁸ Salesa, "New Zealand's Pacific", 149.

¹⁶⁹ Salesa, "New Zealand's Pacific", 154.

¹⁷⁰ Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 123.

¹⁷¹ Salesa, "New Zealand's Pacific", 153

¹⁷² Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 123.

Brooking and Ballantyne agree that under Seddon's government, expansion into the Pacific became a topic of political interest. Ballantyne similarly agrees with Salesa and Brooking, that Seddon wanted to be a power in the Pacific but it was often unsupported by Britain stating "Seddon's liberals remained deeply committed to an imperial project in the Pacific and Seddon himself acquired a reputation as one of the most aggressive advocates of imperial expansion within the whole empire".¹⁷³ However, in practice, Brooking states that these ambitions were frustrated, as Britain wanted to keep them at arm's length. He notes that while New Zealand gained the Cook Islands and Niue, Seddon also aspired to govern Western Samoa, Fiji and potentially the Kingdom of Tonga.¹⁷⁴ Ballantyne also states that "New Zealand's great nation builders" such as George Grey "aspired to be Empire builders".¹⁷⁵ Grey was the instigator of the 1884 Confederation and Annexation bill, which he believed would allow New Zealand "to fulfil its role as the 'future Queen' of the Pacific"¹⁷⁶ which was also similarly echoed by Vogel, who believed that Fiji should become a federation with New Zealand.¹⁷⁷ Ballantyne's analysis of New Zealand in the Pacific gives insight into the political context within which media coverage of the deportations occurred. New Zealand believed they had a responsibility towards the Pacific Islands and sought to broaden their colonial influence within the Pacific region.¹⁷⁸

New Zealand Relations with Australia

The deportations commenced shortly after a prolonged debate over whether New Zealand ought to join the Australian Federation. This issue created some tension between New Zealand and Australia. New Zealand and Australia have a long-standing relationship, that can be traced back to both being colonised by Britain and being a part of its Empire. Dennis

¹⁷³ Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 123.

¹⁷⁴ Brooking, "A noisy sub-Imperialist", 121-22.

¹⁷⁵ Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 123.

¹⁷⁶ Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 123.

¹⁷⁷ Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 123.

¹⁷⁸ Chapter one of James Belich's, *Paradise Reforged* entitled 'Better Britain' looks at the Liberal government of New Zealand during the period under review (1891-1912) and chapter 18 of Michael King's *The Penguin History of New Zealand* discusses how New Zealand saw herself as a social laboratory under the liberal government.

McLean¹⁷⁹, Michael King, James Belich¹⁸⁰ Philippa Mein Smith¹⁸¹ are among the scholars who have discussed this often 'prickly' relationship. James Belich,¹⁸² discussing New Zealand's evolving relationship with Australia, notes that between the 1870s and 1890s New Zealand was in economic difficulty, but then a change "in the 1880s New Zealand was a sinking ship looking to join a rising one. In the 1890s the situation was reversed. Terrible drought may also have made joining Australia seem less attractive".¹⁸³ Moreover, it is generally agreed that between 1890 and 1914 a more distinct New Zealand sense of national identity emerged, albeit one which continued to identify strongly with the British Empire. Mein Smith agrees with Keith Sinclair's view that New Zealand had deliberately chosen to distinguish itself from Australia: "Sinclair reinforced his theme of a 'destiny apart' by highlighting rivalry and differences."¹⁸⁴ This emerging identity was partly driven by responses to social issues. Ballantyne, discussing the politics of the early 1880s, suggests "the political culture of the colony was shifting noticeably".¹⁸⁵ During the era of the Liberal Government (1891-12) there were major advances in Labour Laws, including compulsory arbitration between employers and wage earners, significant improvements in working conditions for labourers, and the introduction of a pension (albeit means tested) in 1898. Racially discriminatory legislation, such as the decision to raise the poll tax on Chinese from £10 to £100 pounds in 1896, were in part motivated by a desire to retain these conditions for those deemed worthy to receive them, namely those of European ancestry.¹⁸⁶ It was in this wider political context that debate over Federation occurred. McLean characterises New Zealand's decision to not federate with Australia as follows: "the most significant national decision New Zealand has ever undertaken was to jump off the bandwagon of Australian federation."¹⁸⁷ James Belich also notes the impact Australian Federation had upon New Zealand's standing in the region

¹⁷⁹ Dennis McLean, *The Prickly Pair: Making nationalism in Australia and New Zealand* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003).

¹⁸⁰ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, (Auckland: Allen Lane, 2001): 46-52

¹⁸¹ Philippa, Mein Smith "The Tasman World" in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed Giselle Byrnes (Oxford University Press: South Melbourne. 2009), 297-319.

¹⁸² Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 46-52.

¹⁸³ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 49.

¹⁸⁴ Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny apart: New Zealand's Search for national identity* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin in association with the Port Nicholson Press, 1986) cited in Mein Smith, "The Tasman World", 299

¹⁸⁵ Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power: 1769-1893", 119.

¹⁸⁶ Keith Sinclair, *William Pember Reeves: New Zealand Fabian*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 226-28.

¹⁸⁷ McLean, *The Prickly Pair*, 74

arguing “that Australian Federation in 1901 shrank New Zealand to quarter of its former size in local relativeness and trade with Australia plummeted to insignificance ending the Tasman World that had been a feature of progressive colonisation”.¹⁸⁸ Australia’s treatment of non-white peoples had also been cited as an argument against joining the Australian Federation.¹⁸⁹ By the time of the deportation debates, however, tensions had subsided and New Zealand newspapers were generally supportive of the policy, possibly because both countries shared a strong sense of white Anglo-Saxon identity.

Conclusion

Deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia due to the 1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act has been discussed within a number of frames of reference in historical scholarship. Many have discussed it with reference to the White Australia Policy that shaped the deportation and put it into force. Other scholars have emphasised the role of economic decline and the influence of the Australian Labour movement. Indeed the deportations occurred at a time when the subject of non-white Labour was topical throughout the British Empire. It is generally agreed that for the most part Australia’s major political parties and media were in favour of the deportations as the vast majority agreed with the White Australia Policy. The deportations also occurred at a time when the nature of New Zealand’s engagement in the Pacific was changing. New Zealand’s idea of having its own empire in the Pacific was prominent in political thought at the time. The relationship between New Zealand and Australia was complicated at the time of deportation, with debates over whether New Zealand ought to join Federation causing a wider gap between the two. These factors shaped the wider context within which the deportations occurred and will be further discussed and evaluated in the following chapters, beginning with a discussion on how economic factors shaped newspaper discussion in the next chapter.

¹⁸⁸ James Belich “Māori and Pakeha: Past and Present” in P. O’Brien and B. Vaughn eds. *Amongst Friends: Australian and New Zealand’s voices, from America*. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2005, p. 168 cited in Smith, 2009, p.g. 299

¹⁸⁹ McLean, *The Prickly Pair*, 79.

CHAPTER TWO: Economic and Political Perspectives on Deportation

This chapter will examine newspaper reporting of the economic impact of the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland, Australia. It compares and contrasts different newspaper articles from New Zealand, Fiji and Britain on how the economy of Queensland and Australia more broadly was likely to be impacted by the deportation and the related effects on sugar cane cultivation. It will also analyse the different reporting styles of reporting of the perceived impact on the economy and related concerns about how this would affect the progress of the economy. The economic impact of the deportation was also connected to changing notions on the physical capabilities of white males. The notion that white men could not and should not work the land, due to vast open plains and the hot climate, was challenged on the basis that they had now built up the ability to work and live in the heat. It was also argued that technological developments, which centred around how the process of cultivating and harvesting sugar cane had evolved and that imported Pacific Island labour was no longer required. Concerns about the economic impact of deportation were also sometimes linked to criticisms that the manner in which it had been conducted overrode the rights of states.

An Obstacle to Colonial Progress? Economic Perspectives on Deportation

Opposition to deportation on the grounds of the economic impact it would have on sugar production in Queensland was a repeated theme in newspaper coverage. In late 1901 the *Press* published an article titled “The Abolition of the Kanaka”¹⁹⁰ which discussed the ‘proposed’ bill explaining that the sugar planters were not happy with the draft legislation, which would effectively mean they would no longer be able to employ Pacific Islanders. The article noted the plantation owners “are loud in their protest against the measure. They have a strong advocate in Dr. Maxwell, the well-known expert, whose assertion that the Bill if

¹⁹⁰ “The Abolition of the Kanaka,” *Press*, 9 October 1901, 4.

carried will paralyze the Queensland sugar industry”.¹⁹¹ This article also acknowledged the tensions the recently formed Federal Government of Australia encountered in drafting of the Bill, noting “in drafting this measure the Federal government has had to face the problem of carrying out its ‘White Australia’ policy without dealing unjustly with existing industrial interest. Like many compromises, the Bill has not given satisfaction to either party”.¹⁹² The article highlighted the discontent from those that owned and ran plantations in Queensland, as the proposed bill would affect their labour costs, which would in turn increase the costs charged to export customers and reduce their overall profits. The planters viewed this as the end of their industry financially: “The planters on the other hand are crying out against the Bill and their assertion that the three years’ limit, instead of ten years, means the ruin of the industry”.¹⁹³

The *Waihi Daily Telegraph*¹⁹⁴ printed an article titled ‘Queensland Sugar Industry’ which expressed similar concerns. The article stated:

Mr W. Kidson, the Queensland Premier, says that the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the labour question is expected to furnish the Government with accurate and reliable data concerning the proposed deportation of Kanakas, and still more important matter of scarcity or other-wise of white labour. He adds: the subject is a difficult one, involving large expense; but as the Federal Government have passed the Black Labour Bill, they, and not Queensland, will have to meet the difficulty and expense.

Some discussions of the economic impact of deporting Pacific Islanders noted the potentially adverse consequences for Queensland banks and the labourers themselves. The *Preston Herald*, a Lancashire newspaper, published an article entitled “Kanakas in Queensland”.¹⁹⁵ This article was a wide-ranging discussion of South Sea Islanders in Queensland. In one section it discussed money held by the Queensland Government Savings Bank which belonged attributed to ‘Kanakas’ working in the sugarcane fields:

There is a sum of £32,734 lying to the credit of 4,584 islanders in the Queensland Government Savings Bank, an indication of the prosperity of these Kanakas. Under the provisions of the Act passed by the Commonwealth Government to abolish South

¹⁹¹“The Abolition of the Kanaka,” *Press*, 9 October 1901, 4.

¹⁹² “The Abolition of the Kanaka,” *Press*, 9 October 1901, 4.

¹⁹³ “The Abolition of the Kanaka,” *Press*, 9 October 1901, 4.

¹⁹⁴ “Queensland Sugar Industry,” *Waihi Daily Telegraph*. 5 April 1906, 2.

¹⁹⁵ “Kanakas in Queensland,” *Preston Herald*, 29 October 1904, 10.

Sea Island Labour in Australia. Recruiting must entirely cease by March 31st 1904 and every Kanaka must be deported from the state by the end of 1906.¹⁹⁶

This article suggests that because of the labour of South Sea Islanders, the Queensland Government bank accrued a considerable sum of money. An unstated implication is that the financial sector of Queensland had benefited from the labour trade and that the deportation of the labourers carried with it a potential economic cost should they withdraw their deposits. What is also interesting is that they explicitly mentioned the sums of money held in banks for 'Islanders'. This could be read as a favourable comment on the trade, which had formerly been characterised as being conducted in conditions akin to slavery but was now regulated and 'Kanakas' had been able to save money. Whereas many previous accounts of the labour trade in British newspapers had been unfavourable, the reference to deposits being held in banks arguably reflects a 'good colonialist' narrative in which the government of Queensland had responded to the humanitarian concerns Britain and other colonies, including New Zealand, had raised in regard to the trade.

Some articles acknowledged the role South Sea Islander labour had played in the development of sugarcane production, but suggested the point had now been reached, owing to improved technology, when white labourers could perform this task. In this way the arguments reflected progress narratives common to colonisation.¹⁹⁷ An article entitled "Australian Sugar Production" in British newspaper the *Globe* and several other newspapers by a "Sydney correspondent" discussed the history of the sugarcane plantations in a manner that presented South Sea Island labour as a transitional stage.¹⁹⁸ It began by suggesting Australia had reached a stage of development that would "enable a greater variety of agriculture" highlighting that there had been other ideas for land use than sugarcane fields and their cultivation.¹⁹⁹ With reference to the role of Islanders as "workers" it was noted "the greater part of the field work in Queensland has hitherto been performed by coloured labour, chiefly that of South Sea Islanders, or Kanakas as they are generally designated".²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ "Kanakas in Queensland," *Preston Herald*, 29 October 1904, 10.

¹⁹⁷ James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, (Auckland: Allen Lane, 1996): 297-312; 349-60.

¹⁹⁸ "Australian Sugar Production Area under cultivation," *Globe*, 27 February 1905, 8.

¹⁹⁹ "Australian Sugar Production Area under cultivation," *Globe*, 27 February 1905, 8.

²⁰⁰ "Australian Sugar Production Area under cultivation," *Globe*, 27 February 1905, 8.

Earlier in the article, however, it was suggested that the employment of Islander labour occurred when production was conducted in “a somewhat primitive fashion” with each grower having their own mill and wasting much juice. This was contrasted with the situation in 1905 when the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had “extensive and well equipped sugar mills in Queensland and New South Wales”.²⁰¹ Interestingly, with reference to New South Wales the article noted sugar production “was formerly done entirely by white labour, but latterly numerous Asiatic, chiefly Hindoos, have been employed”,²⁰² suggesting the White Australia Policy may at times have been selectively deployed against ethnicities deemed undesirable.²⁰³

There were, however, some articles which criticised the deportation of the Kanakas on the basis that it would affect sugar production and this in turn would reverse the general trend of ‘progress’ in the development of Queensland. Following on from their February article²⁰⁴ *The Morning Post*²⁰⁵ published another article critical of Australian Prime Minister George Reid²⁰⁶, in June stating “if he stops at renewal of the bounty²⁰⁷, will receive no thanks from Queensland. Where this is practically taken for granted”.²⁰⁸ The writer of the article expressed concern about “what will happen” to the sugar industry if the deportation were to go ahead, stating in relation to the Pacific Island Labourers: “replaced they must be, unless the richest part of Queensland most favourable for sugar growing is left idle and a portion of that now cultivated is allowed to relapse into jungle”.²⁰⁹ The reference to relapsing into jungle suggests that the writer sees not only an economic cost to deporting Pacific Island Labour but a wider cost in terms of forfeiting the perceived progress cultivation signified in

²⁰¹ “Australian Sugar Production Area under cultivation,” *Globe*, 27 February 1905, 8.

²⁰² “Australian Sugar Production Area under cultivation,” *Globe*, 27 February 1905, 8.

²⁰³ “Australian Sugar Production Area under cultivation,” *Globe*, 27 February 1905, 8.

²⁰⁴ “Australian Labour Laws,” *Morning Post*, 9 February 1905, 5.

²⁰⁵ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

²⁰⁶ George Reid was the Australian Prime Minister between 1904 and 1905. He was born in England but moved to Australia when he was around 7. He led the government from 1904 to 1905, previously holding the position of Premier of New South Wales between 1894 and 1899. He also led the Free Trade Party from 1891-1908. His time as Prime Minister is referred to as the ‘Reid Government’.

²⁰⁷ The term bounty referred to here is the use of monetary payments used as an incentive for plantation owners to employ white labours instead of Pacific Island labourers. See for example, “Bounds for White Labor,” *Bruce Herald*, 6 May 1904, 7.

²⁰⁸ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

²⁰⁹ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

regard to ‘taming’ the environment – which was seen as a characteristic of Anglo-Saxon colonisation.²¹⁰

Some articles expressed concern that if Pacific Islanders were deported there would be insufficient sugar to meet domestic needs. The *Morning Post* stated that for Queensland “black labour has been and remains supreme”.²¹¹ It further explained what could happen in their opinion to the sugar industry if the “Kanakas” were deported:²¹²

Next year all the kanakas are no longer to be eligible for employment; some will have left for their homes in the Pacific and all but a few will be deported...if therefore the Kanaka go and are not replaced some plantations must lie idle and the industry, which this year is able to supply the whole demand within the Commonwealth will shrivel.²¹³

The Queensland government had to assess the damage which was expected to be caused by the loss of the Pacific Islander labour force on the sugar industry. ‘Newly appointed Director of Sugar Experiment Stations Dr Walter Maxwell had informed Premier Philp in a letter’²¹⁴ that deporting the Islanders would highly likely financially paralyse the sugar industry and cause a labour shortage like they had never previously experienced which would take ten years to fill with skilled white labourers, and would likely cause the sugar industry to die out north of Mackay causing compensation claims and cost effects of relocating farmers and mills.²¹⁵ These articles reflected similar concerns in Australian newspapers. Mr. T. W. Crawford a sugar planter from Mossman District was quoted in an article from 1905 in the *Sydney Morning Herald*²¹⁶ stating that “7000 Kanakas would be taken at one swoop out of the industry”.²¹⁷ He further noted “Hindoos and other Asiatics would be available for some time. White labour had been given a trial, but if it was to be used a continuous of the bonus

²¹⁰ Paul Star, “Humans and the Environment in New Zealand c. 1800 to 2000” in the *New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed Giselle Byrnes (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009) 49.

²¹¹ “Federated Australia: The Sugar Industry The Premiers Tour”. *Morning Post*, 3 July 1905, 9.

²¹² It is also perhaps revealing that this article focuses on the ramifications towards the sugar industry rather than the humans ‘the black kanaka’.

²¹³ “Federated Australia: The Sugar Industry The Premiers Tour”. *Morning Post*, 3 July 1905, 9.

²¹⁴ Walter Maxwell to Premier Robert Philp, 5 October 1901, In letter 10176 of 1901, PRE/89, QSA cited in Moore, 2000, 23.

²¹⁵ Walter Maxwell to Premier Robert Philp, 5 October 1901, In letter 10176 of 1901, PRE/89, QSA. cited in Moore, 2000, 23.

²¹⁶ “Queensland Sugar Industry: Revolution in Manufacturing : Deportation of Islanders”. *They Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842-1954)*. 21st March 1905, 3.

²¹⁷ “Queensland Sugar Industry: Revolution in Manufacturing : Deportation of Islanders”. *They Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842-1954)*. 21st March 1905, 3.

would be absolutely necessary”²¹⁸. Clive Moore ²¹⁹ noted that the Queensland Royal Commission which collected evidence expressed that not only would there be considerable effects on the Islanders but also on the “labour supply for the sugar industry”.²²⁰ The English newspaper the *Field* in 1904 printed an editorial written by John Hughes which explored what impacts the deportation was going to have on the sugar industry. Mr. Hughes who was mentioned as being a member of the Royal Colonial Institute²²¹, warned “what will become of the sugar industry in Queensland when the new Act stopping the employment of Kanaka labourers comes into effect is a matter of the most serious consequences”.²²² He also asserted that “sugarcane cannot be economically done by white labour”.²²³ John Hughes’ letter exemplifies the sentiment that the sugar industry would turn into disarray when the South Sea Islanders were deported and the scepticism many held towards the government position that white men could better perform the tasks of sugar cultivation:

Surely an industry which has cost thousands to develop will not be allowed to be ruined by an Act of parliament passed by votes of the white labour class, who ignorantly suppose that such action will cause an increased demand of unskilled agriculture labour in the sugar cane field?²²⁴

The article also discussed comments made around labour, Kanaka’s and deportation. The discussion emphasised the perceived connection between the employment of Island labour and the wider prosperity of the community:

The development of the tropical portions of Australia, essential to the growth of the commerce of Australia and prosperity to the people in as much as development cannot take place without employment of Coloured Labour. It is advisable to amend Federal Legislation so as to permit the establishment of a well-regulated system of employing Coloured Labour.²²⁵

²¹⁸ “Queensland Sugar Industry: Revolution in Manufacturing : Deportation of Islanders”. *The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842-1954)*. 21st March 1905, 3.

²¹⁹ Clive Moore, “Good-bye, Queensland, Good-bye, White Australia; Good-bye Christians”: Australia’s South Sea Islander Community and Deportation, 1901-1908” *New Federalist*, No. 4, December 2000, pp. 22-29.

²²⁰ Moore, “Good-bye, Queensland, Good-bye, White Australia; Good-bye Christians”, 28.

²²¹ The Royal Colonial Institute was an organization set up in Britain to discuss matters relating to the Colonies. See, for example: “Anglo-Colonial Notes,” *New Zealand Herald*. 5 January 1901, 5; “Personal Notes from London,” *Otago Daily Times*. 23 January 1901, 3; “Royal Colonial Institute,” *Colonist*. 1 July 1901, 3.

²²² “Queensland Sugar Cane Industry”, *Field*, 16 January 1904, 32.

²²³ “Queensland Sugar Cane Industry”, *Field*, 16 January 1904, 32.

²²⁴ “Queensland Sugar Cane Industry”, *Field*. 16 January 1904, 32.

²²⁵ “Queensland Sugar Cane Industry”, *Field*. 16 January 1904, 32.

Similar arguments on the need for better regulation of non-white labour were made by the *Morning Post*. An article on 13 June 1905 called for a more considered approach to deportation suggesting more could be done to “regulate it” rather than the “flat-out” deportation encompassed by the legislation. To this end the Chamber of Commerce suggested “it is advisable to amend Federal Legislation so as to permit the establishment of a well-regulated system of employing Coloured Labour”.²²⁶ The fact that alternatives were canvassed reflects that the deportation of ‘coloured labourers’ was extensively discussed in Australia and the content of these debates in turn was reported extensively in British publications. The article illustrates the roles of organisations such as the Royal Colonial Institute in promoting discussion and dissemination of events and to the perceived financial difficulties arising from deportation is an example of the circulation of ideas around the ‘British World’.²²⁷

The circulation of ideas was also evident in newspaper articles which drew on Australian perspectives. The *Morning Post* approvingly noted the views of Mr. W. McCreedy, who had owned a plantation for more than 22 years in Mackay. McCreedy, who reportedly, “offers his book for inspection” affirmed “that without hesitation that in the North the sugar industry will perish if coloured labour is withdrawn”.²²⁸ This statement by Mr. W. McCreedy²²⁹ was also critical of Prime Minister Reid who, it was argued, had supported the 1901 Act without recognising its full impact upon Queensland:

Mr. Reid, if he returns from Queensland without announcing a definite policy in respect to employment upon plantations in the far North, must accept a fresh responsibility exceeding that he incurred in 1901 by his support of the Kanaka Exclusion Act then passed. Or if he confesses to have learned by experience that some remedial measures are required to meet that particular case, he will add to the intensity of the opposition to his Ministry from the labour members there and elsewhere. He cannot recover their votes in any case, and has therefore little to lose and much to gain by allowing further time for the experimental cultivation of sugar-cane in the remotest district as well as a continue of the existing bounty, Will he grab the nettle boldly?²³⁰

²²⁶ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

²²⁷ Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire*, 39-40.

²²⁸ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

²²⁹ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

²³⁰ “The Kanaka Labour Question,” *Morning Post*, 13 June 1905, 7.

Some articles framed the deportations as a potential stimulus for diversifying agriculture in Australia, particularly Queensland. An article in the *County Down Spectator and Ulster Standard* discussed alternatives to sugar cultivation if they could not find enough workers to replace the departing Islanders.²³¹ The search for alternatives was in part, informed by racial concerns: “in view of the coming deportation of the South Sea Islanders, who cultivate sugar for farmers, it is doubtful if sugar growing can be carried out with white labour”.²³² The alternative discussed in this article was dairy farming: “an industry experiment is being tried in the tropical districts of Queensland- the erection of dairy”.²³³ The sentiments expressed in articles that whites could not do the job of the South Sea Islanders, were contrary to those of pro-white labour organisations and the new Australian Federal Government, who argued South Sea Islanders were taking white men’s jobs in the sugar cultivation. The reference to sugar owners thinking of alternatives for their land suggests the deportation of Pacific Labourers was being framed as an opportunity for progress, mitigating the concerns noted earlier that it might set back the development of Queensland.

Fijian Perspectives on Deportation

The economic implications of deportation were also discussed in Fijian newspapers. An article in the *Suva Times* entitled “The Sugar Industry” (pictured below) differentiated between the cultivation of sugar and compared production according to “White Acres’ and “Black Acres”.²³⁴ The context in which this article was written concerned discussion of a telegraph between the Fijian Minister of Customs Mr. McLean and Mr. W. A. Irving, the Queensland collector of Customs, in which the former asked the latter for statistics around sugar cultivation. In the first telegram received it notes “only a trifling portion of cane grown in NO 1 district...is cultivated by white labour”.²³⁵ The writer of this article acknowledged the above quote as part of “a very interesting letter”.²³⁶ What is interesting for the purposes of this research is the way in which white and non-white labour was quantified according to

²³¹ “Dairy Factories in Queensland,” *County Down Spectator and Ulster Standard*. 14th July 1905, p.g.7

²³² “Dairy Factories in Queensland,” *County Down Spectator and Ulster Standard*. 14th July 1905, p.g.7

²³³ “Dairy Factories in Queensland,” *County Down Spectator and Ulster Standard*. 14th July 1905, p.g.7

²³⁴ “The Sugar Industry,” *Suva Times*, 5 July 1905, N.P.N.

²³⁵ “The Sugar Industry,” *Suva Times*. 5 July 1905, N.P.N.

²³⁶ “The Sugar Industry,” *Suva Times*. 5 July 1905, N.P.N.

different racial groups and it also demonstrates how the discussion of black versus white cultivated sugar was discussed both in newspapers and in formal correspondence. Collection of such statistics reinforced notions that the cultivation of sugar, which had previously been seen as a black ‘coloured’ only trade, was now being conducted by both white and non-white labour. The figures produced by Mr. Irving showed that indeed “black acres” produced the most sugar, underlining the potential loss to the industry if they were to be deported.

AREA UNDER CANE.		
District	White Acres	Black Acres.
No. 1 (tropical) ..	3,344	32,712
No. 2	17,472	19,212
No. 3	18,811	21,625
No. 4	5,797	826
Total	45,242	74,375
SUGAR PRODUCED.		
District	White Acres	Black Acres.
No. 1 (tropical) ..	3,950	49,209
No. 2	17,991	24,707
No. 3	13,805	31,210
No. 4	3,658	490
Total	39,404	105,616

Figure 1: *Suva Times*, 5th July 1905, N.P.N. “The Sugar Industry”

This figure shows the amount of sugar produced by “white acres” and “black acres” within the different districts. It is interesting to see the stark contrast between district one and district four. District one²³⁷ is noted as being ‘tropical’, which reflected the notion that people like Pacific Labourers were better at cultivating sugar in ‘tropical’ climates. But this shows the racial undertone and with the ‘new’ way of thinking that whites could now be a part of the cultivation of plantations in Queensland (hotter climates). One interesting statement that again Irving makes is that in his telegraph he points out that “the total number of sugar-cane producers has increased from 2,997 in 1903 to 3,422 in 1904”.²³⁸ This shows that the number of sugar producers/plantations owners had increased by 87.38% in one year, which is more than double. Arguably, reporting the increasing number of producers and plantation owners implied confidence in the ongoing future of the industry. In this way it underlined the arguments against the economic viability of the deportations as ‘whites’, although still in the minority of sugar producers were seen as being capable of growing and harvesting of sugar.

²³⁷ Note: The article does not identify what the type are districts 2,3 and 4. Unlike district one which is identified as “tropical”.

²³⁸ “The Sugar Industry,” *Suva Times*. 5 July 1905, N.P.N.

The *Suva Times* had a different take on the economic impact of deportation than the accounts in some New Zealand and British newspapers, seeing it as a potential financial gain for the Fijian plantation owners. The article advanced the argument they offered the possibility of

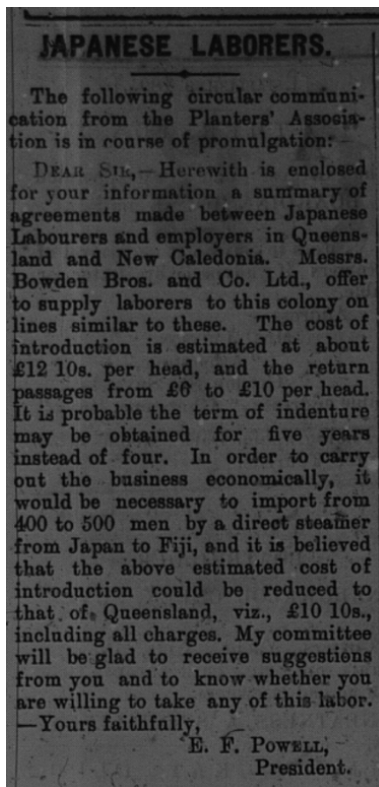


Figure 2: E.F. Powell President of the Fiji Planters Association in the *Suva Times* 24th November 1906, p.g.4

acquiring cheap labourers, whom they would not have to train to cultivate sugar. The *Suva Times* produced a letter written to them by John Gaggin from Australia, in which he suggested the Fiji Government and the Fiji Planters Association to consider taking deported Islanders:

Now if the Fijian Government, or even the Fijian Planters Associations would approach the Federal Government on this matter, they might obtain some 600 or so good workers- who would never leave the group- at a cost of a second-class fare for each, from Queensland to Fiji, which in the case of 600 men would be little.²³⁹

John Gaggin’s letter may have had some impact on the Fijian Government, as the *Suva Times* wrote in November that Pacific Island deportees were coming to Fiji to work.²⁴⁰ The article recounted what the Australian Prime Minister had said on this matter “in regards to the kanakas being deported to Fiji, said the matter was one arranged by the Fijian government, and the

Labourers went there of their own accord. It was proposed to settle them and their families on land which cultivators were wanted”.²⁴¹ The article mentioned that 200 deported Pacific Islanders were already organized to arrive, but an additional 500 were scheduled to arrive.²⁴² The decision to invite Pacific Island workers to Fiji reflects another element of the British empire – the emergence of a network of both white and non-white labour that could be selectively called upon according to economic need. In this particular case, Pacific Island labour was seen as cheaper than Japanese labour. An article from July 1905 entitled “Japanese Labour”²⁴³ by the *Suva Times* and written by the President of the Fiji Planters

²³⁹ *Suva Times*, 15 September 1906, 1.

²⁴⁰ See for Example: “Kanaka Deportation: Arrangements for returning Islanders: Proposal from Fiji”. *The Queenslander (Brisbane)*. 29 September 1906, 35.

²⁴¹ “Kanakas for Fiji,” *Suva Times*, 24 November 1906, 4.

²⁴² “Kanakas for Fiji,” *Suva Times*, 24 November 1906, 4.

²⁴³ “Japanese Labour,” *Suva Times*. 12 July 1905, 4.

Association E. F. Powell, discussed the cost of importing Japanese Labour to work in the Fijian sugar plantation's.²⁴⁴ Mr. Powell claimed that it would be cheaper and easier to procure the Pacific Islanders who would be deported from Queensland, due to cheaper nature of their ship fare and that they were already well skilled for this job. The comparison between Pacific labour and Japanese labour in this context suggests there may have been a spectrum in which "coloured labour" was viewed with some ethnicities temporarily afforded acceptance for particular purposes.

Concerns over the Rights of States versus Federal Government in Economic Development

Related to the criticism of deportation on economic grounds were concerns the Federal Government was over-riding the rights of States and compromising their economic development by proceeding with the legislation. *The Morning Post*²⁴⁵ on 6 December 1901, highlighted this issue in its discussion of the forthcoming Pacific Island Labourers Bill:

Mr. Barton will find it difficult to recover his position with Queensland. Even Sir S. Griffith, who was one of the pioneers of the Federation, has joined the host of Federal Critics. He sees in the Pacific Islanders Act the thin end of the wedge, the total disregard of the states wishes and the convenient forgetfulness of Federal promises. When Queensland agreed to federation it was understood that the Kanaka labour question should be ever regarded as a Queensland question. Mr. Barton, however has thrown this understanding to the winds and has capitulated to a Government which cares more about votes than promises.²⁴⁶

The concern over state's rights was an ongoing theme in newspaper coverage. Premier Reid's tour of Queensland received considerable coverage in newspapers in July 1905²⁴⁷ with the *Morning Post* noting "the sugar industry ranks among the most important to the state".²⁴⁸ The main theme of these articles was on the question of black labour versus white labour and the economic impact it would have on the Queensland economy, the underlying suggestion being the Federal Government had overridden the wishes of one of its constituent states. The *Morning Post* suggested, for Queensland "black labour has been and remains

²⁴⁴ "Japanese Labour," *Suva Times*. 12 July 1905, 4.

²⁴⁵ "Pacific Islanders Bill," *Morning Post*, 6 December 1901, 7.

²⁴⁶ *Morning Post*. 6th December 1901, pg. 7

²⁴⁷ "Federate Australia: The Sugar Industry- The Premiers Tour," *Morning Post*, 3 July 1905, 9.

"Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission," *Morning Post*, 22 July 1905, 9.

²⁴⁸ "Federate Australia," *Morning Post*. 3 July 1905, 9.

supreme”²⁴⁹ and was needed for the sustainability of the Queensland economy and the production of sugar. The focus of this article was on what would happen to the sugar industry if ‘Kanakas’ were deported, rather than the effect on the ‘kanaka’. Moreover, the reference to the ‘Commonwealth’ suggests that the deportations were framed as an issue for Australia as a whole rather than being solely a Queensland issue:

Next year all the kanakas are no longer to be eligible for employment; some will have left for their homes in the pacific and all but a few will can be deported...if therefore the Kanaka go and are not replaced some plantations must lie idle and the industry, which this year is able to supply the whole demand within the Commonwealth will shrivel. Hence all parties in the state whether partisans of white labour desiring more bounties or partisans of black labour desiring to keep the Kanaka have united in urging Federal members to visit them and witness for themselves the circumstances of the sugar industry demanding further aid.²⁵⁰

The *Morning Post*²⁵¹ issued a follow up article titled “Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission”. This article highlighted how Pacific Island labour was the most discussed topic during the visit to Queensland, with the Premier meeting with the Kanakas, in which it was recorded that “the grievances of all the grievance-mongers respectfully noted”.²⁵² The article positioned Kanaks as being at least partially “civilised” and suggested that it was the plantation owners who were the “grievance mongers”.²⁵³ The article noted the continuing objections some growers made that white labour could not operate as successfully in Queensland as Pacific Island labourers and Reid’s rejection of that view:

The representations made on behalf of the planters who find black labour most profitable and least anxious were discounted at Bundaberg more than anywhere else. The case from the small white growers were presented at its strongest, because its object lessons were in their favour. On the other hand, that Kanakas are perhaps more generally civilised and better cared for in the south than in the remoter north, where their labour value is higher.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ “Federate Australia,” *Morning Post*, 3 July 1905, 9.

²⁵⁰ “Federate Australia,” *Morning Post*, 3 July 1905, 9.

²⁵¹ “Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission,” *Morning Post*, 22 July 1905, 9.

²⁵² “Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission”. *Morning Post*, 22 July 1905, 9.

²⁵³ “Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission”. *Morning Post*, 22 July 1905, 9.

²⁵⁴ “Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission”. *Morning Post*, 22 July 1905, 9.

The *Morning Post*, also highlighted the concerns of some of the plantation owners who were going to be affected by the 1901 Pacific Island Deportation Act that “they cannot get white men to face the continuous moist heat of the fields”.²⁵⁵ The overall tenor of the article negated the economic argument against deportation by arguing white labour could perform the task. What is also worth noting here is the relatively positive description of the Kanakas as “generally civilised”, the implication perhaps being that they could safely return home. The *Globe*²⁵⁶ backed up the sentiment issued by the *Morning Post*, although they framed the deportations as being driven by the Australian Labour party, whereas they had cross-party support:

The Australian Commonwealth has become confronted with a serious problem. In its adoption of a “White Australia” policy it has solemnly decreed that within the next few months the whole of the Polynesian Labourers or Kanakas, residing in Northern Queensland must be deported, in order that their labour may be replaced by that of the white man, although experience has shown that it is useless in semi-tropical country. The Labour-Socialist party will permit no deviation from the policy. Like Shylock, they are determined to have their pound of flesh, no matter at what cost. With a view to enlightening members of the Federal Parliament respecting the actual state of affairs a number were invited to visit Queensland at the cost of the State Government.²⁵⁷

This article further discussed how the visit was ‘meant’ to open the eyes of the Federal Government to what would transpire with the deportation:

To the great body of the Federal visitors Northern Queensland was an utterly unknown region, and they speedily learned the difficulty of appreciating the warmth of the struggle between black and white labour from a distance.....They insisted that semi-tropical Queensland is essentially a white man’s country and refuse to hear or see anything to the contrary. Their one idea is that with the aid of a heavy bonus, representing an enormous tax upon the Australian people, the sugar growers will be enabled to dispense with coloured labour.²⁵⁸

This article highlighted the discord between the growers, the Queensland government and the Federal Government. It implied that the Federal Government were unwilling to compromise with the sugar growers, and as a consequence, would place a hefty tax upon the Australian people essentially forcing the growers to be unable to use “coloured labour”,

²⁵⁵ “Federate Australia: Prime Minister Return Sugar Industry Labour, Land Sale Commission”. *Morning Post*, 22 July 1905, 9.

²⁵⁶ “The Queensland Kanaka,” *Globe* 19 July 1905, 9.

²⁵⁷ “The Queensland Kanaka,” *Globe*. 19 July 1905, 9.

²⁵⁸ “The Queensland Kanaka,” *Globe*. 19 July 1905, 9.

rendering their cultivation useless. The article notes Federal Government had made it clear that they did not plan on backtracking from this policy, and that the visit to Queensland, which it was hoped would change their opinions, was unfruitful for the growers who wished to keep their South Sea Island Labourers. Collectively, these articles highlighted a recurring theme in the media coverage of the deportation – that criticism of the action was framed primarily as an issue of the Federal government usurping states’ rights rather than a humanitarian issue.

Professor Gregory’s Economic and Technological Arguments

New Zealand newspapers tended to support the argument that the deportation of Pacific Island labourers was evidence white labour could replace ‘coloured’ labour without compromising productivity and economic viability of the industries in which they worked. In this regard, the views of Professor Gregory, Fellow of the Royal Society, were publicised in both New Zealand and England. Gregory was a geologist, writer and explorer who moved from England to Australia to work at the University of Melbourne as a geology and mineralogy professor in 1900, and these credentials lent authority to his writings which were widely cited. His article “White Labour in Tropical Agriculture: A Great Australian experiment” was published in the English intellectual periodical²⁵⁹ *The Nineteenth Century*, in February 1910,²⁶⁰ and was also discussed in the editorial section of the *Otago Daily Times*.²⁶¹ Professor Gregory aimed, with reference to empirical data, to demonstrate the perception that the sugar industry would crumble following the expulsion of the Kanakas from Queensland was

²⁵⁹ *The Nineteenth Century* was a literary magazine which ran monthly, founded by James Knowles in 1877. Designed for intellectuals containing debates and discussion. It also ran monthly symposium which contributed to the success of the magazine. James Knowles was a member of the Metaphysical Society, and society members also contributed articles to the magazine. It was also seen as a natural magazine where contributors could disagree without interference from an editor, thus it became seen as a responsive liberal establishment. Information derived from Wikipedia, “The Nineteenth Century” retrieved from:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Nineteenth_Century_\(periodical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Nineteenth_Century_(periodical))

See also: Ann Parry. “The Home Rule Crisis and the ‘Liberal’ Periodicals 1886-1895: Three Case Studies”, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 22, no.1. (1989): 18-30.

²⁶⁰ J. W. Gregory, “White Labour in Tropical Agriculture: A Great Australian experiment,” *The Nineteenth Century*, 67, February 1910, 368–380.

²⁶¹ “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁶¹ “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

wrong. The editorial stated his opinion “is devoted to showing that these pessimistic predictions have been falsified”.²⁶² It further reported on Gregory’s findings:

In 1905 there were 8452 coloured persons engaged in the Australian sugar industry, and the deportation of Kanakas in 1905-6 left the industry practically dependent on white labour. Yet Professor Gregory adduces figures to show that instead of the Queensland sugar industry having been ruined and its production diminished, both the acreage under sugar and the production have increased, the value of sugar properties has risen, and notwithstanding the high rate of white wages, the cost of sugarcane production has fallen.²⁶³

The article also reported Professor Gregory held the view that white labour was no more expensive than black labour, and in the long run would be more cost effective: “the rapid extension of the sugar industry of late years, in spite of the revolution of the labour supply, affords illustrators of the fact that, owing [to its] greater efficiency, white labour is often no more costly than black”.²⁶⁴ Gregory further argued “he found none who claimed that there was any serious increase in the cost of cane production as the result of the use of white labour”.²⁶⁵ The article, did, however qualify the statement that white workers who worked in the sugar cane plantation were cheaper noting that because they were seasonal workers, and not employed all year round, they worked out cheaper than the Pacific Island labourers:

At first glance a rather extraordinary assertion is that the comparison to be made between a kanaka costing so much a year and white labourer cost so much a week for perhaps only four or six weeks. It is admitted that if a cane-grower had to employ labourers for a whole year they would cost far more than kanakas.²⁶⁶

Gregory’s views were also reported in the *Wanganui Herald*, which quoted him²⁶⁷ stating that “since the kanakas were deported from Queensland and white labour introduced the production of Australian-grown sugar has increased from 92,506 tons in 1902-3 to 195,900 tons in 1908-9”.²⁶⁸ What is also of interest about this article is the provision of detailed statistics that quantified the contribution of white labour, reflecting the wider interest in quantification and classification characteristic of the period.²⁶⁹ Professor Gregory, not only

²⁶² “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁶³ “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁶⁴ “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁶⁵ “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁶⁶ “An Australian Experiment,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁶⁷ “White Labour in Queensland,” *Wanganui Herald*, 10 March 1910, 4.

²⁶⁸ “White Labour in Queensland,” *Wanganui Herald*, 10 March 1910, 4.

²⁶⁹ “Professor Gregory gives figures which seem to show – incredible though it may seem” *Wanganui Herald*, 10 March 1910, 4.

held strong view points on the economic side of using whites instead of Pacific Islanders, he also held very strong views on race. A number of scholars have noted Gregory's enthusiasm for the White Australia Policy. Bernard Elgey Leake mentions that after his time in Melbourne, Gregory became "almost an obsessive supporter of the 'Keep Australia White' campaign".²⁷⁰ This was reflected in the newspaper which stated "Professor Gregory adduces evidence which he claims shows that the white men actually stood the tropical climate better than the kanakas".²⁷¹ Leake also states that "the crux of the matter was Gregory's belief that racial interbreeding was 'abhorrent' and produced 'inferior offspring'".²⁷² Schaffer made similar observations in his book *Racial Science and British Society, 1920-62* in which he cited Gregory "concurring that 'miscegenation' would lead to a 'chaotic constitution' in children".²⁷³

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how newspapers reported on the economic implications of deporting Pacific Islanders from Australia. A number of newspaper articles objected to the deportation of Pacific Islanders on the basis that it would cause economic hardship in Queensland and that by extension the 'progress' of colonisation would be affected. Some of these articles restated earlier arguments that white labourers could not work in the tropics, which was a widely accepted notion until the last decade of the nineteenth century. These arguments, however, were countered by assertions improved technology meant Pacific Island labour was no longer required; that white men could in fact do the job of sugar cane harvesting. In this way, the deportation of Pacific Island labourers was incorporated into 'progress' narratives of Colonisation, in the sense that it was argued that owing to physical and technological progress their services were no longer required. In addition, some newspaper reports suggested those deported had been able to save money so were in a reasonable financial position. Moreover, some of the humanitarian concerns raised were countered by arguments Fiji could take deported workers. The *Suva Times*, for example, saw

²⁷⁰ Bernard Elgey Leake, "The Life and Work of Professor J. W. Gregory FRS (1864-1932) Geologist, Writer and Explorer," *Geological Society Memoir*, no. 34. (2011): 175.

²⁷¹ "An Australian Experiment," *Otago Daily Times*. 28 March 1910, 4.

²⁷² Leake, "The Life and Work of Professor J. W. Gregory," 175.

²⁷³ G. Schaffer, *Racial Science and British Society, 1930-62*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2008), 47 .

the deportations as an economic opportunity for the Fiji Government and the Fiji's Planter's Association to obtain cheap labour whom they would not have to teach how to cultivate sugar. These newspaper reports reflect the history of imperialism more broadly, notably how public discourse, on matters such as non-white Labour, could change according to shifts in local and imperial politics. Although framed slightly differently according to local circumstances, newspaper coverage of the economic impact of deportation was broadly similar in New Zealand and Britain, with some opinion formers such as Gregory being cited in both places. Discussion of the economic impacts of deportation was also, however, interconnected with humanitarian concerns. The following chapter will evaluate how religious and humanitarian aspects of the deportation were discussed in newspapers.

CHAPTER THREE: Religious and Humanitarian Perspectives on Deportation

This chapter will examine newspaper discussion around religious and humanitarian concerns related to deportation. One feature of these discussions was the Christianisation of the Pacific Islanders that had occurred during their time in Australia and concerns that deportation could harm these Christianised Islanders if they were to return to ‘uncivilised’ communities. In addition to examining religious concerns around deportation, this chapter also examines how newspapers discussed the broader humanitarian concerns connected to this policy. Humanitarianism in its broader sense was one of the key elements of British colonisation, as reflected in the notion of the ‘civilising mission’.

Religious Perspectives on Deportation

Religion played an important role in shaping opinion in the British Empire as it was a global phenomenon where Missionaries linked to various British denominations actively sought to propagate the gospel. Missionaries and Church groups were in some instances in close contact with non-white peoples in Australia and New Zealand because of the mission work they undertook with these peoples. To some degree, their perspectives countered some of the dominant narratives against non-whites.²⁷⁴ As previously noted, the role of the Anglican denomination and the role they played in fighting Pacific Island deportation has been discussed by Mercer. She notes that “both Bishop White and Frodsham, the Anglican Bishops of Carpentaria and North Queensland, campaigned strongly against the return of Christian and married Islander’s to villages where their lives would be in danger”.²⁷⁵ Mercer also describes what Bishop Frodsham offered as an alternative in 1906.²⁷⁶ “Frodsham” Mercer noted “urged a formation of an agricultural community under Christian influence at Fiu on

²⁷⁴ Moloughney and Stenhouse, “Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth”, 59-64.

²⁷⁵ Patricia Mercer, “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940,” 105.

²⁷⁶ *Frodsham to Kidston*, 8 Mar.1906, PRE/84, QSA. PRE/84-91, Correspondence and associated papers relating to Pacific Island Labourers, 1889, 1891-95, 1901-7 cited in Mercer “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940”. 1981, 121

Malaita, were returning Solomon Islanders could be sent”.²⁷⁷ Mercer also discussed the role of Clergymen such as Pritt Gairloch and James Gillespie²⁷⁸ who were very active in arguing the Islanders plight. Mercer cited a letter Reverend Gillespie wrote and sent to the *Brisbane Courier* which was published on 10 January 1907 which supported keeping the Islanders in Queensland. Not only were religious leaders worried about potential ramifications, but so too were Europeans based in the Islands. Mercer notes that “Charles Woodford, the resident commissioner in the Solomon Islands, was concerned with the dangers of returning home for those who had recruited in order to avoid punishment for misdeeds and those whose marriages did not satisfy local marriage rules”.²⁷⁹

However, in contrast to the Presbyterian and Anglican (as well as independent religious sects and independent clergymen) views on deportation, many of the missionaries in the New Hebrides felt deportation to be a positive. Mercer argues that the “New Hebrideans Missionaries, however, did not share these anxieties; as long-standing opponents of recruiting, they welcomed deportation which would, moreover, greatly augment their flock”.²⁸⁰ Religion subsequently became a significant part of Pasifika identity in Australia, many of them having converted to Christianity. It is interesting to see how different denominations viewed the deportation of Pacific Islanders, while many fought the deportation, others felt that deportation would be in the best interest of the Pacific people.

Historically, New Zealand Churches had been very critical of ‘blackbirding’. Their sentiments in this regard providing some historical context for the ways in which New Zealand churches reacted to the deportations. Illustrative of this is an address delivered by W.H. Ash at the Ravensbourne Presbyterian Church, Dunedin in December 1893 entitled ‘The South Seas “MAN” Traffic’, which was reprinted largely verbatim in the *Otago Daily Times*.²⁸¹ The editor recounted W. H. Ash’s statement “the Labour party don’t want coloured-labourers in

²⁷⁷ Mercer, “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940”.1981, 105.

²⁷⁸ Referenced in Patricia Mercer, “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940,” 106.

²⁷⁹ Mercer, “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940”. 1981, 106.

²⁸⁰ *Quarterly Jottings from New Hebrides*, No. 35, Jan 1902, p.23 cited in Mercer “The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940,” 106.

²⁸¹ “The South Seas ‘MAN’ Traffic,” *Otago Daily Times*. 22 December 1893, 6.

Queensland”.²⁸² Ash argued that the term ‘Kanaka’ meant man in Polynesian, thus meaning ‘man traffic’ and therefore argued they should be treated as such: “Kanaka Traffic is a slight veiling of the phrase man traffic”.²⁸³ The article commented that “the number of human beings whose lives were sacrificed during the recruiting can never be accurately known”.²⁸⁴ Ash argued that the presence of Presbyterian Missionaries in the Pacific Islands justified the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland being involved in this debate: “Presbyterian missionaries have been labouring in the New Hebrides for 45 years; ... it now has three missionaries there and spends over £1000 a year upon the islands.”²⁸⁵

Religion played some role in newspaper characterisations of the deportations. A 1902 edition of the *Evening Mail* included an extensive discussion of a parliamentary paper discussing the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 under the heading “Queensland”. The article explicitly noted the Christian nature of the petitioners plea stating that the parliamentary paper contained “a petition to his Majesty, signed by 3,000 Pacific Island Labour Residents in Queensland, praying for the disallowance of the Act as passed by the Australian Commonwealth”.²⁸⁶ The article is an example of how the struggles of ‘coloured’ people fighting against a ‘white’ Act were reported within a newspaper. In addition to acknowledging their Christianisation, the reference to the Pacific Islanders ‘praying’ implies a contrast being drawn between Christianised ‘Kanakas’ praying for relief and the ‘uncivilised’ place to which they were to be deported. This is evident in a later statement in the “They [the Islanders] also

Downing-street, August 30, 1902.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 23rd June last, forwarding a petition addressed to his Majesty by certain Pacific Island Labourers domiciled in Queensland with regard to the Pacific Island Labourers Act, 1901, of the Commonwealth of Australia.

2. You have already been informed that it has been decided not to advise his Majesty to disallow the Act. That decision was taken on the broad constitutional ground that the Act involves no Imperial public interest, and that in other matters his Majesty's Government are not prepared to take upon themselves the functions of a Court of Appeal from the Parliament of a self-governing Colony.

3. The petition forwarded in your despatch contains nothing to weaken the force of those considerations. In laying it before the King, I have therefore been unable to advise his Majesty to give any directions with regard to it; and I have to request that you will cause the petitioners to be informed accordingly.

4. I may add that, before any active steps are taken to arrange for the deportation of Pacific Island labourers from Queensland, the Commonwealth Government propose to adopt such precautionary measures as are desirable to ensure their return to their proper villages. It is being suggested to the Prime Minister that, with that view, the Government should place itself in communication with the Resident Deputy Commissioners in the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides; and I have no doubt that the Commonwealth Government will do its utmost to minimize any hardships consequent upon the deportation of the Pacific Island labourers.

I have, &c.,
J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Figure 3: *Evening Mail*, 29th September 1902, p.g.3

call attention to the inevitable distress which must ensue if they are sent back to the uncivilised Islands”.²⁸⁷ This statement suggested to the reader that if the Islanders were sent back, they would not be safe as many had become Europeanised and going back could result

²⁸² “The South Seas ‘MAN’ Traffic,” *Otago Daily Times*, 22 December 1893, 6.

²⁸³ “The South Seas ‘MAN’ Traffic,” *Otago Daily Times*, 22 December 1893, 6.

²⁸⁴ “The South Seas ‘MAN’ Traffic,” *Otago Daily Times*, 22 December 1893, 6.

²⁸⁵ “The South Seas ‘MAN’ Traffic,” *Otago Daily Times*, 22 December 1893, 6.

²⁸⁶ “Queensland,” *Evening Mail*, 29 September 1902, 3.

²⁸⁷ “Queensland,” *Evening Mail*, 29 September 1902, 3.

in hardships due to these changes or even death. One further item of interest here is the implication that the Christianisation of the workers was one of the positive features of the labour trade and a favourable reflection on those who had ministered to them. The response from Chamberlain, indicating the Commonwealth Government had been asked to adopt 'precautionary measures', reflects the tension in Britain between wanting to be seen to be addressing humanitarian concerns while also acknowledging the right of the Australian government to make its own decisions. Chamberlain's reply reflected the reluctance of Britain to interfere in decisions made by its colonies. It was also a typical response to petitions by indigenous peoples. When Tawhiao, the Māori King, visited Britain in 1884 seeking redress against confiscation he was told the British Government had no authority to override the legislation passed in its colonies, although Belgrave argues his visit raised concerns about the treatment of Māori in New Zealand.²⁸⁸

The Christianisation of many of the Pacific Islanders resident in Australia was, according to some articles, a complicating moral factor in their deportation. The *Weekly Journal* (Hartlepool)²⁸⁹, quoted the following comments made by the Bishop of North Queensland, Dr Barlow:

I have never met a dark race so intelligent, so quick to apprehend Christian teaching. It is a most touching sight to see perhaps a hundred of these men in their white suits coming quietly and reverently up to the sacrament of Holy communion after the white congregation have received.²⁹⁰

Barlow further complimented their honesty and work ethic: "As to their performance of their work my chancellor Mr Justice Club, told me recently that in the whole course of his experience in North Queensland, he had not found a Christian South Sea Islander tell a single lie in giving evidence".²⁹¹ This article suggests that not only had the Islanders assimilated to the Christian way in that they were honest and reliable workers, they also lived out the moral virtues of Christianity. This was a contrary perspective to many Australian newspaper articles

²⁸⁸ Michael Belgrave, *Dancing with the King: The Rise and Fall of the King Country 1864-1885* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 294-338.

²⁸⁹ "The Sunday Corner," *Weekly Journal* (Hartlepool), 6 January 1905, 4.

²⁹⁰ "The Sunday Corner," *Weekly Journal* 6 January 1905, 4.

²⁹¹ "The Sunday Corner," *Weekly Journal*, 6 January 1905, 4.

such as those published by the *Worker*.²⁹² Barlow's position as a Bishop and the reference to another significant personage the Chancellor within the article may well have given additional standing to these sentiments among some readers.

There were, however, some events involving missionaries, which cast Pacific peoples in Australia in an unfavourable light in newspaper reporting. The murder of the missionary Reverend Charles C. Godden in the New Hebrides, by a deported "Kanaka", in 1906 was the subject of considerable newspaper discussion.²⁹³ The Brisbane newspaper the *Telegraph*, reported on Godden's death²⁹⁴ and discussed how his murderer was a returned labourer, quoting Mr. F. W. Allen stating that there has been "continuous transshipment of returned labourers to the New Hebrides for many years..... There is no doubt that the murderer of Mr. Godden was one of these returned labourers".²⁹⁵ British and New Zealand newspapers reported the event in a similar manner. The English newspaper *Reynolds Newspaper* reported "he committed the murder as an expression of revenge on a white man for the policy of deportation of coloured labour which prevails in the Australian Commonwealth".²⁹⁶ Some newspapers, albeit indirectly, linked Godden's murder, with the supply of firearms to indigenous peoples. The *Liverpool Daily Post* wrote:

Mr Godden had charge of the mission work in Opa, Where the Melanesian Mission maintains forty schools. Mr Godden wrote six months ago that there was a great deal of fighting and that he was much troubled over the circumstances that traders were supplying the natives with firearms.²⁹⁷

Reverend Godden was born in 1876 in Victoria, Australia and was ordained in 1900. The Samuel Marsden Archives state that "He was murdered by a local man, Alamemea, who had been pressed into working on the Queensland cane fields and bore a grudge against white

²⁹² Corris, "White Australia in Action," 237; Harris, "The Struggle against Pacific Islander Labour 1868-1902," 40-48.

²⁹³ Examples on the murder of Godden in British newspaper include: "Missionary Murdered," *Bolton Evening News* 30 October 1906, 7; "Missionary Murdered," *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 30 October 1906, 2; "Missionary Murdered," *Reynold's Newspaper*, 6 November 1906, 7; "Murder of a Missionary", *Eastern Daily Press*, 10 December 1906, 10. See for New Zealand examples: "The Murder of Mr. Godden: A Treacherous Attack" *New Zealand Herald*, 13th November 1906, 3. "New Hebrides Murder" *Poverty Bay Herald*, 15 November 1906, 3. "Murder of a Missionary in the New Hebrides" *Otago Daily Times*, 27 November 1906, 2.

²⁹⁴ "Murder of Mr Godden", *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), 1 November 1906, 5.

²⁹⁵ "Murder of Mr Godden", *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), 1 November 1906, 5.

²⁹⁶ *Reynold's Newspaper*, 6 November 1906, 7.

²⁹⁷ "Murder of a Missionary", *Liverpool Daily Post*, 30 October 1906, 8.

man”.²⁹⁸ The murder of Godden may have lessened sympathy for the deportees among some contemporary newspaper readers. There are some parallels between this event and Bishop Patteson, who was murdered in 1871 and was subsequently viewed as a Martyr of the Anglican Church. The murder of Patteson in 1871²⁹⁹ is widely credited with turning public sentiment against “Blackbirding”.³⁰⁰ Reverend Godden’s death, however, did not receive as much coverage as Bishop Patterson’s. One potential reason is the deportation process was already well advanced and the public debate was largely over by the time it occurred, whereas Patteson’s killing occurred at the height of the “blackbirding” trade. Because of the timing, the death of Patteson was widely cited as exemplifying the evils of the Pacific Island labour trade, but Godden’s murder arguably reinforced the existing narrative that “kanakas” were uncivilised and that there was not much public or political debate around deportation.

While some within the Church expressed concerns about deportation, some leaders saw it as positive. In February 1907, the *Auckland Star*³⁰¹ published correspondence their reporter had had with the third Bishop of Melanesia, Bishop Cecil Wilson. Bishop Wilson, was the Bishop of Melanesia from 1894, when he succeeded Bishop John Selwyn, until 1911.³⁰² The article, entitled “Deportation of Kanakas: Views of the Bishop of Melanesia” focused on the Bishops’ personal feelings towards both the labour trade and the deportation of the Islanders. The reporter stated:

He was not concerned with the political or labour aspect of the question. It might be true that Queensland could not carry on the sugar industry without coloured labour, but he did say that a great and grievous wrong was being done to the Polynesian race by capturing them, more less voluntarily, and taking them to work, in a foreign land; and in the name of Christianity, as well as in the name of humanity, it was time this wrong ceased.³⁰³

Furthermore, the reporter directly quoted Bishop Wilson’s assertion “I consider the deportation of Kanakas the best possible thing that could happen”.³⁰⁴ He also criticised the way in which deportation was discussed in the newspapers, both in Australia and New Zealand:

²⁹⁸ “Godden, Charles Christopher”. The Samuel Marsden Archives. Donald Robinson Library . Retrieved from: <http://atom.library.moore.edu.au/index.php/godden-charles-christopher> [accessed 15th February 2022]

²⁹⁹ See for example *Daily Southern Cross*, 1 November 1871; 4. *Star* (Christchurch), 17 April 1883, 2.

³⁰⁰ A.D McIntosh, “New Zealand Interest and Participation in the Labour Traffic prior to Bishop Patteson's Death, 21 September 1871”, MA Diss., University of Otago, 1961.

³⁰¹ “Deportation of Kanakas,” *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1907, 8.

³⁰² W. P. Morrell, *The Anglican Church in New Zealand: A History*. Dunedin: Anglican Church of the Province of New Zealand, 1973), 155-64.

³⁰³ “Deportation of Kanakas,” *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1907, 8.

³⁰⁴ “Deportation of Kanakas,” *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1907, 8.

My opinion of deportation of the Kanakas from Queensland ...is altogether different from the opinions which very often find their way into print, on the other side, and are repeated on this side...These misleading paragraphs are, for the most part, inspired by anti-labour people.³⁰⁵

Bishop Wilson explicitly criticised the White Australia Policy and its influence in the deportations:

The labour party is supposed to have caused the Kanakas to be sent back in order to get a white Australia, and one argument used against the labour party is that it is very inhumane to send the kanaka back to his own country and a great deal of capital is made of this.³⁰⁶

Wilson also made it clear he disagreed with humanitarian concerns and that there would be no harm done towards the returning Pacific Islanders once they returned home. He told the reporter "It is absolutely erroneous to make out that there is any great danger to these people in going back to their own islands."³⁰⁷ He repeated these sentiments again a few months later when visiting Christchurch.

The *Lyttelton Times* in March 1907³⁰⁸ published an extensive account of an address delivered by Bishop Wilson. Wilson again stated that in his view there would be no harm towards the Islanders if the deportation went ahead:

Much had been written and said about the danger deporting the Kanakas. As a matter of fact, there was no danger to the return Kanakas, in any of the fifty Islands excepting Malaita, so that there were forty-nine safe islands to send the Kanakas.³⁰⁹

Furthermore, Bishop Wilson felt that the deportation of Pacific Islanders would create opportunities for evangelisation in the places where they were sent to. He felt that the Christianising and educating of the Islanders would allow those returning to be easier accepted:

There was an immense work to be done in the Islands Christianising and educating the natives and he appealed to all those present to do all in their power to help forward the work of the Melanesian Mission.³¹⁰

Wilson again highlighted that The Australian Labour party were behind the legislation of deporting Islanders and had done so in order to promote white Australian workers.³¹¹ The

³⁰⁵ "Deportation of Kanakas," *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1907, 8.

³⁰⁶ "Deportation of Kanakas," *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1907, 8.

³⁰⁷ "Deportation of Kanakas," *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1907, 8.

³⁰⁸ "Bishop Wilson's Lecture," *Lyttelton Times*, 1 March 1907, 8.

³⁰⁹ "Bishop Wilson's Lecture," *Lyttelton Times*, 1 March 1907, 8.

³¹⁰ "Bishop Wilson's Lecture," *Lyttelton Times*, 1 March 1907, 9.

³¹¹ "Bishop Wilson's Lecture," *Lyttelton Times*, 1 March 1907, 9.

prominence given to Wilson's views shows the enduring role of the Church in shaping opinion on the issue. The differing perspectives among religious groups may have lessened the overall impact of their objections as some believed they would be harmful to the Islanders whereas others believed it was in their best interests. As with economic arguments on deportation, there were a range of views expressed in different forums.

Humanitarian Perspectives on Deportation

Alongside the religious and church perspectives, broader humanitarian perspectives were also evident. A number of newspaper accounts, however, reported on measures to address humanitarian concerns raised by the deportation process. The *Star* (Christchurch) published an article titled "White Australia: Deportation of Kanakas"³¹² which was originally published in Brisbane, Australia. The article stated "the Governor of New Caledonia is disposed to make provisions for the landing of time-expired Queensland Kanakas at New Caledonia, if the men, for personal reasons, deem it unsafe to return to their own islands. Negotiations are proceeding between the State Government and the French Consul".³¹³ The article reflected further attempts to accommodate returning Islanders who felt unsafe to return, in addition to the relocation of some Islanders to Fiji discussed in the previous chapter.

The potentially fatal consequences of the deportations were discussed in a number of provincial New Zealand newspapers, including the *Feilding Star* and *Gisborne Times* in March and June of 1903. The article published by the *Feilding Star*³¹⁴ was originally published in Sydney, Australia and it is from the perspective of Captain Rason, the British resident in the New Hebrides. In this article, the newspaper highlighted Captain Rason's feelings that "3000 New Hebrideans are concerned in the proposed deportation".³¹⁵ He further argued that provision should be made for the returning Islanders "if they were sent directly to their homes it would be necessary that provisions be made to feed them. If they were to be properly settled land must be purchased at a cost of 10 or 15 thousand pounds"³¹⁶ Rason

³¹² "White Australia," *Star* (Christchurch), 11 October 1902, 5.

³¹³ "White Australia," *Star* (Christchurch), 11 October 1902, 5.

³¹⁴ "Coloured Labour in Queensland," *Feilding Star*, 17 March 1903, 2.

³¹⁵ "Coloured Labour in Queensland," *Feilding Star*, 17 March 1903, 2.

³¹⁶ "Coloured Labour in Queensland," *Feilding Star*, 17 March 1903, 2.

argued that a better solution was “to send them to native villages”.³¹⁷ Drawing on historical tropes of cannibalism Rason argued, “any of them in good condition would be promptly killed and eaten”.³¹⁸ The inclusion of this article suggests the editor of the *Fielding Star* wanted their readers to be aware of the potentially fatal outcomes of deportation on the Islanders. In June 1903 the *Gisborne Times*³¹⁹, updated readers on correspondence between the Australian government and the Colonial Office. This article discussed the Federal Cabinet and their “considering of dispatches which have recently passed between the Governor-General and the Colonial Office in reference to the subject of Kanaka deportation”.³²⁰ But, more importantly, it highlighted how Deakin, who was acting Prime Minister, urged Mr Chamberlain through Lord Tennyson to not grant the Pacific Island Labourers petition which they had sent to the King of England. His reason for this was that “it was part of the long-continued and well-organised effort of a number of persons in Queensland, supported by the State Government to thwart the wishes not only of the large majority of people in Australia, but also the people of Queensland itself”.³²¹ He further highlighted that there were “due precautions being taken to carry out deportation”.³²² While at first glance this article seems to be supporting the deportation it highlighted at the very end that:

Lord Tennyson, in forwarding Mr Deakin’s dispatch, called attention to these points and advised the framing of regulations before assent was given. The Act was assented to by Lord Hopetoun in December 1901, and although the time allowed for disallowance by the King expired, the question has risen regarding the legality of Lord Tennyson’s subsequent advice.³²³

The newspaper articles demonstrate the Australian government was aware of humanitarian and legal concerns around deportation and wanted to be seen to be responding to these.

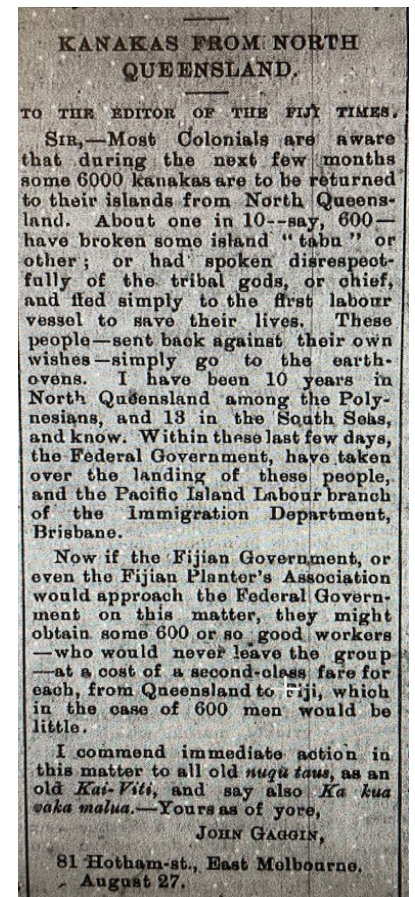


Figure 4: Suva Times ‘Kanakas from North Queensland’ September 15th 1906, p.g.1

³¹⁷ “Coloured Labour in Queensland,” *Fielding Star*, 17 March 1903, 2.

³¹⁸ “Coloured Labour in Queensland,” *Fielding Star*, 17 March 1903, 2.

³¹⁹ “General Cable,” *Gisborne Times*. 24th June 1903, 1.

³²⁰ “General Cable,” *Gisborne Times*. 24th June 1903, 1.

³²¹ “General Cable,” *Gisborne Times*. 24th June 1903, 1

³²² “General Cable,” *Gisborne Times*. 24th June 1903, 1

³²³ “General Cable,” *Gisborne Times*. 24th June 1903, 1

Concerns about the plight of the returning Pacific Islanders, where also expressed in *the Suva Times*. In September 1906, John Gaggin of East Melbourne, Australia wrote to the editor of the *Suva Times*, in which he implored the Fijian Government along with the Fijian Planters Association to acquire some 600 of the soon to be deported Kanakas, to work in on the Fijian

sugarcane plantations. Gaggin repeated the notion, expressed by others, that those being deported were highly likely to be killed or face persecution. Whereas many accounts of the Pacific Labour trade were critical and compared it to slavery, he presented their emigration to Queensland in a positive light stating they may have had to leave because they “spoke disrespectfully of the tribal gods, or chiefs and fled simply to the first Labour vessel to save their lives”.³²⁴

While some articles asserted deportees would face hardships if they returned home, others claimed many wanted to return to the Pacific Islands. *The Aberdeen People’s Journal*³²⁵ published a letter written by an Australian John Mann in June 1904, entitled “Australia and the Kanaka”. Mann appears supportive of the deportations. His intention seems to be to correct critical accounts which had appeared in British newspapers. The author was either Australian or someone who resided in Australia for some time as they stated that they lived in Cairns for fifteen years but the signature underneath their letter - “Cairns, late of Morayshire” - indicated they now lived in Scotland.³²⁶ Mann stated at the beginning of his letter that he was responding to ‘a

gentlemen from Fife’ who had presumably written to the newspaper complaining of the deportation of Kanakas. His response is twofold (and not, it might be suggested, entirely consistent). Mann makes the suggestion that the Australian

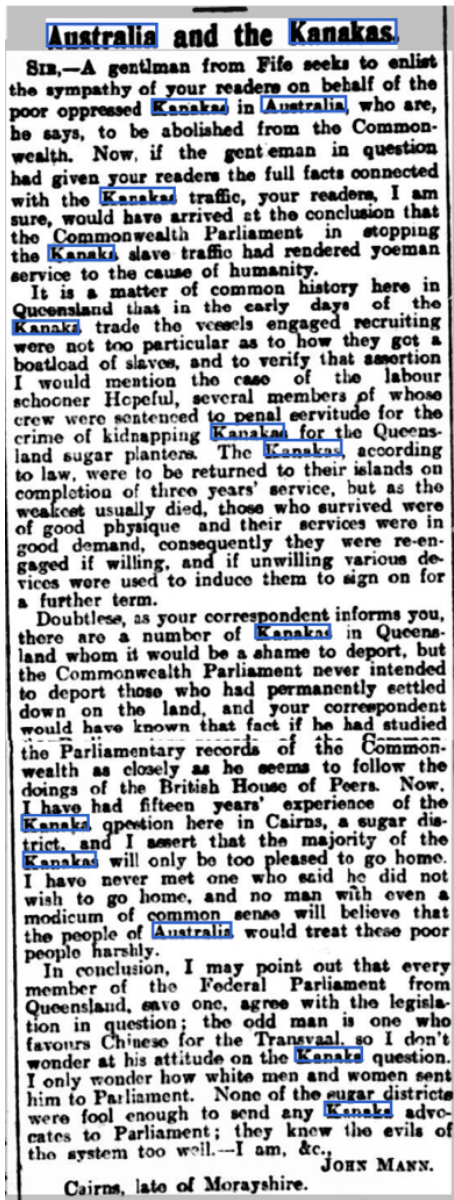


Figure 5: “Australia and the Kanaka”. *Aberdeen People’s Journal*. 25th June 1904, p.g.4

³²⁴ “Kanakas from North Queensland,” *Suva Times*, 15 September 1906, 1.

³²⁵ “Australia and the Kanaka,” *Aberdeen People’s Journal*, 25 June 1904, 4.

³²⁶ “Australia and the Kanaka,” *Aberdeen People’s Journal*, 25 June 1904, 4.

government did not deport those who wanted to remain permanently “doubtless as your correspondent informs you, there are a number of Kanakas in Queensland whom it would be a shame to deport, but the Commonwealth Parliament never intended to deport those who had permanently settled down”.³²⁷

He went on to state that many of those who came to Australia were taken there as slaves or indentured labourers who were to be returned after three years. He then asserted that while many stayed, those who remained in Australia wanted to go back to the Islands. He then, however, seemed to suggest that the Australian government did not deport those who wanted to remain permanently – a rather optimistic assessment. It is revealing that a former resident of Australia would take the time to write to a Scottish newspaper. It is another example of movement of people and information throughout the British empire. Arguably this is example of the interconnecting webs of empire Ballantyne alludes to in his argument of how the British Empire was connected by mutually reinforcing networks of ideas and institutions.³²⁸ Indeed, Mann’s letter reflects a pattern of contestation as well as circulation of ideas. The movement of people throughout the Empire meant there were often people who, by virtue of having resided in its constituent parts, saw themselves as qualified to comment on imperial issues.

Women’s voices were also reported in reinforcing arguments the Pacific Islanders had become civilised and Christianised, and that returning them would do more harm than good. In February 1905 the *Morning Post*³²⁹ included an article on “Australian Labour Laws”³³⁰ which discussed a women’s initiative in support of the Islanders. The article noted “a deputation of the Women’s Political Association today waited upon Mr Reid, the Federal Premier, to protest the deportation of the Kanakas and to urge the repeal of the White labour clause in the Immigration Act prohibiting the importation of labourers under

³²⁷ “Australia and the Kanaka,” *Aberdeen People’s Journal*. 25 June 1904, 4.

³²⁸ Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire*, 39-40.

³²⁹ “Australian Labour Laws,” *Morning Post*. 9 February 1905, 5.

³³⁰ This article was reprinted at least five times – albeit with different subheadings - in other newspaper including: “Foreign and Colonial,” *Daily News* (London), 9 February 1905, 6; “Labour in Australia,” *Mid-Sussex Times*, 14 February 1905, 6; “Labour in Australia,” *Bicester Herald*, 14 February 1905, 3; “Labour in Australia,” *Diss Express*. 14 February 1905, 2.

contract”.³³¹ The Women’s Political Association was founded in 1903 by Vida Goldstein. Its aim was “to educate women in political matters”³³² The presence of this deputation suggests the deportation of the labourers was important to a number of different political associations. Furthermore, at a time when women had clear gender roles, the actions of these women can be seen as an example of progressive women’s political action in what was then a very white male-dominated Australia. For an Association comprised of white women to be protesting for the rights of mainly “Black” men to stay and work was unusual at the time. The article noted that “In response to the delegation “Mr. Reid assured the deputation of his personal sympathy and said that the only way to carry their ideas into effect was for the people to return members favouring their views”.³³³ Their endeavours were, however, seen as unlikely to succeed. The writer of this article ended the article by stating “it was useless to hope for a reversal of the Kanaka legislation”.³³⁴

From 1905 onwards deportation was primarily discussed not in relation to the Act that enforced it, but the deportation process itself. An article in the *Marlborough Express*³³⁵ in May 1905, republished from a Sydney newspaper, reflected some of the differing perspectives among states on the issue. It cited Joseph Carruthers, Premier of New South Wales between 1904 and 1907,³³⁶ stating he “told an interviewer that much feeling is shown in some of the sugar-growing centres against the proposed deportation of Kanakas. Many of the Kanakas, he said, had married and got families, and now lived on their own land. To deport these people among savage Islanders was, in his opinion a blot on our civilisation”.³³⁷ The article demonstrates the contrast between the political consensus at Federal level on deportation and how the issue was perceived at state level. The publication of these views in a New Zealand provincial newspaper suggests some degree of public interest in the topic in New Zealand and also indicates that a range of perspectives on deportation were reported. The humanitarian concerns expressed in British and New Zealand newspapers echoed some

³³¹ “Australian Labour Laws,” *Morning Post*, 9 February 1905, 5.

³³² The Australian Women’s Register. “*Women’s Political Association of Victoria (1903-1919)*”. Retrieved from: <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0541b.htm>

³³³ “Australian Labour Laws,” *Morning Post*, 9 February 1905, 5.

³³⁴ “Australian Labour Laws,” *Morning Post*, 9 February 1905, 5.

³³⁵ “The Kanaka in Queensland,” *Marlborough Express*, 11 May 1905, 2.

³³⁶ Sir Joseph Carruthers was the Premier for New South Wales between 1904 and 1907.

³³⁷ “The Kanaka in Queensland,” *Marlborough Express*, 11 May 1905, 2.

reports in Australian newspaper. The *Daily Telegraph*,³³⁸ a Tasmanian, newspaper issued an article that contained the voice of a “Protector of Australian Aboriginals”³³⁹ who questioned what would happen to the Aboriginal women who had married Pacific Island men, he asserted that many wanted to go with their husbands but feared being murdered once they arrived in the Islands. On the other hand, the article discussed the prospect that some of those men may not wish to take their wives and children back with them and questioned what actions might be taken against them for “child desertion and maintenance”³⁴⁰

Humanitarian concerns about the fate of deportees were also mentioned in the *Hastings Standard*³⁴¹, in March 1906. It reported a discussion between the Minister of Agriculture in Queensland and Prime Minister Alfred Deakin. The minister raised concerns that when the Act came into force and the Islanders would be unable to work, nothing had been put in place for them to enable them to afford food or accommodation:

The Minister of Agriculture for Queensland, in an interview with Mr Deakin, pointed out the serious position which would arise after December 31st, when the Kanaka agreements became inoperative. No provisions has been made for their maintenance pending the deportation of 6000 Kanakas, who will be debarred from work³⁴²

Some of the humanitarian concerns focused specifically on the treatment of women. In January 1907, the *Bush Advocate*³⁴³ published an article entitled “The Kanakas” which was initially published by *The Herald* Sydney on 5 January, expressing the view that Pacific Island girls born in Queensland but whose parents were originally from Malaita (which is an Island apart of the Solomon Islands) should not be repatriated to the Islands because to do so would be unsafe. “The female children born in Australia” it noted “are regarded as not possessing tribal rights and there is little doubt, they will be made slaves when they return with their parents”.³⁴⁴ One possible reason for appealing to the fate of ‘girls’ may have been that the public were generally more sympathetic towards children, particularly girls, being affected rather than adult men, as women had an elevated role in colonial

³³⁸ “Queensland,” *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 21 July 1905, 5.

³³⁹ “Queensland,” *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 21 July 1905, 5.

³⁴⁰ “Queensland,” *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 21 July 1905, 5.

³⁴¹ “Fanning Island,” *Hastings Standard*, 29 March 1906, 3.

³⁴² “Fanning Island,” *Hastings Standard*, 29 March 1906, 3.

³⁴³ “The Kanakas,” *Bush Advocate*, 7 January 1907, 5.

³⁴⁴ “The Kanakas,” *Bush Advocate*, 7 January 1907, 5.

society as ‘helpmeets’ to men and girls were helpmeets in the making.³⁴⁵ The article further argued that even mission stations on the island were not safe: “the mission stations at Malaita are not altogether safe against raids”³⁴⁶ meaning that repatriated Islanders of Malaita and their Australian born children could not be guaranteed safety even by the Christian mission stations. The last sentence stated that “the matter is one requiring prompt attention with a view of preventing the deportation of young girls born and reared in Queensland to such a life as it is too repugnant for even the warmest advocate of Kanaka expulsion to contemplate”.³⁴⁷ In choosing to print this article, the editor of the *Bush Advocate* may have anticipated it would make New Zealanders aware of the potentially fatal consequences of the deportation.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how newspapers reported on the religious and humanitarian implications of deporting Pacific Islanders from Australia. There were a variety of opinions expressed in both New Zealand and British newspapers on the humanitarian aspects of deportation. A number of newspaper articles reported objections to the deportations of Pacific Islanders from various Churches and religious leaders on the grounds they may have fatal consequences for deportees. On the other hand, a number of religious leaders argued the deportations were a positive occurrence and would not have such an impact as feared. While some of the discussion of the deportation had an explicitly religious element, there were also some which expressed broader humanitarian concerns. Some of these articles restated earlier arguments similar to Church leaders that there would be no harm towards deported Islanders. Others, however, argued that many young Islanders born and raised in Australia, particularly young girls, who did not speak the language or understand the cultural customs and practices in their ancestral homelands, would suffer if they were deported with their families. A related concern, partially reflecting notions that the deportees had attained a degree of ‘civilisation’ by virtue of having been raised in Australia, was that these Islanders had assimilated to western life and would find it hard going back to a place they hardly

³⁴⁵ Raewyn Dalziel, “The Colonial Helpmeet” Women’s Role and the Vote in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 11, no. 2 (1977): 112-123.

³⁴⁶ “The Kanakas,” *Bush Advocate*, 7th January 1907, 5.

³⁴⁷ “The Kanakas,” *Bush Advocate*, 7th January 1907, 5.

remembered. Overall, however, humanitarian arguments against deportation gained little traction. This was partially because the policy was primarily viewed through the lens of the impact of non-white labour on white Australians, but it also reflected division within the Church itself over the deportations. Moreover, a number of newspaper reports asserted the Australian government had been made aware of humanitarian concerns over the deportations and had taken action to address them. As noted, sections of the religious community looked more favourably on non-white peoples than the wider community, where many labour and political leaders were openly critical of 'coloured labour'. The following chapter will look at how these issues were reflected in newspapers discussions of race and labour in relation to deportation.

CHAPTER FOUR: Race and Labour

Perceptions on Deportation

This chapter examines two inter-related topics, commencing with a discussion of race and labour, before discussing newspaper coverage of what was often referred to at the time as the “coloured labour” issue. The two while similar can be separated and defined in different ways. Discussions around race and labour centred around the White Australia Policy, in particular the idea of whites not wanting the employment of non-white labourers. In this particular context, it refers to the changing views on whether white people could work in tropical areas. It encompassed the ideology that the ‘whites’ could now work and labour in the tropics and this was a driving force and a political consensus among all Australian parties, with them all agreeing with this new ‘whites can’ ideology. This ideology along with the broad political consensus on the White Australia policy was a driving force behind the Australian deportation of Pacific Island Labourers. The second half of the chapter discusses how deportations of Pacific Islanders were framed within the wider context of policies over “Coloured Labour” in Britain and the Western world. This debate centred on the specific conditions in which non-white labour ought to be allowed to be used in the British Empire, the debate about non-white labourers being evident in South Africa, Canada, Australia and to a lesser extent New Zealand, all with various acts and policies enacted towards non-white labour.

Race and Labour

Public discourse on race in the British Empire, and indeed the western world more widely, was premised on an inherent belief in the superiority of white peoples. Peter. H. Conlin³⁴⁸ argues that “the British empire of the nineteenth-century displayed and embodied racism in its composite. In embodying this idea of racial inequality, the Empire created grounds on

³⁴⁸ Peter H. Conlin, “Victorian Racism: An Explication of Scientific Knowledge, its Social Character, and its Relation to Victorian Popular Culture,” *Inquiries Journal* 10, no. 1. (2018). Retrieved from: <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=1719> [accessed 29th October 2021]

which it could justify the imperialist actions”.³⁴⁹ Conlin argues that these notions were reinforced with reference to science and also in public exhibitions. For example, in the 1899 Greater British Exhibition, when the show *Savage South Africa* was performed, “200 natives from South Africa”³⁵⁰ were brought to England for the performance [for them to play the role of ‘savages’]. Conlin argues “by 1899 the racial conception was seen as ‘accepted fact’ rather than ‘proposed theory’”³⁵¹ and he further argues that “the public newspapers [in England] used the pronouns of “superior race” to describe the white European and “specimen of a lower race” to describe other races.³⁵² Different British newspapers expressed a variety of opinions³⁵³ around this but the general consensus is that views on race hardened as the nineteenth century progressed.

The notion of the superiority of White workers was evident in much of the newspaper discussion on the Pacific Island Labourers Bill. The previous use of non-white Labour was characterised as a passing phase, which owing to acclimatisation and technical improvements could now be overcome. The *New Zealand Herald* in 1901 explicitly framed it within the context of “Black Labour”.³⁵⁴ It stated the Commonwealth House of Representatives have “finally” decided to commence discussion on “the much-debated Black Labour question”.³⁵⁵ The article outlined the key provisions of the Bill noting “this proposal gives Queensland sugar planters- who alone are directly affected- five years in which to entirely replace by white labourers the Islanders”.³⁵⁶ The article was mainly centred on the second reading of the Bill, moved by then Prime Minister Edward Barton. The article records the numbers of Pacific Island Labourers (8700) and White Labourers (5700) in Queensland. The article also reported Barton’s assertion that the employment of non-white Labour was only ever a “temporary expedient” and that “all responsible men” were opposed to the continued use of “coloured labour”. Financial incentives to owners to employ white labour were also

³⁴⁹ Conlin, “Victorian Racism,” N.P.N.

³⁵⁰ Conlin, “Victorian Racism,” N.P.N.

³⁵¹ Conlin, “Victorian Racism,” N.P.N.

³⁵² Ben Shepard, “Showbiz Imperialism,” in ed. John.M. Mackenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986, 103, cited in Conlin, “Victorian Racism,” N.P.N.

³⁵³ See, for example, “Australia and Pacific Islanders,” *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 2 October 1901, 8.

³⁵⁴ “Australian News,” *New Zealand Herald*, 4 October 1901, 4.

³⁵⁵ “Australian News,” *New Zealand Herald*, 4 October 1901, 4.

³⁵⁶ “Australian News,” *New Zealand Herald*, 4 October 1901, 4.

mentioned alongside the notion that the characterisation of the South Pacific labour trade as “inherently bad”.³⁵⁷

New Zealand newspapers also reported the views of Federal Labour Leader John Christian Watson, on the deportations. Watson, who was born in Chile, subsequently moved to New Zealand and then to Australia where he came leader of the Labour Party and the first Labour Prime Minister of Australia in 1904. Prior to the Australian Federal election he visited New Zealand in 1903. The *New Zealand Graphic* reported on a talk he gave during his time in the country.³⁵⁸ Watson reportedly stated that Australia had proven it could produce sugar without Pacific Island labour and asserted most sugar was grown by whites. He went on to relate his support for the imperial government preventing “Asiatic Labour” in South Africa and linked that to the exclusion of Pacific Islanders. He expressed satisfaction with the role of Labour in achieving this result: “Mr Watson said much success had attended the labour party’s efforts towards securing a white Australia. The policy of white Australia was being given effect to wherever possible, and the larger half of the sugar grown in Queensland last year was grown under the white Australia clause”.³⁵⁹ Watson further added that “under this law the Kanaka would not disappear just yet, but it had been clearly demonstrated that the Kanaka can be done without”.³⁶⁰

Watson personifies the sensitivities about race in the period under review. He was born Johan Cristian Tanck in Chile in 1867 to a Chilean German father Johan Cristian Tanck and a New Zealand mother Martha Minchin, with the couple married at Port Chalmers in 1867. The couple separated in 1868 and his father Johan Cristian Tanck subsequently died. Martha Minchin then returned to New Zealand and in 1869 married George Thomas Watson in February 1869. Johan Tanck then took on his stepfathers surname and anglicised his name to become John Christian Watson and he was known as Chris Watson. They lived at Waipori and then shifted to Oamaru in 1875. Watson became an apprentice printer at the *Oamaru Mail* at the age of 13 and left for Australia in 1888 where he took up residence on Sydney. He

³⁵⁷ “Australian News,” *New Zealand Herald*, 4 October 1901, 4.

³⁵⁸ “Labour Question,” *New Zealand Graphic*. 31 January 1903, 329.

³⁵⁹ “Labour Question,” *New Zealand Graphic*. 31 January 1903, 329.

³⁶⁰ “Labour Question,” *New Zealand Graphic*. 31 January 1903, 329.

subsequently became President of the Trades and Labour Council in 1892. He later entered politics, becoming the member for the seat of Young in the New South Wales parliament in 1894. He proved adept at working with both unions and the leaders of other political parties, becoming President of the Labor Party in 1901, successfully standing for the seat of Bland in the first Federal Election held that same year. In 1904 he became leader of the first Labor Party government elected in the World. In this regard, Watson personifies both the circulation of peoples and ideas throughout the British Empire.³⁶¹

Reports of a personal encounter between Lady Northcote and a young Kanaka further reflected racial attitudes from the time. In 1904 the *Globe* indicated that Lady Northcote had 'ruffled some feathers', stating "Lady Northcote in kissing a pretty Kanaka infant has given offence to Queensland labour party, the members of which appear to think that the milk of human kindness is reserved only for those in possession of a white skin".³⁶² The tenor of the article suggests the paper disapproved of the attitudes of white Queenslanders towards non-whites. The decision by the correspondent to report this, suggests they believed it would resonate with the humanitarian sympathies of the British public, who would view the Queensland labour party as racist towards non-whites. Lady Northcote³⁶³ was the wife of Governor General Lord Harry Northcote, who was the third Governor General of Australia 1904-1908 and as such was in office during the period the deportations were being enforced. She was a significant figure in Australian women's history, who established the "first national exhibition of women's work to be held in Australia".³⁶⁴ Elizabeth Taylor observes that this exhibition referred to "social and political issues at the time".³⁶⁵

Some articles discussed the deportation of Pacific Islanders in the wider context of contemporary racial issues. On September 5 1904, the *Globe* published a letter entitled "White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages" from their Sydney correspondent. The letter

³⁶¹ Al Grassby, Al and Silvia Ordonez, *The Man Time Forgot: The Life and Times of John Christian Watson, Australia's First Labor Prime Minister*. Annandale: Pluto Press, 1999. 1-91

³⁶² "White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages," *The Globe*, 5 September 1904, 8.

³⁶³ Elizabeth Taylor, *Lady Northcote: Leading Light and Sponsor of the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work*. 2012. Seizing the Initiative: Australian Women Leaders in Politics, Workplaces and Communities. Published by the eScholarship Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, 2012.

³⁶⁴ Taylor, *Lady Northcote*, 37.

³⁶⁵ Taylor, *Lady Northcote* 38.

discussed five different situations relating to 'White' Australia. The discussion of the deportations within the wider context of these situations suggests they were one part of a wider debate about how Australia, and the Empire more widely, was to deal with 'coloured' peoples – especially as there were now more vigorous colonial competitors in the Pacific. The first race situation discussed was on the status of Japanese and Chinese in Australia. The article highlighted the fear of “the island-content becoming over-run by Chinese, Japanese and other Asiatics and consequent crowding out of the white population”,³⁶⁶ a recurring fear that white Australians had about non-whites including those from Asia. The second example noted how, due to the Act, Fijian Chiefs who had been sending their children to Australia to be educated now needed to seek special permission to enter Australia. The third concerned a New Zealand Māori rugby team. The letter from the correspondent stated “New Zealand Maories from another class affected by 'White' Australia policy”.³⁶⁷ They too needed permission to enter Australian soil. Another, possibly unintended consequence alluded to was how 'White Australia' was hindering the imports of Pacific goods “the Australian import of Fijian and other Island produce are rapidly falling”.³⁶⁸ The correspondent also mentioned how “in the New Hebrides several of the British settlers finding the Commonwealth market virtually closed against them are discussing switching allegiance to the French”.³⁶⁹ The fifth and final topic discussed was the deportation of Pacific Islanders. The *Globe* correspondent states that “the sugar industry in that state will receive a crushing blow”³⁷⁰. They also stated:

The Governor-General, who is visiting that part of the Commonwealth, lately received a deputation from a body of Kanakas, who became permanent resident in the semi-tropical portions of the state. Several of them have been in Queensland over twenty-years. Many were married, have acquired property, and very naturally regard with dismay their impending forcible deportation to their native lands where they will incur the risk of being murdered for the sake of their belongings.³⁷¹

³⁶⁶ “White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages,” *Globe*, 15 September 1904, 8.

³⁶⁷ “White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages,” *Globe*, 15 September 1904, 8.

³⁶⁸ “White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages,” *Globe*, 15 September 1904, 8.

³⁶⁹ “White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages,” *Globe*, 15 September 1904, 8.

³⁷⁰ “White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages,” *Globe*, 15 September 1904, 8.

³⁷¹ “White Australia. Difficulties and Disadvantages,” *Globe*, 15 September 1904, 8.

The discussion of the deportations within the wider context of Asian immigration and policies over non-white Labour indicates how they were framed as one element of a wider set of perceived challenges to the progress of Australia.

The contention between race and labour in Australia resonated in Britain because Australia's policies of racial exclusion were seen in some quarters as having the potential to cause difficulties for Britain. These were discussed in an article on "Australian Defences"³⁷² published in the *Globe*. Although the article does not explicitly mention the deportation of Pacific Islanders, it does note the emerging strategic context in which the deportations took place – Anglo-French rivalry in the Pacific and Australia's expanding influence in the Pacific. The article asserted "Australia has been neglecting few opportunities of creating international trouble for the imperial government. She has forcibly deported Chinese immigrants in the teeth of an Anglo-Chinese treaty, and has legislated against the incoming Japanese subjects except under humiliating conditions".³⁷³ This suggests that the implementation of the White Australia Policy caused concern to some observers in Britain who feared they might become caught up in these tensions.



Figure 6: The *Globe* (London) *Australian Defences* September 1904, p.g. 7

Discussion of Pacific Island Deportation within debates over "Coloured Labour".

Discussions of race in relation to the deportation of Pacific Island workers were framed within wider discussions of 'coloured labour' and its role in Australia. Racial hierarchies and stereotypes tended to be reinforced in these discussions. Newspaper discussion of the deportations reflected evolving racial hierarchies with both European and Asian labourers being proposed as substitutes for the deported Pacific Islanders. *The Evening Post* in 1902 included an article which discussed replacing "Tommy Tanna" (the pejorative name often

³⁷² "Australian Defences," *Globe*, 13 September 1904, 7.

³⁷³ "Australian Defences," *Globe*, 13 September 1904, 7.

used in reference to Pacific Island labourers) for “Fritz”: “The pro-Kanaka party of Queensland headed by Premier Philp, has suddenly discovered that it may save the sugar industry by putting ‘Fritz’ in place of ‘Tommy Tanna’”.³⁷⁴ It was later noted in the article that Premier Philp believed that the sugar industry could be saved by German immigration as the “white Australia [policy] would spell ruin for the industry”.³⁷⁵ The *Evening Post* also maintained that the Queensland Government “is treating for the transport of 20,000 Germans from South Australia to Queensland to place them on the sugar lands of the North”.³⁷⁶ It further argued that the German agriculturalists were some of the best in the country: “the German agriculturalist are some of the best settlers on the continent, inured to climate, hardy, frugal and untiring in their industry”.³⁷⁷ In summary it stated “The German answer for Premier Philp’s must be as embarrassing as it seems conclusive.”

In contrast to the *Evening Post*’s 1902 article, an article in the *Teignmouth Post and Gazette* of March 11 1904 alluded to the possibility of Chinese workers being used in place of Pacific Island labour.³⁷⁸ The presence of this article in a regional newspaper is also an indication of how far and wide news of what was happening in Australia and the Empire more broadly was reported to British audiences. The article stated:

A leading Chinese merchant at Geraldton (Queensland) has made an offer to indenture a thousand Chinese from the Northern Territory of Australia to take the place of the Kanakas when the latter are deported from Queensland sugar plantations³⁷⁹

This article is interesting because it touches on the issue of Chinese immigration versus the status of Pacific Islanders at the same time as the ceasing of Pacific Labour and their impending deportation. Moreover, it did so at a time when the Chinese were also not favourably viewed within the ‘White Australia’ policy. They too were facing prejudice and with a similar act towards them. The main theme from this article is that the Chinese were ‘offering’ to do the work in place of the Islanders once they had been deported. That the

³⁷⁴ “German for Kanaka,” *Evening Post*. 14 February 1902, 4.

³⁷⁵ “German for Kanaka,” *Evening Post*. 14 February 1902, 4.

³⁷⁶ “German for Kanaka,” *Evening Post*. 14 February 1902, 4.

³⁷⁷ “German for Kanaka,” *Evening Post*. 14 February 1902, 4.

³⁷⁸ “Chinese Labour in Australia,” *Teignmouth Post and Gazette*. 11 March 1904, 5.

³⁷⁹ “Chinese Labour in Australia,” *Teignmouth Post and Gazette*, 11 March 1904, 5.

offer was reported in a British newspaper is interesting. The editor may have wanted to show the discontent and instability between non-white peoples (the different “coloured-labourers”) in Australia. It may also have been seen as a human interest story. The report also suggests at least one member of the Chinese community was trying to use the deportations in their favour and possibly be seen as a good citizen in the process.

‘Tommy Tanna’: The evolution and uses of a stereotype

The term ‘Tommy Tanna’ was a generic term, like ‘Kanakanak’ that was often applied to Pacific Islanders who lived in Australia. The *Free Lance* newspaper recorded that term was applied to Pacific Islanders, who by virtue of having lived in Australia and being exposed to western values were deemed to have acquired a degree of civilisation.³⁸⁰ The article stated: “Tommy Tanna is the name generally given to the Solomon Islander who has passed from the cannibal stage to the advantages or disadvantages of civilisation”.³⁸¹ The term was used heavily in newspapers³⁸² to describe Pacific Islanders living in Australia. It was in circulation at least as early as 1894 when it appeared in an article in the *Colonist*.³⁸³ In this instance “Tommy Tanna” was used to describe a Pacific Islander who was elected chairman of a meeting discussing mistreatment by a planter: “Tommy Tanna was, accordingly, duly elected chairman and the meeting proceeded to business”.³⁸⁴

There were many newspaper articles in which the term “Tommy Tanna” was used. One article in the *Free Lance* compared “Tommy Tanna” to Māori shearers not being able to enter Australia.³⁸⁵ The article describes how for Māori shearers to come to Australia they needed

A drop of those two Maori shearers who were not allowed to land in Australia, that country is becoming increasingly absurd. Queensland is seething with Japanese and Kanakas, for whom special legislation is provided, and in Western Australia white police, assisted by trained blackfellows, whose savage instincts are allowed full play, are wiping out the aboriginal as fast as prison, rifle and poison can do it. The backblocks are pestered with Hindoo hawkers, and South Australia and New South Wales is largely dependent on insolent Afghans for camel drivers. All the big cities have hordes of Chinese, and many of the up-country towns have colonies of yellow-faced coolies with whom low whites consort.

* * *

But Maori shearers—who in former years have proved very excellent and capable workers—can’t get in for a three-months’ job unless they pass an education test. What about the education test of Singh, or Tommy Tanna, or Ah Fat, or Dabh Abdullah? A sunburnt Britisher will yet get stuck up by those absurd Australian officials.

Figure 7: ‘Deportation of “Tommy Tanna”’, *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 13 November 1906, 7.

³⁸⁰ *Free Lance*, 26 May 1920, 32.

³⁸¹ *Free Lance*, 26 May 1920, 32.

³⁸² See: ‘Local and General’, *Ashburton Guardian*, 16 February 1894, 2. ‘Trade and Labour Notes,’ *Auckland Star* 15 March 1905, 10.

³⁸³ *Colonist*, 13 February 1894, 3.

³⁸⁴ *Colonist*, 13 February 1894, 3.

³⁸⁵ “Entre Nous,” *Free Lance*, 4 March 1905, 12.

to pass an education test, “Maori shearers-who in former years have proved very excellent and capable workers- can’t get in for a three-month job unless they pass an education test”.³⁸⁶ The *Free Lance* in the process of discussing this asked “what about the education test of Singh or Tommy Tanna, or Ah Fat, or Dabh Abdullah?”³⁸⁷. Whilst the article does contain racist connotations, it is also a good example of showing conflicting views on coloured workers and also reflects a wider historical pattern of Māori being categorised as superior to other Pacific Islanders and indeed other indigenous peoples more broadly (sometimes on account of their supposed Aryan ancestry).³⁸⁸

The term ‘Tommy Tanna’ was also used in newspaper articles on the deportations.³⁸⁹ The *Lake Wakatip Mail*, for example, in their November 1906 article asserted “The last days of ‘Tommy Tanna’ on the soil of the Australian Commonwealth are now in progress”.³⁹⁰ “Tommy Tanna” was characterised in a childlike fashion:

When Queensland way back in the sixties discovered her warm, moist coast lands would grow excellent cotton, she imported Tommy Tanna, the kanaka boy, to do the work, under the impression that the cheap black was the individual who could make the industry a success. Queensland, with her sister states cherished the delusion that the black man, and only the black, could be useful in the tropic belt and she perpetuated the idea when the sugar industry was inaugurated. Kanakas were imported in great numbers to work the cane and the result served good purpose knocking the end out of the idea of the native’s superiority to the white man in the tropics.³⁹¹

This newspaper article explicitly shows the link between ‘Tommy Tanna’ and the ‘whites can’ ideology that was emerging in Australia which argued people of European ancestry had superseded Pacific Islanders as capable labourers in the hot tropical climate.

³⁸⁶ “Entre Nous,” *Free Lance*, 4 March 1905, 12.

³⁸⁷ “Entre Nous,” *Free Lance*, 4 March 1905, 12.

³⁸⁸ Peter Meihana. ‘The Paradox of Maori Privilege: Historical Constructions of Maori Privilege c. 1769-1940’, (Phd. Diss. Massey University, Palmerston North, 2015), 37-45.; Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 206-15.

³⁸⁹ See: ‘Deportation of “Tommy Tanna”’, *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 13 November 1906, 7. “Importation of “Tommy Tanna”’, *Northland Age*, 19 March 1907, 5. “Deportation of “Tommy Tanna”’, *North Otago Times*, 25 October 1906, 2. “Deportation of “Tommy Tanna”’, *Pelorus Guardian and Miners’ Advocate*, 9 April 1907, 7.

³⁹⁰ *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 13 November 1906, 7

Note: all the articles listed about in footnote 374 are all the same article just printed in different newspapers

³⁹¹ “Topics of the day,” *The Evening Post*, 25 June 1910, 6.

“Tommy Tanna” was also used when describing horrific events committed by Pacific Islanders, such as the newspaper story “Tommy Tanna: The Kanaka that ran amok”, which was originally published in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*³⁹² and subsequently reprinted in multiple newspapers.³⁹³ Another article in the *New Zealand Daily Mail*³⁹⁴ detailed the murder-suicide of a “Kanaka” named William. The discussion of the term “Tommy Tanna” in the article indicated its widespread usage: “Recent cable message from Sydney told the desperate affray in which a Kanaka, Tommy Tanna- all Kanakas are called Tommy Tanna”.³⁹⁵ This article explicitly notes the common use of the term as a generic way of describing Pacific peoples without regard to their particular Pacific identity or without having to use names. The article also quotes the man’s English name along-side Tommy Tanna by stating “William or Tommy Tanna”³⁹⁶ which takes away the personal identity of the individual by referring to him using a generic term. There was an underlying connotation in the article that all “Tommy Tanna’s” had the potential to commit such crimes. A year after the events in Sydney, the *Free Lance* wrote that “the bullets from which seemed to bounce off Tommy Tanna and, no doubt the police deaths were due to the cheap “Brum” firearms they carried” and because the bullets of the revolvers ‘could-not’ kill a “Tommy Tanna” the police force changed firearms.³⁹⁷

Usage of the term Tommy Tanna carried over into other decades following the deportation as a means of describing Pacific Islanders. From 1910 it was still heavily used, most often in reprinted articles. The *Pelorus Guardian and Miners Advocate*³⁹⁸ republished their 1907³⁹⁹ article in 1917, showing the continued use of the term. In 1925 the *Evening Star*⁴⁰⁰ published an article titled “Heads shaped to Order: New Hebridean Customs- Head-Hunting Still Exists” which highlighted the origin of the term “Tommy Tanna”:

³⁹² “Tragic Affray”, *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 12 February 1906, 5.

³⁹³ See, for example: “Tommy Tanna: The Kanaka that ran amok,” *New Zealand Herald*, 19 February 1906, 5; “Tommy Tanna: The Kanaka that ran amok,” *Poverty Bay Herald*, 22 February 1906, 4; “Tommy Tanna: The Kanaka that ran amok,” *New Zealand Times*, 26 February 1906, 2; “Tommy Tanna: The Kanaka that ran amok,” *New Zealand Daily Mail*, 28 February 1906, 18; “Our Melbourne Letter,” *Otago Witness*, 7 March 1906, 2. “Tommy Tanna: The Kanaka that ran amok,” *North Otago Times*, 10 March 1906, 1.

³⁹⁴ *New Zealand Daily Mail*, 28 February 1906, 18.

³⁹⁵ *New Zealand Daily Mail*, 28 February 1906, 18.

³⁹⁶ *New Zealand Daily Mail*, 28 February 1906, 18.

³⁹⁷ “Entre Nous,” *Free Lance*, 4 May 1907, 12.

³⁹⁸ “Deportation of “Tommy Tanna,” *Pelorus Guardian and Miners’ Advocate*, 9 April 1907, 7.

³⁹⁹ “Deportation of “Tommy Tanna,” *Pelorus Guardian and Miners’ Advocate*, 30 January 1917, 7.

⁴⁰⁰ “Heads shaped to Order: New Hebridean Customs- Head-Hunting Still Exists,” *Evening Star*, 21 March 1925, 13.

In the days when kanakas were employed in Queensland sugar fields a large portion of them came from the New Hebrides. So much so that Tommy Tanna, from Tanna, one of the islands of the group was used as a general term for a kanaka.⁴⁰¹

The Gisborne Herald on 15 May 1940 used the “Tommy Tanna” term in an article about the death of surfer Fredrick Williams, where it is stated that he “learned the art from a South Sea Islander. The islander, Tommy Tanna was making a tennis court at Manly when Williams met him”.⁴⁰² The term “Tommy Tanna” appears to have been used much more in Australasia and the Pacific than in Britain. Only one reference to the term has been found in British newspapers.⁴⁰³ The *East of Fife Record* in 1906⁴⁰⁴, referenced “a Kanaka named William, or Tommy Tanna”⁴⁰⁵ who allegedly attacked his boss’s son when refused money. It appears, then, that the phrase “Tommy Tanna” was primarily used in Australasia.

Deportations and Debates on ‘Coloured Labour’

In addition to being discussed within debates on race, the deportation of Pacific Islanders was also reported in connection to the use of “coloured labour” in the Empire. By the early 1900s there was a consensus it was acceptable for governments to adopt immigration restrictions on non-white peoples. Such work as was available for non-white peoples tended to be limited to jobs such as domestic service, as Caroline Bressey noted in her research on Blacks seeking work in Britain between 1860 and 1920.⁴⁰⁶

As noted in Chapter One, the deportation of Pacific Islanders occurred within the wider context of a longer-term debate about non-white Labour which was extensively discussed in contemporary newspapers. In a number of articles the employment of Pacific Islanders was framed as part of a wider ‘coloured labour;’ issue well before the 1901 Legislation. The

⁴⁰¹ “Heads shaped to Order: New Hebridean Customs- Head-Hunting Still Exists,” *Evening Star*, 21 March 1925, 13.

⁴⁰² ‘Surf Shooter’s Death’, *Gisborne Herald*, 15 May 1840, 3.

⁴⁰³ Note: when searched in British Newspaper Archives, some results did not relate to the relationship between the name and the pacific Islands. Tommy Tanna was searched between the years 1900-1909 in the British Newspaper Archives for which 43 articles appeared.

⁴⁰⁴ “Murder of a Native in Australia,” *East of Fife Records*. 23 March 1906, 4.

⁴⁰⁵ “Murder of a Native in Australia,” *East of Fife Records*. 23 March 1906, 4.

⁴⁰⁶ Caroline Bressey, “Looking for Work: The Black Presence in Britain 1860-1920”, *Immigrants and Minorities. Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* 28, no. 2-3 (2010): 164-182.

stance of the Queensland Labour Party was discussed in an 1883⁴⁰⁷ article published in the *New Zealand Herald*⁴⁰⁸ it mentioned “there is a strong party in Queensland opposed to coloured-labour altogether, and which watches with keen and jealous eyes for every opportunity”.⁴⁰⁹ In 1888 an article published by the *Evening Post* entitled “The Anti-Chinese Agitation in Australia”⁴¹⁰ noted that the Intercolonial Trades Congress had argued for a poll tax of £100 for any Chinese entering Australia and also that a “resolution was passed disapproving the Government employing any coloured labourers”.⁴¹¹ Furthermore, it suggested that anti-coloured resentment was so strong that it was expected to influence the next election “is so strong in Queensland it is expected that the next election for parliament will result in favour of all members who are inclined to expel” Chinese from Queensland.⁴¹²

One of the earliest newspaper reports of the Australian 1901 Pacific Islands Labourers Act in New Zealand newspapers was from the *Evening Post*⁴¹³ of 2 October 1901 entitled “Coloured Labour’ in Queensland.” The title of the article explicitly linked the deportation of Pacific Islanders to ‘Coloured Labour’. It then discussed the Pacific Island Labourers Bill in some detail:

Its main provisions are that no Pacific Island Labour shall enter Australia after 31st March 1904, and none shall enter before that date excepting under licences. During 1902 licenses will be allowed for three-fourths of the number of Islanders who are returned to their native islands during the present year, and during 1903 to not more than half of those who are returned to their islands. No agreement to remain in force after December 1906. Persons exempt are those who have resided in Queensland continuously for 5 years prior to September 1884; those employed as part of ships crews, and those possessing exemptions under the Immigration Restriction Act.⁴¹⁴

An editorial “The Abolition of the Kanaka”⁴¹⁵ published in the *Press* in October 1901 endorsed the legislation. It suggested that “even if this Bill passes it will not be the solution for the ‘Kanaka problem’” stating “the elimination of the Kanaka is a foregone conclusion”.⁴¹⁶

⁴⁰⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 30 October 1883, 4.

⁴⁰⁸ Note: This was published after a report by the Imperial Government into the affairs of the Western Pacific was made public

⁴⁰⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 30 October 1883, 4.

⁴¹⁰ “The Anti-Chinese Agitation in Australia,” *Evening Post*, 6 March 1888, 2.

⁴¹¹ “The Anti-Chinese Agitation in Australia,” *Evening Post*, 6 March 1888, 2.

⁴¹² “The Anti-Chinese Agitation in Australia,” *Evening Post*, 6 March 1888, 2.

⁴¹³ “Coloured Labour in Queensland,” *Evening Post*, 2 October 1901, 5.

⁴¹⁴ “Coloured Labour in Queensland,” *Evening Post*, 2 October 1901, 5.

⁴¹⁵ “The Abolition of the Kanaka,” *Press*, 8 October 1901, 4.

⁴¹⁶ “The Abolition of the Kanaka,” *Press*, 8 October 1901, 4.

The editorial cited suggestions of a “half-caste” race emerging as a factor in favour of the legislation. The article acknowledged there were arguments on both sides on the question of whether whites could work in Sugar plantations, but suggested the Kanakas decline was “inevitable”. It also argued improvements in technology meant that non-white labour was no longer as important. The overall tone of the editorial suggested general support for the White Australia Policy. That these statements were made in an editorial, suggests they reflected the view of the newspaper, giving some insights into New Zealand perspectives on the legislation. New Zealand newspapers appeared broadly supportive of the White Australia policy. The *Otago Witness* published an article under the sub-heading of ‘A White Australia’, discussing the legislation with reference to New Zealand.⁴¹⁷ It linked the Australian 1901 Immigration Restriction Bill to New Zealand’s 1899 statute noting it “follows closely New Zealand statute of 1899 in that it prohibits the entrance into the Commonwealth of any person unable to write and speak the English language”.⁴¹⁸ This article explicitly supported the White Australia policy and foresaw difficulties with it in terms of relations with Japan.

The deportation of Pacific Islanders was also explicitly discussed in the context of a wider debate about humanitarian abuses in the employment of non-white labour. In February 1904 the *Daily Mail* published an article “Slavery in A Hurry”⁴¹⁹ which compared proposals to allow Chinese labourers to work in South Africa to the alleged slavery of ‘Kanakas’ in Queensland. “In the early years of Australian history this particular form of slavery led to untold cruelties perpetrated against the natives of the South Sea Islands”⁴²⁰, it was argued. The article continued:

One of the first acts of the Australian Commonwealth Government has been to assert its Authority in Queensland by forbidding the importation of Kanaka labourers under indentures such as those proposed in South Africa. Why? Because it was found that Kanakas so engaged differed in no respect, except the difference between hypocrisy and brute force, from mere slaves. Australia has shown itself in that decision to be a worthy offshoot of British stock- the stock whose glory it has been for nearly a full century to regard slavery as a crime.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁷ “A White Australia,” *Otago Witness*. 9 October 1901, 44.

⁴¹⁸ “A White Australia,” *Otago Witness*, 9 October 1901, 44.

⁴¹⁹ “Slavery in a Hurry,” *Daily News (London)*. 23 February 1904, 6.

⁴²⁰ “Slavery in a Hurry,” *Daily News (London)*. 23 February 1904, 6.

⁴²¹ “Slavery in a Hurry,” *Daily News (London)*. 23 February 1904, 6.

This issue was subsequently discussed in the House of Lords. In March 1904 the *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette* discussed proposed regulation of Chinese labour⁴²² in Transvaal.⁴²³ The article reported on a discussion in the House of Lords which focused on the Colonial Secretary's views on indentured labour. The article noted that the use of Pacific Island Labour in Australia was cited as a precedent, reference being made to the 1880 Act passed in Queensland which brought the Labourers to Queensland to work. A discussion around this Act took place between Mr. J. Ellis (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) and Mr. Lyttelton. Mr. Lyttelton presented the 1880 Act as an example which strictly regulated the employment of non-White labour:

But I confess that when this matter first became a subject of discussion in Australia, I was unaware of one or two matters. I find that in 1880 Queensland passed an Act which brought indentured Labourers from the Pacific Islands the Ordinance provided that they should be confined to certain kinds of agriculture, and in 1884, after experience, the expressly forbade, by an amending Act numerous employment which were scheduled to the Act. They provided in addition for the repatriation of the indentured coolie unless he was re-indentured. That is the Ordinance of a self-governing colony.

Mr. J. Ellis (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): That has been repealed.

Mr. Lyttelton: No, it has not. I will take another equally ludicrous test of slavery. It is supposed to be slavery because the alien is not entitled to hold land: that is another badge of slavery, and I have been challenged to find specific enactments in the Colonial Office against it.⁴²⁴

This particular speech prompted a letter to the editor subsequently published in the *Daily News*. The publication of personal letters gives insights into particular issue people were motivated to write about and what editors decided to include in their newspapers. Following the reports of this exchange the *Daily News* (London) published a letter from Harold Cox of Gary's Inn, which strongly contested Lyttelton's assertions. Cox asserted that in practice, Pacific Islanders in Australia had considerable freedom of movement and that legislative

⁴²² The New Zealand Attorney General moved a motion expressing regret at this decision See "Legislative Council," *Press*, 10 September 1904, 8.

⁴²³ "Chinese Labour: Liberal Leaders Consistency," *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*. 24 March 1904, 5.

⁴²⁴ "Chinese Labour: Liberal Leaders Consistency," *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*. 24 March 1904, 5.

measures aimed at reducing the range of employment they could undertake were ineffective:⁴²⁵

There are two statements here. The first is approximately accurate. The second is altogether misleading. It is not the case, as the above words imply, that the Queensland Act of 1880 and 1884, or any other Queensland Act provided for the compulsory repatriation of Pacific Islanders. Here are the words of the statute (44 Vic. No. 17. S. 23): At the expiration of the engagement of any labourers his employer shall either cause him to be returned to his native home, or if the labourer does not then desire to return, pay the sum of £5 to the Immigration Agent, to be applied in defraying the cost of the return passage of such labourers when required by him In other words, the labourer was left free to remain in the Colony as long as he chose That freedom continued as long as Queensland remained an independent Colony. It was only terminated by an Act of the Commonwealth Parliament (No. 16 of 1901) Next as to Mr. Lyttleton's statement with regard to forbidden employments. The words as they stand are true, but there is a very serious holding back of essential facts. It is true that the law confined the Pacific Islanders or most of them, to agricultural employment of a tropical or sub-tropical character; but in the first place the law did not apply at all to Islanders engaged in fishing, or employed on coasting vessels, and in the second place an amending Act was passed specially exempting from the restricting clauses of the law islanders who had been continuously resident in the Colony for five years, ending December 31st 1885 (47 Vic., no. 12, s. 11). These men were, and still are, in every respect freeman. Moreover, in the Queensland Act there is nothing to prevent Pacific Islanders from acquiring land. They are, therefore at liberty to become freeholders and as soon as they obtain a freehold qualification, they become electors (49 Vic., no. 13, s. 6) ⁴²⁶

Cox's aim may have been to refute suggestions that the Pacific Island legislation provided for their automatic expulsion. The detailed content of the letter on the workings of legislation relating to Pacific Island workers suggests a degree of familiarity with Queensland on the part of the author.

Another letter, from Tom Mann, who had visited Bundaberg, was printed in the *Clarion* and gave a more sympathetic portrayal of Pacific Island labourers. Mann argued that they had been lured to Australia by White people, sometimes by dubious means, as implied in the title "Slavery in Queensland".⁴²⁷ Mann began his letter by discussing the recently held "Labour-in-

⁴²⁵ This letter is in some way linked back to the discussion in the House of Lords and the conversation that took place between Mr. J. Ellis and Mr. Lyttleton which was discussed above in the news article in the *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*.

⁴²⁶ "Mr Lyttleton's Accuracy", *Daily News (London)*, 24th March 1904, 12.

⁴²⁷ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

politics convention"⁴²⁸in Queensland. Mann stated "Bundaberg, where I write this, is, in fact, the first place to be visited" in the upcoming tour by Commonwealth Ministers.⁴²⁹ He argued employment of Kanakas was an established practice stating "it has all though been the general rule on the part of the principal planters to employ the largest possible number of coloured men, especially the Kanakas".⁴³⁰ Mann continued "these boys (they are men) have been trapped or bargained with and brought to Queensland".⁴³¹ This passage acknowledged the way in which many of the South Sea Islanders came to Queensland and could be read as a criticism of the morality of those who had placed them in that position. He also commented on their living conditions based on his experience seeing the Islanders in their 'homes': "sleeping accommodation is provided on the gunya or barrack plan. The Act says they must have a bed, they got literally bare boards and a blanket".⁴³² He went on to write "in the guayas where they sleep eight or twelve together. The building is of straw, a low doorway ...no window of any kind".⁴³³ Moreover, he noted, the Islanders "had no fork and no implement except a knife...no knife or fork or plate or utensils of any kind, no seating accommodation of any kind for the men to sit down, to have their food; and of course, no table".⁴³⁴ Mann does briefly mention the Act stating that "the federal government has determined the Kanaka must be deported by the end of next year".⁴³⁵ It could be argued here that, at least implicitly, the letter was arguing Pacific Islanders were not well treated in Australia; therefore, their deportation would not make their circumstances materially worse.

Some Fijian newspapers saw business opportunities for themselves arising from the deportation, including the possibility for Fiji to act as a port of call for Japanese workers en route to Queensland. In July 1905, the *Suva Times* printed an article which was originally produced and circulated by the Planters Association. It was written by E.F. Powell, President of the Planters Association and published under the title "Japanese Labourers"⁴³⁶ It outlined an agreement between Japanese labour and employers in Queensland "Dear Sir- Herewith is

⁴²⁸ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴²⁹ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³⁰ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³¹ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³² "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³³ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³⁴ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³⁵ "Slavery in Queensland by Tom Mann," *Clarion*, 30 June 1905, 8.

⁴³⁶ "Japanese Labourers," *Suva Times*, 5 July 1905, N.P.N

enclosed for your information a summary of agreements made between Japanese Labourers and employers in Queensland and New Caledonia"⁴³⁷ Further stating that "Messrs. Bowden Bros. and Co. Ltd., offer to supply Labourers to this colony".⁴³⁸ It seemed the fear of the "Asiatic" had disappeared to some extent as the proposal suggested Asian Labourers could be used in Queensland. The article concluded by quoting Powell asking for suggestions and whether planters in Queensland would like to use Japanese Labourers:

The cost of introduction is estimated at about £12 10s. per head, and the return passage from £6 to £10 per head..... In order to carry out the business economically, it would be necessary to import from 400 to 500 men by a direct steamer from Japan to Fiji, and it is believed that the above estimate cost of the introduction could be reduced to that of Queensland, viz., £10 10s., including all charge.⁴³⁹

What is interesting about this article is that it suggests that for some Whites at least, the fears they once had towards Asian immigration were, in some instances, transferred to Pacific Islanders. The proposal cited in the article has some similarities to the previously cited article in a British newspaper on a Chinese man's apparent willingness to supply the Queensland plantation owners with Chinese labour.

As noted in chapter two, some articles in *The Suva Times* reported on the deportations in the context of getting good workers, for Fijian plantations. There was some discussion, however, around whether the "Kanaka" would be able to assimilate to Fiji. In this respect, there were some parallels with wider debates on 'Coloured Labour' in Britain, Australia and New Zealand. In July 1906 *the Suva Times* speculated as to the suitability of 'Kanaka' for Queensland arguing they were materially different in character to indigenous Fijians:

There is something like 4000 of these people still remaining in Queensland to be returned to their island homes in the South Seas. "Kanaka" as employed in Australia is heterogeneously used and signifies a native of any of the many Western Pacific Islands irrespective of language. The similar individual in Fiji is more correctly designated as Polynesian, and his residence is welcomed by reason of his docility, and the ready manner in which he assimilates to the requirements of the European"⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ "Japanese Labourers," *Suva Times*, July 1905, N.P.N.

⁴³⁸ "Japanese Labourers," *Suva Times*, July 1905, N.P.N.

⁴³⁹ "Japanese Labourers," *Suva Times*, July 1905, N.P.N.

⁴⁴⁰ "The Queensland Kanaka," *Suva Times* 25 July 1906, N.P. N.

This article may also be read as an assertion the Fijian administrators were better colonists than Australia because they had been able to assimilate Pacific Island workers into their plantations. Similarly in August 1906, the *Suva Times* reprinted an article, originally from Melbourne, entitled “Repatriation of Kanakas”.⁴⁴¹ The article concluded: “the kanakas will be distributed between the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides according to present arrangements”.⁴⁴² Fijian perspectives on the deportations and their implications on race and “coloured labour” demonstrates the co-existence of both differing and complementary perspectives on the topic within the British Empire, according to location and perceived economic self-interest.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how newspapers reported on the deportations in the wider context of contemporary discussions over race and labour as well as “coloured labour”. A majority of the newspaper articles recounted historical notions that whites were unable to work manual labour jobs such as harvesting and cultivating sugarcane. However, due to the attitudinal changes in Australia, influenced by economic recession of the 1890s, the perspectives around race and labour changed. It was now argued that the white race was able to do this same labour that historically they had been deemed unable to do. Such articles reflected prevailing views of race in the British Empire and indeed the majority of the western world on the superiority of white peoples. The deportations were also discussed within the wider context of discussions on ‘coloured labour’ with the majority viewing the action of the Australian government favourably. Some argued in favour of the policy on ostensibly humanitarian grounds arguing it would prevent abuses such as those that had occurred in the early years of the Pacific Labour trade. Others posited the notion of alternative sources of non-white labour to replace Pacific Islands workers, demonstrating how ideas about particular peoples could change according to circumstances. These issues were actively canvassed in newspaper discussions in both major and provincial British and New Zealand newspapers. On occasion, they also included contributions from Australian

⁴⁴¹ “Repatriation of Kanakas,” *Suva Times* 4 August 1906, 3.

⁴⁴² “Repatriation of Kanakas,” *Suva Times* 4 August 1906, 3.

authors or people who had visited plantations in Australia. In this way they provide insights into the circulation of ideas on race relations and 'coloured labour' in the British world more broadly.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to evaluate media representations of the Pacific Island deportation from Australia in New Zealand, British and Fijian newspapers between 1880 and 1910, as this topic had not previously been the subject of detailed scholarly investigation. The principal research questions it set out to investigate were:

- 1/ How was the deportation of Pacific Islanders represented in New Zealand, British and Fijian newspapers?
- 2/ To what extent do newspaper accounts in New Zealand, Britain and Fiji of the deportation of Pacific Islanders provide insight into histories of race relations and imperialism more broadly?

In regard to the first question, the general tenor of newspaper discussion in both Britain and New Zealand on the deportations was supportive. Both New Zealand and British newspapers presented the deportations as a necessary and justified response to the presence of non-white Labour in Australia. The *Suva Times* was also supportive albeit for slightly different reasons presenting the deportations as an opportunity for Fiji to acquire cheap, reliable labour for its plantations. In this regard, the newspaper discussions of the deportations were in contrast to the generally critical media commentary on the Pacific Labour trade - often known as blackbirding – which was the means by which many of the Islanders had arrived in Australia prior to deportation. This trade, as discussed in chapter one, was generally criticised on both moral grounds as being tantamount to slavery and also on racial grounds because it allowed non white Labour to work in a white settler colony.

Newspaper coverage of the deportations focused on three main themes – economic factors; religious and humanitarian concerns and race and labour issues. Arguably, the strongest and most vigorous arguments against the deportations were made on economic grounds. There were two, inter-related concerns. The first was that the deportation of Pacific Labourers would make sugar cane farming uneconomic and this would have serious economic implications for both Queensland and, at a broader level, Australia. A related concern was that the loss of the sugarcane industry would see a loss of ‘progress’ in colonising generally as plantations might revert to wilderness. Another concern was that the deportation legislation

of the Federal government overrode the rights of states. These economic concerns, however, were countered by racial and technological arguments. On the one hand it was argued that whites could now do the work previously done by Pacific Island workers and fewer of them were needed. Moreover, the bounty system compensated plantation owners for any loss of income incurred by deportation. It was also argued that technological improvements meant that there was less need for Pacific Island labour, and that this had only ever been a temporary expedient. In addition, it was argued technology had developed in such a way that it allowed other uses for plantation land such as dairy farming. It was also noted that Pacific Island labourers had accumulated significant bank deposits therefore deportation would not have a serious economic impact on them.

Humanitarian and Religious concerns were intermixed. Humanitarian objections argued that it was dangerous to send Pacific Islanders back to the Islands because there was a risk they would be killed. This was countered on a number of grounds. It was reported in British newspapers that Australia had been asked to ensure the safety of those who were deported. Some religious leaders, including Bishop Wilson of New Zealand, also argued that concerns about the safety of deported Islanders were groundless. Moreover, because they had been Christianised while living in Australia it was also implied there were good possibilities that they might be able to positively influence the Islands they returned to. As noted, some Fijian newspapers, citing potential economic benefits, suggested they could accommodate deported Islanders, thereby lessening concerns they would be ill-treated if they were deported while also giving Fiji a source of relatively cheap workers. Overall, the humanitarian and religious discussions tended to favour a 'good coloniser' narrative, suggesting that living in a Christianised country had had a positive moral effect on the Pacific Islanders who worked there and that measures had been taken to mitigate harm to deportees.

Racial Issues also featured prominently in newspaper coverage. A dominant theme was that the deportations were justified because Australia's foremost duty was to advance the welfare of white workers. Related to the desire to promote white workers and the White Australia Policy more generally, it was also argued with reference to notions of racial advancement that White Australian workers had now reached a point where they could work in the tropics without being adversely affected. In contrast Pacific Island Labourers were increasingly

characterised as unreliable, as seen in a number of unfavourable stories about “Kanakas”. These derogatory categorisations were personalised and reinforced through the use of the term “Tommy Tanna”, which became a caricature personifying Pacific Island labourers. The “Tommy” part of this phrase suggested they may be partly anglicised but the “Tanna” part reminded readers they were still 'the other'. “Tommy Tanna” took its place among other derogatory names for various non-white ethnicities such as 'Asiatics', as a presumed marker of inferiority. The term Tommy Tanna was widely applied and endured as a stereotype for Pacific Island labourers alongside the term 'Kanaka'. Moreover, the discussion of the deportation of Pacific Islanders in British and Australian newspapers took place within the wider context of debates over 'coloured labour' in the British World. Whereas “Blackbirding” had been extensively criticised as both a form of slavery and importation of non-white Labour; the deportations were seen as a way of dealing with a common issue experienced in Britain, South Africa and many other colonies. Moreover they occurred at a time when their governments and a considerable section of their electorates more broadly, perceived ‘coloured labour’ as a problem. In Britain, for example, the deportations were explicitly compared to the employment of Chinese workers in Transvaal. The deportations took place in the wider context of increasingly restrictive immigration practices in the British world. The only check on such policies was concerns from Britain that they might jeopardise the recently concluded alliance with Japan. They also occurred at a time of increasingly assertive trade union activity which advocated for better working conditions for labourers and the continued presence of Pacific Island Labourers and non-white Labour more generally was widely perceived to undermine the progress being made in this regard.

Comparing New Zealand and British media coverage, in Britain, as might be expected owing to the larger number of newspapers, there was a significantly higher in numbers of articles discussing different aspects related to the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia. Whilst there were fewer articles on the deportations in New Zealand, the nature of the commentary tended to be similar, although some of the discussion reflected concerns particular to both places. In the case of New Zealand this related to issues such as the effect of the White Australia Policy on the ability of Māori to access Australia whereas some British newspapers reflected on the implications of the deportations for British colonies elsewhere in the world. Many of the articles on the deportations in New Zealand newspapers were

sourced from Britain and Australia, which to some degree accounts for the broadly similar coverage. By contrast, coverage of the deportations in the *Suva Times* tended to be more related to domestic concerns .

The second research question asked what newspaper coverage of the deportations reveals about imperialism more broadly. In relation to newspaper coverage, the discussion of deportations very much reinforces Ballantyne's notion of a 'British World' which was connected by various webs of empire. One of these was a rapid circulation of ideas throughout the British World. Gregory's assertions that white labour was capable of sustaining sugar production in Queensland, for example, were cited in both British and New Zealand newspapers. Moreover, the deportations were discussed in both the major daily newspapers of New Zealand and Britain as well as provincial newspapers, underlining how widely news travelled within the Empire. Australian perspectives were incorporated into many of these accounts, some sourced from Australian newspapers; others from correspondents who either lived in Australia or had previously lived in Australia, demonstrating how one effect of the movement of peoples throughout the empire was the emergence of an unofficial network of self-ascribed authorities on colonial subjects. The coverage in the *Suva Times* is another example of the extent of awareness of the deportations throughout the British Empire, albeit framed within more of a self-interested perspective in terms of economic gains for Fiji. The nature of the newspaper discussion on the deportations reinforces notions that a common White Anglo-Saxon identity was widely shared amongst the British Empire as seen in the broadly similar coverage of the deportations in British and New Zealand newspapers. Although the newspaper discussion of deportations was broadly similar, there were nevertheless a variety of opinions expressed. This reflects one of the underlying complexities of colonialism. It is a phenomenon which resists simplistic analysis, as there were always a range of competing interests and perspectives in play. This thesis has identified a spectrum of opinion on the deportations and it is important to keep this in mind when making broader assessments about the nature of colonial societies in this period.

Possibilities for further research in this field include a longer term study on perceptions of present Pacific Islanders as labourers, using newspaper coverage to see how thinking on this

topic evolved in New Zealand from the early 1900s through to the present day. There are also possibilities for looking at New Zealand's responses to the deportations in the context of the new Aotearoa New Zealand History Curriculum which includes reference to New Zealand's role in the Pacific. Newspaper discussion of the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia provides insights into New Zealand's approach to the Pacific region and attitude towards Pacific peoples. It is one aspect of New Zealand's history as an imperial power in the Pacific Islands that has received very little scholarly or public attention. It is, however, very relevant to the second of four 'big ideas' in the recently adopted Aotearoa New Zealand History curriculum namely that "colonisation and settlement have been central to Aotearoa New Zealand's histories for the past 200 years".⁴⁴³ The blurb for this section goes on to state "Aotearoa New Zealand has also colonised parts of the Pacific".⁴⁴⁴ Although not directly connected to New Zealand's colonisation of the Pacific, its attitudes towards the region were very much shaped by the Pacific Labour trade and the deportations. The fourth big idea noted in the curriculum states:

Relationships and connections between people and across boundaries have shaped the course of Aotearoa New Zealand's histories. People in Aotearoa New Zealand have been connected locally, nationally, and globally through voyaging, discovery, trade, aid, conflict, and creative exchanges. This has led to the adoption of new ideas and technologies, political institutions and alliances, and social movements.⁴⁴⁵

This thesis has highlighted how newspaper discussion of the deportations reflected the circulation of ideas and peoples around the British Empire. This is especially evident in the case of Chris Watson, who was born in Chile to a New Zealand mother, and subsequently came to lead the Labour Party in Australia and who strongly supported the deportation policy. In this regard this thesis has been able to contribute to both scholarly knowledge and has potentially generated relevant material for New Zealanders learning about their history.

The lack of criticism of deportation in New Zealand newspapers is an example of an underlying racism in New Zealand settler society that was evident both in the restrictive

⁴⁴³ *Ministry of Education, New Zealand. "Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in the New Zealand Curriculum" 2022, 2.*

⁴⁴⁴ *Ministry of Education, New Zealand. "Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in the New Zealand Curriculum" 2022, 2.*

⁴⁴⁵ *Ministry of Education, New Zealand. "Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in the New Zealand Curriculum" 2022, 2.*

policies against Chinese and Indian immigration. This racism co-existed with the view that race relations in New Zealand were especially positive and that Maori were particularly well treated in New Zealand. The general support of the deportation in New Zealand newspapers is another example of New Zealand's actions as an imperial power in the Pacific, which Damon Salesa has alluded to. Arguably too, one can see in the generally positive coverage of the deportations and the references to 'Tommy Tanna' in New Zealand newspapers some of the long-term underlying racism that would later be deployed against Pacific Islanders who were invited to come to New Zealand as labourers to do work New Zealanders were reluctant to do, but were then deported in the 1970s when economic conditions soured. So in a longer term sense it is an example of Pacific Islanders as a 'reserve army of labour'.

I myself, live in Te Puke where there are any Pacific Islanders who come under the RSE scheme to work in the kiwifruit packhouse and on the orchards. Many work in very poor conditions and are often exploited. The use of Pacific Islanders as labourers in this context has its historical origins in the Pacific Labour trade and deportations. The notion that they are particularly adept as manual labourers can also be traced back to the Pacific Labour trade. The historical nature that the blackbirding and the deportations had on Pacific Islanders has crossed over to present day, where by many still only work in agriculture. They also have a distrust of outsiders due to previous treatment in New Zealand and Australia, as with New Zealand in the 1970's Dawn Raids. Whilst, these are not directly linked to the deportations, there are some historical parallels between the two in terms of how newspapers can influence perceptions, ideas and understandings of race and labour in the work force. Historically, there are also economic parallels in that work provided by Islanders still seems to be far cheaper than that of whites, even though there are ostensibly laws and policies in place to protect workers.

Between 1840 and 1906 more than 60,000 Pacific Islanders worked in the Queensland sugarcane industry, most were kidnapped, lured, forced or coerced onto the ships bound for the sugar fields. After this mass influx of Pacific labour attitudes towards the non-white labourers became increasingly hostile and in 1901 two key pieces of legislation started to be processed in order to deport any indentured Pacific Islanders back to the Islands, namely the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 and the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901. The Pacific

Islanders who had been brought over to work, were now being forcibly deported. The deportation of Pacific Island labours from Australia has been discussed in the context of Australian and Pacific history, but not so much in terms of New Zealand and British perspectives. This thesis has sought to acknowledge the plight of those affected by these policies using newspapers as the key to understanding what the public were told about them. I hope that this master's thesis on how the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia within British and New Zealand Newspapers, as well as Fijian and Australian newspapers has contributed towards understanding an important part of our shared histories as Pacific nations.

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Evening Star

Fielding Star

Free Lance

Gisborne Times

Hastings Standard

Hawera and Normanby Star

Hawke's Bay Herald

Lake Wakatip Mail

Lyttelton Times

Marlborough Express
Manawatu Herald
New Zealand Herald
New Zealand Mail
Northland Ages
North Otago Times
Otago Daily Times
Pahiatua Herald
Pelorus Guardian and Miners Advocate
Poverty Bay Herald
Press
Star (Christchurch)
Taranaki Daily News
Taranaki Herald
Thames Advisor
The West Coast Times
Waihi Daily Telegraph
Waikato Argus
Wairarapa Age
Wanganui Herald
Western Star

Australian Newspapers:

Argus (Melbourne)
Boomerang
Bulletin
Courier (Brisbane)
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Appendix One

TIMELINE OF ACTS AND LAWS ON IMMIGRATANTS IN AUSTRALIA: 1861-1965

- 1861: Masters and Servant Act
So that Pacific Islanders could not negotiate their own contracts, they were recognised as servants under this Act.
- 1868: Polynesian Labours Act
To regulate and stop the abuse of Pacific Islanders being taken, also meant that Islanders entering Australia would be on 3-year contracts.
- 1880: Pacific Labourers Act QLD
Meant that a licence was needed if plantation owners or merchants wanted to bring/carry Pacific Islanders. This restricted the Islanders to only work in the sugar industry, they were unable to work in farming roles (pastoral work) and could only be 30 miles from the coast.
- 1884: Pacific Labourers Act QLD Amendment
Restricted Islanders to only field work in tropical agriculture, banned them from domestic work, jobs in sugar mills and in the maritime industry. It confined them to only menial jobs within agriculture e.g., clearing, planting and weeding.
- 1901: White Australia Policy
Development of the Pacific Islanders Act.
- 1901: Pacific Islanders Labourers Act
Closed the recruiting of Pacific Islanders and implemented the repatriation of all Pacific Islanders. The Pacific Islanders Associated was created during this time which lobbied for the many Pacific Islanders to stay in Australia.
- 1901: Immigration Restriction Act
This limited immigration in Australia and provided a legitimate pathway for deportation and restricting immigration into Australia at the discussion of officials, it also introduced the Dictation Test.
- 1903: Sugar Bounty Act
Bounties were introduced so that cane was cut by white workers only, effectively forcing the Pacific Islanders out of the sugar industry and into very menial roles.
- 1913: Qld Sugar Cultivation Act
Non-Europeans had to apply for an exemption to work in the sugar industry and all together forced Pacific Islanders out of the sugar industry.
- 1885-1904: The Liquor Act
An act enforcing that Aboriginal natives and Pacific Islanders or Polynesians born within the colony and any half-castes from buying any liquor.
- 1905: Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Act
Sugar workers are laboured employees within sugar plantations, other than Pacific Island labourers.

- 1911: Sugar Workers Act
Pacific Islanders must be able to read and write 50 words in English to be granted a certificate to work in the sugar cane fields.
- 1902-1917: Local Authorities Act
Pacific Islanders must be able to read and write 50 words in English to be able to work in construction, bus and tramways maintenance services.
- 1913: Sugar Cultivation Act
Pacific Islanders must be able to read and write 50 words in any language directed by the Inspector, otherwise they are disqualified from growing/cultivating sugar cane on any land in Queensland.
- 1898-1913: Mines Act
Licences for miners' rights were not allowed to be issued to people of Pacific decent and or Asians or Africans.
- 1913: Pearl Shelly and Beche de Mer Fishery Act
No-one who has not been able to pass the 'dictation test' is able to hold a licence for any boat and or be allowed to be employed in the industry.
- 1915: Workers Accommodation Act
Sleeping and dining for workers are to be kept separate from those of any Pacifica or Asians that are employed on the plantation or within the sugar work.
- 1920: Dairy Produce Act
No-one who has not passed the 'dictation Act' in English is allowed to be employed in any registered dairy/produce premises
- 1921: Banana Industry Preservation Act
It is unlawful for any person who has not passed the dictation test to engage or be able to carry working in the industry of cultivating bananas on any land in Queensland.
- 1897 (amended in 1934): Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the sale of Opium Act
Any Pacific Islander decent who has lived or associate with Aborigines. This placed Pacific Islanders on a lower social scale than Asians (who were not affected by this new legislation).
- 1919,1920 and 1920: Legislative Sanctions handed down
Similar to the 1885-1904: The Liquor Act restricting Pacific Islanders, Polynesians, Aborigines, and half caste in buying alcohol.
- 1965: Aliens Act
Controlling the movement of foreigners in Australia.

Appendix's Two

1904-1910 SEARCH ENGINES: British Newspaper Archives, Papers past and TROVE- Target Search

SEARCH ENGINE	SEARCH TERMS	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Deportation	357	331	383	508	498	381	320
British Newspaper Archives	Queensland Deportation	89	86	94	149	172	172	96
British Newspaper Archives	Kanaka Deportation	20	22	48	50	3	24	3
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific Islander Deportation Australia	2,531	2,390	2,198	3,027	3,151	2,705	2907
British Newspaper Archives	1901 Pacific Island Labourers Act	2,105	1,770	1,532	1,909	1,665	1,157	1,014
British Newspaper Archives	Coloured labour	29,926	26,465	31,338	27,538	26,274	26,940	26,017
British Newspaper Archives	Pacific labour	6,997	5,899	7,420	9,034	7,663	6,028	6,739

British Newspaper Archives	Sugar labour	11,311	12,356	10,082	10,031	9,562	10,093	9,670
Papers past	Pacific Deportation	15	45	52	46	20	23	11
Papers past	Queensland Deportation	60	78	254	122	23	56	17
Papers past	Kanaka Deportation	14	39	182	104	10	13	8
Papers past	Pacific Islander Deportation Australia	N/A	1	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Papers past	1901 Pacific Island Labourers Act	13	4	3	3	3	4	2
Papers past	Coloured labour	1,366	1,229	1,263	1,480	1,378	1,412	1,872
Papers past	Pacific labour	985	761	1,057	1,418	1,225	1,062	1,223
Papers past	Sugar labour	976	1,327	1,464	1,811	1,139	1,465	1,901
TROVE	Pacific Deportation	444	630	978	479	403	348	203
TROVE	Queensland Deportation	1,335	2,069	2,586	2,026	1,507	1,212	1,144
TROVE	Kanaka Deportation	609	1,438	2,391	1,617	257	211	150
TROVE	Pacific Islander Deportation Australia	236	340	500	225	186	117	73
TROVE	1901 Pacific Island Labourers Act	242	134	193	132	109	127	100
TROVE	Coloured labour	10,041	9,667	10,227	9,964	9,147	8,574	9,702
TROVE	Pacific labour	2,479	2,364	2,700	2,652	2,417	2,227	1,992
TROVE	Sugar labour	5,720	7,541	7,517	8,443	5,603	5,031	6,782