

**BOSE VAKATURAGA:  
FIJI'S GREAT COUNCIL OF CHIEFS, 1875–2000**

Colin Newbury  
*Linacre College  
Oxford University*

The Great Council was a product of the interdependence of the British and Fijian governing hierarchy. Fijian chiefs used it to defend their status and privileges; governors used the Council to control provinces and legitimate their policies. From 1904, the Council nominated representatives to the Legislative Council and provided personnel for statutory boards and commissions. From 1944, these precedents and the Council's own initiatives entrenched Fijian Administration as a branch of Fiji's increasingly centralized government. The Council played an important consultative role in negotiations prior to independence but failed to grapple with the financial reform of rural administration. After 1970, the Council increased its elected representation from the provinces and served as a political caucus and a pressure group of Fijian parliamentarians, notables, and commoners, nominating members of the Senate, confirming policies favoring ethnic Fijians, and maintaining close ties with central government through the Ministry of Fijian Affairs.

*The Governor is the root of the Council.*

Regulation No. 1/1877

*It is a Fijian Council of State.*

Governor Jakeway, 1965.<sup>1</sup>

*I respect the Chiefs. I do not like the composition of the Great Council of Chiefs. There are so many non-Chiefs there who will try to dictate the resolutions of the Great Council of Chiefs.*

Brigadier-General Sitiveni Rabuka.<sup>2</sup>

---

*Pacific Studies*, Vol. 29, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2006

### The Council as an Imperial and Fijian Artifact, 1875–1880

Fiji's Council of Chiefs was a product of local hierarchy and Crown Colony government. There had been occasional assemblies of high chiefs in pre-Cession Fiji as when, for example, Cakobau was elected "president" of a confederation at Levuka in 1865. Cakobau gathered chiefs formally into a privy council under the 1871 Constitution. There were precedents for gatherings of chiefs well before annexation under the Cakobau-settler government, more particularly in meetings of the Privy Council and in negotiations leading to the annexation itself.<sup>3</sup>

These precedents and a strong element of continuity with practices begun pre-Cession ensured that Council chieftainship was based on the status of hereditary chiefs within their own political units (*vanua*) and on British recognition of their role as a source of authority. The chiefs who signed at Levuka represented provinces as territorial groups of clans.<sup>4</sup> A number of other provinces had disputed paramountcies or were signed for by "outsider" (*vilagi*) chiefs set over them by Bau/Tailevu, with British approval.<sup>5</sup> Nobody signed for the interior valleys of Viti Levu.

On the Fijian side of the new hierarchy, as defined in Robinson's provisional government in 1874, the notion of preserving rank and enlarging privilege was a strong motive for acceptance of the Cession. Thurston's notes on draft proposals reveal chiefs preoccupied with the status of themselves and successors as clients of British overrule.<sup>6</sup> Cakobau was pensioned off, but his sons were given positions—superintendence of Viti Levu on £800 a year, while the Tui Cakau would rule over Cakaudrove on £600 a year, with boundaries expanded to include Bua and Macuata. Thurston as a former minister in Cakobau's government and a leading official under Gordon argued strongly, moreover, for association of chiefs with the government executive and their employment as administrators of Fijians. European commissioners would administer to Europeans. Thus, both Robinson and Thurston proposed continuity of Fijian aristocracy and its governance within a British dispensation. There was to be a cession, not an annexation.<sup>7</sup> What was on offer in 1874 was a joint government of Fiji, not possession of all the land or people. There were strong inducements to accept. In Robinson's provisional budget at the end of 1874, nearly a third of total expenditure was earmarked for stipending twelve chiefs as *rokos* of provinces, eighty-two district *buli* as subordinate chiefs, a dozen Fijian magistrates, and an armed Fijian constabulary to back them up.<sup>8</sup>

With sovereignty transferred to the Crown, the islands fell under the provisions of the British Settlements Act of 1843, by which Parliament empowered the Queen's representatives to set up courts and prescribed for a

governor and an executive council assisted by a legislature, in which officials predominated. The government was in theory an autocratic hierarchy, but severely underfunded and with little in the way of coercive force beyond a locally recruited armed constabulary. An additional burden placed on the governor was supervision at long range of illegal activities of British subjects in islands where there was no European jurisdiction. To support this outpost of British overrule, growth of taxable trade through local production was essential by encouragement and control of immigrant settlement and local Fijian agriculture, as foreseen by Thurston and sponsored by Gordon.<sup>9</sup> The formal structure of governor, officials, magistrates, and clerks looked more impressive in the first *Blue Books* of the colony than the realities of isolation, uncertain markets, and Treasury parsimony warranted. It would not be allowed to go bankrupt; it could call on Imperial forces in emergencies. But, as elsewhere in the new Empire, its economic and political fortunes depended on the cooperation of local societies. Fiji became, therefore, by necessity as well as by design, an early example of ruling through a co-opted indigenous hierarchy. The reasons for this solution to local administration lay in practical limitations to the power of the first administrators—Robinson, Gordon, and their successors—and in the bargaining ability of chiefs who already had some experience of the advantages of codified regulations and formal conciliar structures for reinforcement of their own positions.

By far the best introduction to the establishment of their Council of Chiefs as part of that system is Gordon's neglected article published at the end of his governorship.<sup>10</sup> This enthusiastic account claimed continuity for village, district, and provincial assemblies under colonial regulations and completion of the chain of authority between Fijians and government "by the institution of an annual meeting of the Roko Tuis themselves, and of representatives chosen from all districts of Fiji, presided over by the Governor. This assembly has, however, been called into being almost undesignedly, and has assumed its present social and political importance rather by natural development than of set purpose."<sup>11</sup>

There was a "design" to the assembly, however, which lay in the need felt by Cakobau and the leading chiefs to establish protocols for receiving a supreme "chief" of Fiji and assuring their place in the new order. Shortly after Gordon's arrival on 24 June 1875, the *Vunivalu*, Cakobau, made his own unprecedented *tama*, or salutation to a superior, at Government House, Nasova. The chiefs of provinces followed this example and met with Gordon on 9 September for a *yaqona* ceremony [drinking] and ceremonial obeisance. Sir Arthur Gordon, ever the aristocrat, rose to the occasion and laid down his own protocols, lecturing the chiefs on their duties and administering an oath to the queen from each recognized chief (roko tui) as a mark of appoint-

ment to provincial office.<sup>12</sup> Gordon does not say whether this opened the first Council of Chiefs (it was a week before the full assembly). But he took the opportunity to ask their advice on communal services (*lala*), marriage and divorce, taxation in kind, and recruitment of village labor—all of which had been brought to his attention in memoranda from Wilkinson and Thurston.

The proceedings of the first Council show in much more detail that the provincial rokos and their subordinate chiefs took this agenda further and displayed considerable initiative in exploring questions that preoccupied them and in devising a format for keeping order in a very large gathering of some 300 chiefs, officials, and followers. They imposed discipline on meetings that lasted longer than either side envisaged, 16 to 29 September, before they reconvened at Government House and read their memorial of conclusions and resolutions for Gordon's judgment.<sup>13</sup> What worried them most was not commoners' services or taxes, but the status of chieftaincy itself in a society where sanctions could no longer be so rigorously applied, where there were alternative sources of authority in magistrates' courts and missionary churches. Labor recruiters offered escape from village life and its communal obligations to social superiors. Clarification about ways of keeping order *vakaturaga*<sup>14</sup> in changed circumstances was called for. After Gordon withdrew, the immediate agenda of the roko, the provincial buli, and magistrates was to determine status and privilege, who could be present and speak and who could not. Much of the first two days of open discussion was taken up with reasserting forms of respect for chiefs and their right to services. It became clear that Gordon was treated as a "high chief" by incorporation at the upper level of the Fijian hierarchy. He was, therefore, expected to rule "Vaka Viti" through chiefs and people and enforce laws against "disobedience"—a term of considerable elasticity, given the vague line (as chiefs admitted) between orders issued for the general good and for a chief's personal benefit. Suitable punishment was agreed to be forced labor for two or three weeks.

But not all could be chiefs benefiting from the governor's protection, though many might have high social rank, even hereditary titles, without holding public office. On 18 September, official chiefs were defined as "Rokos, Magistrates, Bulis, and all chiefs owning land and people called Turaga Taukei, or Turaga ni Mataqali and Chiefs of Towns."<sup>15</sup> This inclusive set of the privileged would cause difficulty later, as duties and rewards were disputed. But on one point all were agreed: there was a need to check the insolence of commoners and put a stop to their excuse that only European magistrates were to be obeyed. This could be done, it was decided, by regulations incorporated into the printed Native Code of Laws inherited from the previous regime.<sup>16</sup> Having settled matters of precedence to their satisfaction, they turned their attention to marriage and divorce, which exercised them

over three days;<sup>17</sup> they accepted Gordon's plan for a "culture system," which was strongly preferred to taxes in cash "as obtaining it threw the people more or less into the hands of unprincipled traders."<sup>18</sup>

When Gordon heard their "memorial"—in essence their answers to the agenda he had proposed—it contained much else besides in other resolutions. Limitation of communal services to rokos and bulis was accepted, while other cases were left for the roko to decide (which added to his power of patronage over Fijian magistrates and scribes). Nasova itself as the "high chief's residence" was deemed to be "a sacred spot on chief's land." For the rest, Gordon agreed to their recommendations on punishment for disobedience, their wish to retain current codes of laws and regulations, the need to regulate labor recruitment, and their acceptance of a produce tax. Importantly, they approved the governor's selection of a roko for Macuata Province and advised how he was to be installed, but they allowed his rival to be returned to the province. As would become more frequent, they permitted rival chiefs within a cluster of villages to form a new settlement by segmentation from a wider group to end a local intraprovincial dispute.

Clearly, it had not been a one-sided encounter between the governor and Fijian representatives. To give effect to their request for a civil law code, Gordon expanded the membership of a Native Regulations Board (NRB) to include Cakobau and three other chiefs, the chief justice, two members of the Legislative Council, a missionary, and Carew, Thurston, and Wilkinson.<sup>19</sup> A steady flow of Council resolutions aimed at order and social control built up a body of new laws and amended old ones. With some justification Gordon felt he had helped to create an institution that was more than an administrative rubber stamp. He acknowledged there were practical reasons for this solution to provincial management and supervision: "when a native population also outnumbered, by more than fifty to one, the strangers dwelling among them, it is not safe, even if it be practicable, to deny to the natives a large measure of self-government."<sup>20</sup>

The wisdom of this pragmatism was borne out, moreover, when the support of chiefs was required, as had happened in 1873, to help Gordon confront 7,000 Kai Colo "mountaineers" of the Viti Levu interior in April 1876. To avoid sending for West India regiments or Indian sepoys, the rokos were enlisted to raise 2,000 volunteers. By July, the campaign was over; thirty-seven prisoners had been tried by a court of two rokos with Fijian assessors, fourteen were executed, and Gordon was considerably indebted to his auxiliaries. The sons of Cakobau had already begun to further the political ambitions of Bau over the Wainimala and upper Sigatoka, before the campaign began.<sup>21</sup> They were joined by the coastal chiefs of Serua, Namosi, and Nadroga provinces to subordinate the Kai Colo and enforce the Christian *lotu*.

At the end of the campaign, clients of Bau and the governor were appointed as official chiefs and stipendiary magistrates to provinces of Viti Levu, while collaborating leaders among the Colo themselves were placed over defeated clans. If Gordon was adroit in settling this war, so were his chiefs.

As a result, there was a change in the rokos present in the Council of 1876.<sup>22</sup> Gordon did not refer to the politics of chiefly alliance in his article, but the bargaining position of the Council underlay the major topics of his governorship until his departure at the end of 1880.<sup>23</sup> These were taxation, the definition of Fijian land tenure, indentured labor, casual labor, industrial schools, and a series of lesser resolutions covering the conduct of local courts and councils. There was much that he did not mention such as the use of prisoners for provincial labor, the reluctance of rokos to accept inspection of provinces by European officials, the increasing difficulty of prescribing suitable produce tax crops, payment of minor district officials, depopulation and health, and wrangles over the definition of "fornication."

What impressed Gordon more than the variety of business were the ways in which the Council conducted itself. From 1876 meetings were held in different provinces and followed a set procedure. Gatherings opened with *yaqona* followed by a speech from the governor that raised topics but did not always lay down a fixed agenda. Assemblies lasted as long as a month, often with three sittings a day to deal with provincial reports in great detail, local grievances and inter-district or provincial disputes, and any resolutions arising from those discussions. From 1876, too, the Council took care to record its own report and prepare a letter to the queen signed by the rokos. From its second meeting the problem of numerous and noisy representatives and their friends was dealt with by constituting a subcommittee for bulis, scribes, and minor chiefs—"an elementary separation of the assembly into two 'houses'—the more remarkable because perfectly natural and spontaneous."<sup>24</sup> This probably owed something to the fact that only rokos voted on the rare occasions a vote was called for, and it was difficult for bulis to speak their minds in the presence of high chiefs, especially if they were critical of affairs in their provinces.

From the beginning, too, governors replied to resolutions on the concluding day, making an immediate decision on minor matters and referring others to the NRB or the Legislative Council. Gordon claimed this enabled the Council to influence Fijian affairs more immediately than a minority presence of Fijians in the legislature. He cited as prime examples the Native Lands Ordinance of 1880, which contained material from the resolutions of three annual meetings, and the Native Labour Ordinance of 1877. He might have added the Native Taxes Ordinance of 1876 and supplementary regulations on tax assessment and collection arising from provincial complaints in Council about how the system worked in its early years.

Two other features of the Council impressed Gordon: its ability to find ways of reconciling provincial disputes arising from boundaries and the segmentation of clans into mobile groups who transferred their settlements and allegiance to other chiefs and the ways in which it handled “delinquent chiefs.” “Above all, the questions *are* decided. They are not left to fester and rankle, and break out subsequently in perhaps serious disturbances.”<sup>25</sup> Secondly, Gordon recognized (as few of his successors did) that the formal business of the Council was accompanied inseparably by ceremonial and *solevu* exchanges.

The guests or strangers present goods to their entertainers, the entertainers present goods to their guests. This portion of the *Bose* is looked at with very jealous eyes by those who do not understand it; but, not to mention that it would be almost impossible to render intelligible to Fijians the severance of an interchange of property from the interchange of ideas at the Council, it should not be overlooked that these interchanges lead to the manufacture of a vast number of articles, and a corresponding increase of what to the Fijians represents wealth.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, as Gordon pointed out, provinces were responsible for provisioning this assembly, guests, and entertainment—a task that became more burdensome in later years, requiring restriction of the numbers of chiefly followers and occasional subsidies from Fijian administration funds.

A large deputation brings in the contribution from each village, piles it up on the “*rara*,” or public square, goes through the usual ceremonies attending the presentation of food, dances a formal dance, and withdraws. A High Chief and the Governor’s Mata-ni-vanua [spokesman] superintend the division of the pile into sixteen or seventeen heaps for the Governor, the ex-king, the constabulary, etc. The Mata-ni-vanua of each province superintends the further division of each provincial heap into portions for the Rokos, Magistrates, and Bulis of the province, whose own attendants again subdivide each minor heap among those dependent upon them. It is astonishing with what order, regularity, and speed these distributions are accomplished, and how much less waste than might be expected takes place.<sup>27</sup>

Accordingly, Gordon took pains to defend the institution and its procedures against criticism from settlers and missionaries.<sup>28</sup> His final justification for its existence, unusual in a Crown Colony, was a practical one:

Its maintenance is a necessity if the system of government through natives is to be kept up. It acts as a safety-valve to many a grievance that might otherwise rankle and swell to dangerous proportions; it furnishes a touchstone of feeling of the utmost value in gauging the tendencies of the native mind, and it is a most powerful auxiliary in carrying out the wishes of the Government.<sup>29</sup>

### **Decline and Revival: the Council as Broker of Fijian Resources, 1880–1940**

The corporation of Fijian leaders and officials that gained experience in the formal ceremonial of annual meetings with the governor and his representative in the 1870s was, therefore, a novel artifact of Crown Colony administration. Its prescribed role under Fijian Regulations did not derive from Fijian custom, but from interaction of Fijian leaders with settlers and administrators and from the need for chiefs to speak as a body in dealing with foreign representatives.<sup>30</sup> Up until 1900, the existence of the Council depended largely on governors' judgment of its usefulness. But if the governor was its "root" (as the Regulation of 1877 put it), the institution also enabled Fijian chiefs to extend informal influence into the formal sources of power in colonial government at the level of the Provincial Department, the Legislature, and the Executive Council through the governor as "supreme chief" and his *talai*, the Native Commissioner.<sup>31</sup>

The primary purpose of the Council from 1880 was to monitor regulatory control of a rural Fijian population through Fijian magistrates and bulis, while acting as guardian of their lands and use of their manpower in conditions of settler pressure and demographic decline. To achieve this, Gordon's three layers of councils provided a mechanism for representation and a chain of command and redress. Tikina (district) councils under bulis were designed to keep headmen accountable for the order and cleanliness of the villages; provincial councils met once a year and set rates and taxes to meet a budget of expenditure, but the management of that budget was handled by provincial commissioners, European magistrates (as tax inspectors), and scribes attached to the Provincial Office. As long as Gordon's produce tax continued till about 1912, senior Fijian officials were paid through the Provincial Office from central funds as part of the budgets for the Provincial Department or the Secretariat for Native Affairs. Neither district nor provincial councils exercised judicial functions. Stipended rokos, either as hereditary chiefs, or in their subordinate positions as assistants to commissioners, were, therefore, not exactly "Native Authorities" with prescribed judicial and executive powers, courts, and councils of elders, as in African protectorates. They did not



run “native treasuries.” But they had authority and status to influence application of Fijian regulations through bulis, headmen, magistrates, and lesser officials if they cared to apply themselves to routine affairs, agricultural projects, or fund-raising. More often they did not. Within this structure there was room to maneuver, but not much for initiative at village level, unless the *vanua* chief of the district gave his support. As responsibility for district and provincial affairs passed increasingly into the hands of commissioners in the later nineteenth century, the hierarchy of official chiefs and buli executives became less effective in administration and more defensive in complaints about status, pay, pensions, and appointments in Council Proceedings.

The greatest weakness of Fijian administration was that Gordon’s prescribed system left a number of loose ends that did not mesh with extended family and subclan leadership at village level.<sup>32</sup> Provincial councils meeting infrequently were a gathering of district bulis, appointed village headmen, magistrates, and scribes under the chairmanship of the roko or the commissioner. Their purpose was general “welfare and good order,” as laid down in a detailed list of questions to bulis. In districts under bulis there were, in theory, monthly meetings of *tikina* councils consisting of appointed village headmen to regulate general matters of health, the conduct of officials, and census registrations. Their relations with family and village leaders as heads of *i tokatoka* and *mataqali* were left vague. Nearly a century after Gordon’s prescriptions, when the system of rural administration came under pressure for further bureaucratization, there was still a wide gap at grass roots between village headmen, as agents of the buli, and village and family elders and titled chiefs of *mataqali*.<sup>33</sup>

For one thing, the neat demarcations of districts and provinces on the maps of the Colony did not keep pace with changes in the population of rural settlements. Frequent requests through the Council for approval of migration by subclans segmenting from the main stock to other districts or provinces suggests “boundaries” were porous. *Mataqali* could expand into *yavusa* clans with a common ancestor, but the kin components of a *yavusa* might be concentrated or spread among different village settlements. Furthermore, there was a subhierarchy of family heads, ranked *mataqali* chiefs (sometimes acting as village heads) who might or might not provide the “official” village headmen and buli personnel. If they did not, there was a disjunction between official and customary leadership. To complicate matters further, in the subordinated interior provinces and districts of the Kai Colo, the idealized pattern of local administration existed as a layer of “foreign” (*vulagi*) appointees well into the next century, and there the gap between official and grass-roots authority was even greater.<sup>34</sup> Other forms of Fijian mobility such as a steady defection by young men and some women from the obligations

of communal village life were regulated but did not stop. By the end of the century, a number preferred to earn wages and pay their fines. There were lesser issues confronted by the Council concerning relations with missionary societies, health, and education in conditions of population decline. But these required intervention and resources outside the immediate command of the chiefly hierarchy, until the period of postwar welfare spending and central planning complemented Fijian political aspirations in the 1950s.

What concerns us here are the practical effects of the inability of the administrative hierarchy to translate its policies through enforceable regulations all the way down to the village level with assurance they would be carried out. The problem of effective authority in action was continuously reflected in the Proceedings of the Council of Chiefs. Through the reports of bulis, there were rumblings of discontent from below, usually about taxes and constant revisions of regulations on marriage, divorce, public health, mission recruitment, and absenteeism from villages that headmen could not deal with. From time to time, and more especially in the 1890s, there were undercurrents of religious and political resistance in the *tuku* and *luve ni wai* cults and a search for better methods of marketing produce in response to the challenge of the "Viti Company" movement from 1914.<sup>35</sup> Disputes over the division of *solevu* and other presentations between provinces and debate on whether they should be banned altogether considerably modify Gordon's portrayal of ceremonial harmony in the circulation of goods during Council meetings, when bulis and lesser officials failed to deliver.<sup>36</sup> At a basic level, therefore, in nineteenth century Fiji the gap between regulation and executive action was usually laid at the doorstep of the unfortunate *turaga ni koro*, unpaid, untrained, unsupervised, and caught between a layer of official bulis and mataqali and family heads.<sup>37</sup> Councils and governors failed to resolve this fundamental difficulty, and administrators turned more frequently to supervision through commissioners. In Council Proceedings, chiefs and governors concentrated their agendas instead on the main topics inherited from the 1870s: use of land resources, creation of rents and revenue, and the authority and status of chiefs in the face of this intrusive administrative supervision.

Underlying much of the cooperation of Gordon and the chiefs had been a common resolve to determine who could alienate limited areas of Fijian land.<sup>38</sup> Instructions on holding Fijian lands in trust given by Lord Carnarvon in 1875 and the pronouncements of the Council of Chiefs on the ownership of Fijian lands by mataqali, 1878-9, were reinforced by Gordon's 1880 Ordinance according legal tenure by custom to Fijians. One of the reasons why Council chiefs entered willingly into this complex exercise of definition of territory and social groups was that a letter from Cakobau at the end of 1878 had called their attention to the work of the earliest Land Commis-

sion set up by Gordon to investigate European pre-Cession claims,<sup>39</sup> which promised a division of monies from sales of Crown land between the government and Fijian owners. A second was the question whether chiefs' own lands would fall under the provisions of the produce tax of 1876. On both these points chiefs were in the dark.<sup>40</sup> They were reassured on the methods of examining European claims pre-Cession; and the question of taxation and shares of rents concentrated their minds, when they set about basing their definition of territorial "ownership" by mataqali subclans and elaborated a procedure for handling registration after settlement of disputes in 1879 and 1880, formulating, in effect, the draft land Ordinance No. 21 of 1880.<sup>41</sup> Des Voeux, as lieutenant governor, took part in the council session at Bua and made it clear there would be no alienation without consent. But he saw no obstacle to Fijian sales through the Crown, with provision for a share of the price to the owners. On any count, the recommendations were generous to the political chiefs of provinces and to government. Gordon made only a perfunctory minute on all of this and did not go into detail. At the end of the 1880–81 Council held in the Lau group at Mualeva on Vanuabalavu, Gordon took his leave on his way to his New Zealand governorship, confirming that land alienation would be curbed and registration of lands would begin, as required under the regulations formulated by the chiefs.<sup>42</sup> It is worth noting, however, that on 28 March 1881 he gave an opinion on mataqali lands, questioning whether they were quite so "inalienable" as decided by Council resolutions. Such resolutions, Gordon observed, were not laws but "merely declarations of Native Custom." Gordon minuted that the Crown was free to sell Crown lands as "the property of a Mataqali not then making use thereof." But this was special pleading for a special case: on this tenuous ground Gordon covered his decision to make a sale to the Colonial Sugar Refinery before the Ordinance came into force, though no further concessions would be made thereafter.<sup>43</sup>

As a consequence of the Council's long-debated definitions of territorial ownership based on agnatic social groups, chiefs in the provinces were now saddled with the difficulty of finding out what the boundaries were for lands whose usehold rested not on territorial demarcation, but on a bundle of land rights acquired by farmers, rights vested in descent groups—with contingent rights for nonresidents—and important tributary rights arising from the incorporation or conquest of mobile clan and subclan groups.<sup>44</sup> Having decided that the lands of hamlets and villages fell under *tikina* councils and boundary disputes between districts were the business of provincial councils, the chiefs exempted their own private lands from any such arbitration. Indeed, for a while they seem to have aimed at making their Council into a court of appeal for disputes at provincial level. A case involving the Province of Serua and

the interior of Colo in 1884 was examined and referred by their resolution to the NRB for decision. In 1885, the Council felt confident enough to judge a land dispute between Moala district and Lakeba and set up a small commission to deal with the case. By 1888, however, the Council recognized (and Governor Thurston agreed) that the 1880 Ordinance did not provide ready ways of settling Fijian boundary disputes. Indeed, the Council could hardly bring itself, after two hours of debate, to decide the land rights of Tongans in the Lau group, following the death of Ma'afu as paramount of the group, when local resentments at their presence surfaced. To their credit the chiefs resolved to respect Tongan claims to remain as integrated and historic settlers. That charitable attitude did not extend to Indian settlers in May 1888, when for the first time the consequences of the end of indenture were raised. Some village chiefs and buli had been fined for harboring Indians; and most agreed with the warning of Magistrate Jonacani: "They will stamp us out."<sup>45</sup> But a resolution to end settlement of Indians in Fiji merely resulted in a long explanation from Thurston that they were British subjects, few in numbers, and would have to pay taxes.

Governor Thurston steered the agenda back to the topic of land in 1892, when he outlined his objections to paying anything more than a token rent from the government for "waste lands" taken over by the Crown.<sup>46</sup> In return for continued communal services for chiefs, the Council caved in on this issue. On the other hand, Thurston amended Gordon's Land Ordinance in 1892 by requiring commissioners to sit with provincial councils to settle boundaries. At the same time, he slipped in a clause making it easier to lease Fijian-owned lands with the consent of councils and the governor.<sup>47</sup> But little more was done for the next decade. Thurston's attention was taken up from 1894 by a major tax revolt on Macuata led by two cult movements in the Seaqqa hill villages combined with a secession movement from the authority of the Roko Tui Macuata to Cakaudrove Province. In addition, he had an important dispute with Ratu Epeli, Roko Tui of Tailevu and surviving eldest son of Cakobau.

Following Thurston's chiefly paramountcy, the Council entered the lowest period of its influence, as the practice of using provincial inspectors—condemned by the 1902 Council as "enemies of the Rokos"—spread.<sup>48</sup> Inspectors interfered with the chain of command and complaisance running from bulis to rokos and their *matanivanua* personal officials. There had been dismissals of bulis without consultation of the hereditary chief. Inspired by the Roko Tui Tailevu, Penaia Kadavu Levu, the Council solemnly debated replacing all European commissioners and inspectors by chiefs on the grounds that they had not given Fiji to the queen in order to be eased out of authority. Commissioners were to be limited to judicial work. Surprisingly, the Assis-

tant Native Commissioner who accepted their resolution agreed to lay the matter before the incoming governor, Sir Henry Jackson.

Jackson took the Council seriously. He thought it should meet annually, although it was “a rather tedious and costly proceeding” to assemble at Suva.<sup>49</sup> For the first time since Gordon, he began an appraisal of the chieftaincy system in relation to Fijian taxation, communal services, and land availability for lease.<sup>50</sup> The taxation system he planned to “modify” further in the direction of cash payments. The communal system of prestations for chiefs and other officials might stay in place, if not pressed too far and encouraging defiance of chiefly authority, as had happened in Colo districts and in Lau, where food donations to officials were resisted. *Lala* services were in some confusion in the Regulations of 1877 and 1892 by requiring commoners’ labor for house-building, road-building, planting gardens, feeding strangers, making canoes, turtle-fishing, and works of “public good.” The English version made it clear that only *rokos* and *bulis* could exercise such authority. The Fijian version was vaguer, leaving interpretation open to “local custom.” The injunction to obey was backed, however, by fines and prison for disobedience.<sup>51</sup> Persons complaining of excessive *lala* might appeal to the governor, but that was very unlikely to happen in Fijian society. There were undoubtedly abuses of the system, and some chiefs added considerably to their official incomes by forced services.<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, Indians and Pacific islanders were free from communal services and the produce tax. This was deeply resented, Jackson argued, by young men who abstained from communal labor as much as possible by periodic absence. But Jackson saw the main obstacle to such “individualism” in the land tenure system. The Land Commission had made some progress in registering family lands of *mataqali*. At family levels, plots were individually worked and trees were individually owned. This tendency might be strengthened, he concluded, by making tax refunds payable to individuals. But policies in different spheres—chieftaincy, taxation, land, labor—although connected, had been discontinuous in detail, and Fijians played off several authorities against each other. To remedy this defect, Jackson proposed to reform the Native Department by reinforcing the Native Commissioner’s role through touring inspections as the governor’s *talai* (spokesman), and in this way to circumvent resentment of provincial inspectors. Thus, a direct link from provincial *rokos* to the source of power might be restored. Finally, Jackson planned to transform the produce tax by commutation into cash payments because the Revenue Department had zealously required production of crops not always suitable to different districts and provinces. The result had been travel over long distances to find suitable plots hired from other districts. Tax had been harshly administered.<sup>53</sup> Above all, tax work conflicted with subsistence pro-

duction. Fijian objections took the intelligent view that they were subject to Customs on goods like everybody else, in addition to their special tax in produce. Jackson agreed with Fijians that many areas were overassessed in terms of population and production.

Thus, he edged towards a graduated tax according to types of production with greater reductions in assessments for minor crop producers and the poorest provinces. In all, Fijian taxation would be reduced from over £19,000 to about £16,000 a year. Individual cash payments would end gifts to rokos from the annual refunds of tax money and outright retention by some bulis. The Council had already made a request in Resolution 22 of 1902 for payment of all assessments in cash, and Jackson agreed with rokos on how to apply this.<sup>54</sup> The Colonial Office approved these proposals.

With this program circulated to chiefs in advance, Jackson took a relaxed attitude towards the Council when it met in September 1903. He agreed to reinstate some of the chiefs and officials dismissed by his predecessors. He supported Nadroga Province in its request for a young roko, Ratu Tavita Makutu. A bargain was clearly in the making. For, in this atmosphere of goodwill, he secured government control of more unused lands with the consent of the Council. In return, he accepted the Council's division of rents.<sup>55</sup> And this was followed by his acceptance of a panel of Fijian names for selection for the Legislative Council.<sup>56</sup> The Colonial Office allowed all this to stand, accepting a reduction in produce tax, because it was clearly a tradeoff for the Council's Resolution 6, "which practically hands over to the Government the entire control of the whole Waste Lands of the Colony," and Resolution 13, "which in adopting the family subdivisions of the Mataqali, as the proprietary unit in registering the Native Lands, makes a very long step in the direction of individual ownership."<sup>57</sup>

That conclusion was overoptimistic. But Jackson's successor, Sir Everard im Thurn, reluctantly had to accept the reduction of tax as well as the scale of rents and call the Council together for a few days in 1905 to confirm nominations of Fijian Unofficial Members of his legislature. That was about as far as that devious governor was prepared to consult the chiefs.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, they played no part in the minor drama over the Native Lands Ordinance of 1905 intended to make Fijian lands freely alienable on perpetual leases, end the work of the Lands Commission, and end registration of mataqali boundaries.<sup>59</sup> As is well known, the legislation was scotched by Lord Stanmore (Gordon) amid mutual recriminations, but not before a number of the high chiefs had taken advantage of the opportunity to obtain Crown Grants and Native Grants, which provided a good income from subsequent leases.<sup>60</sup> There is also evidence that several of the highest chiefs were alive to the possibilities of extracting improved incomes from rent and sales monies by ex-

plotting their positions as titular heads of political *matanitu* and laying claim to the shares accorded to former *qali* as tributary dependencies.<sup>61</sup>

The long-term result of Thurn's abortive attempt to "reform" land tenure by more flexible conveyance was to "traditionalize" a flexible system long subject to group mobility and extraction of tribute from the most basic Fijian resource. But that process took time—at least until the 1940s, and in the meantime the Land Department and Lands Commission officials proceeded slowly to enshrine "ancient" land rights into a form of protection accepted by Fijians without meeting future difficulties over contingent rights of Indians to extended leases or suitable Fijian units for land management.<sup>62</sup> In the shorter term, the immediate effect was to hold up the registrations and boundary surveys begun through commissioners and provincial councils under the provisions of the amended Land Ordinance of 1892. The new governor, Sir Francis May, set about reviving the Lands Commission in 1911 and continued Jackson's policy of encouraging Fijian provinces to release lands for lease, while extracting a hefty ten percent fee from the annual rents (some £23,000 a year) to cover the work of Native Department and Lands Department officials.<sup>63</sup> On both counts it became necessary to recall "the Great Council (or gathering) of Chiefs" to approve selection of two Fijians for the new Commission and the new method of channeling rent monies and tax refunds more frequently through the Native Deposit Account—less administration fees. There was a further motive for consultation: without fixing ownership and boundaries, the government could not introduce a land tax, as May planned, or progress towards individual ownership on the model of the governor's very partial understanding of Maori land ownership in New Zealand.<sup>64</sup>

When the Council met once more at Suva in 1911 and 1912, it nominated for the first time rokos as members and assessors to the Land Commission, but it conceded no more than five percent in fees for handling rents. May accepted this for the moment, and with easy revenue in mind the Council agreed to persuade provinces to make over more unused lands for lease.<sup>65</sup> There was a battle over the size of the rents committee (the Council wanted thirty-three chiefs to carve up the income), but it was kept to a few officials and nominated Fijians. The argument continued into future sessions, raising chiefly claims to "ownership" of all lands as clan trustees. As a consequence, by 1917, very little of Fijians' land was handed over for further lease. The work of the Land Commission slowed down, even as it expanded into one of the largest departments of government by the early 1920s. On two other matters the Council won and lost points. The government wanted to tap into land rent monies as a source for funding forestry officials. This was refused (the Council preferred to share any costs). Second, there was constant pres-

sure from the Council for reversion of the lands of extinct *mataqali* to remaining subclans of a maximal descent group (*yavusa*) and not to the Crown. In 1928, the governor of the day laid down that the purpose of *mataqali* had been to provide protection for families of land users. This function had been taken over by the Crown: "It follows that right of overlordship as well as the right to the extinct *mataqali* land passed at the same time to the Crown."<sup>66</sup>

For the time being the Council was content with this, so long as it was able to increase its official representation within the Lands Commission and among the employees of the Land Department. *Mataqali* lands continued to revert to the Crown, and Fijians fell into arrears of payments for the Commission's surveys.<sup>67</sup> More Fijians were extending their own land use by leasing. The trend by the 1930s was towards protecting the stock of expiring leases, rather than renewing them. To counter this trend Ratu Sukuna, as a high chief in the Council and Member of the Legislature, proposed to the 1936 session at Bau that:

all lands (including leases) not required for the maintenance of Fijian owners, be opened for settlement; that to further this end a committee be appointed to enquire into and determine the amount of land needed for the proper development by native owners; and that all land (including leases) not so required be handed over to the Government to lease on behalf of the Fijians.<sup>68</sup>

On the evidence of Sukuna's previous career, this was a strange initiative for such a prominent Fijian to take.<sup>69</sup> He had supported chiefs' petitions against further Indian settlement in 1921; his views on the development of Fijian society were, according to his biographer, "amazingly static"; and after the entry of the first elected Fijians into the Legislative Council in 1929, he had allied himself with the principal European Members to oppose easier conditions of access to land.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, his proposal to the Council of Chiefs was opposed by at least two of the high chiefs present and was not approved by resolution immediately until the text of Sukuna's proposal had been circulated to provincial councils.

Provincial councils supported the idea of government-administered leases with the promise of more rents, as it became clear that Sukuna's proposal was less generous to Indian lessees than it seemed. Seen in the context of legislation in 1933 to allow extension of leases and compensation for improvements at the end of expired leases, the initiative was a preventive measure against the government taking powers for extended control of "surplus" Fijian lands.<sup>71</sup> In 1938, therefore, the Council of Chiefs in Resolution 40 asked the government to take Fijian lands "in trust," as suggested by Sir



Arthur Richards in his opening address. On this basis Richards drafted and forwarded a Bill for approval in London.<sup>72</sup> The details of the new proposal lay in the Regulations of the Native Lands Trust Ordinance, 1940, which created the category of Fijian Native Reserve Lands with no possibility of lease to non-Fijians by direct negotiation with owners. The remainder of Fijian land available for lease (pre-Cession “waste” lands and land from *mataqali* held by the Crown) came under a new statutory body, the Native Land[s] Trust Board, staffed by officials and Fijians, including some from the Council. The terms of leases were laid down. Proceeds from sale of leases, after deduction of ten percent by the administration, were divided 8s. in the £1 to chiefs and provincial funds and 12s. to *mataqali* owners. Thus began a centralization of Fiji’s land leasing system under an institution that became a target of criticism for its lengthy procedures, its lack of qualified staff, its “deplorable” land-filing system, and lack of personnel training.<sup>73</sup>

The more immediate question here in the context of growing Council influence before and during the 1940s is just how the originator of the measure, Ratu Lala Sukuna, managed to sell to Richards and the Colonial Office the idea of a seemingly liberal and rational method of opening Fijian lands for further settlement, while vesting all control over Fijian lands in a statutory board that made settlement difficult through its monopoly over leases.<sup>74</sup> The issue of land, moreover, is a sensitive indicator of the changing structure of administration and politics of Fijian society, where other new statutory bodies paved the way for a concentration of executive and civil service power and authority in the decades leading up to independence.

Sukuna had more experience than most Fijian chiefs or administrators of the variety and difficulties of Fijian tenure, so his knowledge of the factors inhibiting Fijian small-holder development of cash crops is not in question. He was aware of the relative shortage of good farm land in Fiji in relation to population.<sup>75</sup> And he was aware, because of his unusual education, practical training in the Secretariat, the Native Lands Commission, and as administrator of Lau Province, that there was a wide gap between his conviction that Fijians were happiest in their ascribed roles as rural farmers and the quality of chiefly leadership needed to guide them in that desirable status.<sup>76</sup> Rokos were not able administrators, even as assistants to commissioners. Provincial finances had been under fire from the Audit Department for a decade; provinces fell consistently into arrears on tax collection and payment of fees to the Land Commission over the period from the 1920s to 1940, and in 1931 there had been the spectacular dismissal and imprisonment of Ratu Joseph Mataitini, Roko Tui Rewa, for misappropriations from provincial funds.<sup>77</sup> Sukuna had dealt with dangerous cases of chiefly misrule and opposition to custom arising within the chiefly hierarchy between Verata and Bau in the

1920s and 1930s.<sup>78</sup> He was also aware that many of the hereditary chiefs were far from opposed to freeing up Fijian lands for sale or lease, against the best interests of commoners.<sup>79</sup> Some of the governors, too, had begun to tire over the denial of land to Indian settlement and recommended the outright sale of areas held under government lease.<sup>80</sup> By birth, upbringing, and experience a natural autocrat, Sukuna's reaction to the challenges facing Fijians by the end of the 1930s was to safeguard their interests within the institutions of Crown Colony government, if necessary by creating new ones, using the Council of Chiefs to staff them. Moreover, by the early 1940s, Sukuna had the political weight to do this. He had been singled out for promotion quite early in his career, and his selection for the Legislative Council confirmed the confidence of governors in his influence (as well as confirming the unusual practice of using Fijian officials as legislators).<sup>81</sup> By persuading Richards to take Fijian Reserves into trust, Sukuna removed leases from the informal market for "auctions," bribery, and negotiation between Indians and Fijians into government management under the NLTB in which chiefs could establish a monopoly of expertise. It was the first step toward centralization of other functions of Fijian administration, a re-establishment of provincial *rokos*, and a confirmation of the Council of Chiefs as a source of nominated legislators and officials of statutory bodies.

### **The Council as a Political Caucus, 1943–1970**

As in many other territories, the exigencies of wartime administration and postwar planning initiated a re-examination of Fiji's Constitution. In response to a survey begun within the Colonial Office, Governor Sir Harry Luke supplied a perfunctory account of the communal electoral and nominating system for the Legislative Council and accorded an important place to the Council of Chiefs as the principal assembly for Fijians.<sup>82</sup> But he had few ideas to offer. It was left, instead, to Sir Philip Mitchell, transferred from service in East Africa in 1942, to take in hand in mobilization of Fiji's manpower and production and commit his officials to serious thinking about an overhaul of multiracial representation and local administration. Mitchell's own thinking took him in the direction of promoting communal leaders to the Executive Council on the model of Fiji's wartime "Cabinet," which co-opted European members of the legislature.<sup>83</sup> But first he had to assess the communities he was dealing with.

Mitchell's initial impressions in July 1942 were not all that favorable, after ceremonial greetings on the lawn of Government House and a lecture to a rather "bored" assembly of chiefs on the business of his appointment—war and work, by compulsion if necessary.<sup>84</sup> But he did meet Sukuna in the first few

days and was “much taken with him.”<sup>85</sup> It is clear, however, that once he got around to drafting his “Fiji Reorganisation Report” in mid-August, the ideas in it were his own, based on his African experience and his briefing from C. E. de F. Pennefather, Adviser on Fijian Affairs. When he met with the Council of Chiefs at Nadroga, on 16 September, there was a full turn-out of seventeen *rokos* and notables, nominees of the Adviser, and nineteen representatives of the provinces, with a full exchange of courtesies and a *taqa* (military parade).<sup>86</sup> Once more his spoken message was short and to the point: the governor required a thousand more men for the army and a labor corps. His written and circulated address dealt with education, forestry, agriculture, welfare, and demarcation of Fijian reserves. But it was too soon to announce any constitutional program. His decisions on the 1942 Council’s resolutions revealed, instead, a cautious policy of toning down the aspirations of chiefs for annual assemblies, official recognition, payment for the *Vunivalu* of Bau, increase of salaries, and exemption of Fijian soldiers from tax. There was an unusual resolution, however, put forward by Sukuna and Ratu George Cakobau supporting his “proposal” for “Provincial Financial Autonomy” (which does appear in his address). In fact, this was merely an indication on Mitchell’s part that there would have to be a rationalization of central funding and provincial finances. To further this, the Council resolved to set up a committee, and Mitchell agreed.<sup>87</sup>

This was a straw in the wind, rather than a revelation of his thinking about the relationship between government and Fijian administration. The council meeting was short—no more than five days. Privately, Mitchell was disappointed in the chiefs and called off a dinner for them, when “six out of ten got tight and failed to turn up.”<sup>88</sup> Indeed, he did not call the Council together again during his governorship. His priorities were his War Council, the Production Board, and the Fijian Defence Force. It was only in May 1943 that he again discussed some of his draft on reconstruction with Sukuna, who liked the “new big plan” and agreed at once to accept the post of Secretary for Fijian Affairs. The following day he outlined its details to a full meeting of district commissioners and district officers:

They were all strongly in favour, and as they explained the existing system it could be seen to be even better fitted to my plan than I had realized. But we were agreed that we must keep posts for the men now at the war, and needed not to be in too much of a hurry to appoint *Rokos*.<sup>89</sup>

More surprisingly, Mitchell revealed that some of his model for change was based on an outdated Native Authority Ordinance for Tanganyika fairly irrelevant to the circumstances of Fijian provinces, districts, or villages.<sup>90</sup> If

there were any dissenters, they kept quiet. But all were agreed that a larger government subsidy would be needed to make his reforms work.

Mitchell's dispatch on Fijian affairs in July 1943 contained two main ideas: existing local government structures would remain intact but would be tied more closely to central government, and, second, confusion over Fijian finances and departmental expenditure on the provinces would be clarified by combining accounts in a new Secretariat for Fijian Affairs.<sup>91</sup> Both of these intentions would be met by reconstituting the Native Regulations Board into a Fijian Affairs Board (FAB) under the new Secretary, with five Fijian Members of the legislature as officials, assisted by a legal adviser.

This will automatically tie into the Legislative Council in one direction and to the Great Council of Chiefs, from which the Fijian Members are derived, in the other; while the Secretary for Fijian Affairs, as a Member of the Executive Council, will hold what will amount to a Ministerial Office in the Government of the Colony, and will be directly responsible to the Governor and, in appropriate matters, to the Legislative Council, for Fijian local government in all its aspects.

It may well be that the 1942 committee set up by the Council of Chiefs had some input into this. In any case it was a bold move to make the new Board into a virtual extension of the Council through its nominated legislators. At a stroke, too, Fijian leadership won back direct access to the seat of power in the Colonial Secretariat, which now housed the Fijian Office and to the Governor's Executive Council, where Sukuna took his place. The Board, moreover, would have wide quasijudicial and executive powers over Fijian legislation, over all appointments below the grade of roko, and over Fijian revenues and expenditure. There would, in short, be two administrations in rural Fiji, one falling under the Colonial Secretary, departmental officers, and Accountant-General, and one responsible to the Secretary for Fijian Affairs and his Board. Indian affairs were left, as before, to commissioners and district officers. But commissioners were also responsible to Fijian Affairs for supervision of the provinces and their councils. Fijians living in periurban "villages" and all Pacific islanders would come under the Secretary "for local government purposes."

How to finance this new model Fijian administration was left unclear. Mitchell recognized that his theoretical separation of "Fijian Affairs" could not be watertight in practice, when commissioners or district officers carried out rokos' functions in some provinces and other departmental officers carried out common services such as public works and agriculture. How would

allocations be decided? Nor did Mitchell touch on education funding, partly departmental and in part supported by Fijian taxpayers. The work of the Medical Department was common to all. Where did that leave support for Fijian Medical Practitioners?

His rough assessment of Fijian-sourced revenue amounted to some £53,200. This was based on a variable Provincial Rate, in fact a male poll tax levied by councils “according rather to the enthusiasm of the moment,” and it included a central government tax of about £10,000. There was some revenue from court fees and fines. Total expenditure on Fijian administration Mitchell calculated at a gross figure of £58,249, covering all personnel emoluments from rokos to minor officials and “other charges” (left unspecified). Net expenditure by government on Fijian administration was given as £9,402. This left a large part of expenditure on Fijian affairs unaccounted for, because of the difficulty of assigning salaries of departmental officers (judicial, treasury, public works etc.) to provincial accounts.<sup>92</sup>

This lack of clarity made the Colonial Office nervous about Mitchell’s proposal to make the Fijian Affairs Board “a self-accounting body for which the Accountant-General need have no responsibility.”<sup>93</sup> Otherwise, officials welcomed his plan and approved of the appointment of Sukuna. But they could not see how centralization of finances would do anything to encourage responsibility in provincial administration, and they insisted on making the Fijian Affairs Board subject to the Director of Colonial Audit. Defensively, Mitchell argued that Fijians deserved the measure for their war effort and that the operation of a centralized board by Fijian members of the legislature was a matter of politics and not of great constitutional or financial significance.<sup>94</sup> In any case the final Ordinance was approved without difficulty by the Legislative Council in 1944, and Mitchell was obliged to concede that the FAB would operate its “Central Fijian Treasury” subject to audit control, before it came into force.<sup>95</sup>

Mitchell’s measure also replaced Gordon’s Ordinance and Regulations of 1876 and 1877, which had consolidated the Fijian conciliar system, but indicated that the Council of Chiefs would continue to meet at least once every two years with its current proportions of chiefs as official or nominated members plus provincial representatives. Its immediate business was a meeting under Sukuna at the end of 1945 to give a laudatory approval to his paper on the new Ordinance and agree to his lists of amalgamated provinces and districts. This reconfiguration reduced provinces to fourteen by enlargement of Ba, Naitasiri (which swallowed up Colo East), Ra, and Tailevu, which took over *tikina* from Colo East. A combined province of Nadroga and Navosa took over the remainder of the Colo interior. The four geographical divisions (Northern, Central, Western, and Southern) in place

since 1938 and grouping provinces under commissioners with responsibility for Indian advisory committees, towns, and townships, as well as Fijian affairs, were not changed. But all provinces were part of a separate "Native Administration" for the Fijian population with councils, courts, treasury, and executive officers, retaining the whole of the provincial rates and the central tax assessment, separately from personal rates and taxes levied on other social groups.<sup>96</sup> More vaguely, it was stated local treasuries would be "coordinated" under the FAB's Central Treasury, but apart from fixing an annual tax once a year, provincial councils and their rokos did not manage these funds—paid into commissioners' subtreasuries. The line of authority now ran from the Secretary through the commissioners of the western, southern, eastern, and northern divisions to the rokos, 181 bulis, 28 Fijian magistrates, scribes and 17 agricultural assistants—for the most part centrally funded. But Mitchell's promise of posts for servicemen was honored. Five of the new rokos appointed had served as commissioned officers overseas, and they moved into posts formerly occupied by provincial commissioners.<sup>97</sup>

On the whole, the reform of 1944 strengthened the position of the Fijian chiefly hierarchy within central government. As Mitchell had intended, Sukuna's secretaryship provided a direct link to the governor's Executive Council—the equivalent of a "ministerial office"—and gave Fijians an extra *ex officio* representative in addition to the three Fijian, Indian, and European representatives selected from the Legislative Council from the late 1940s. The Council of Chiefs now had to be consulted on any regulations touching Fijian affairs. But effective power lay not in that consultative body, still meeting once every second year, but in the Fijian Affairs Board, meeting five times a year and charged with financial as well as general executive powers.<sup>98</sup> The FAB, moreover, did not take long to record opinions on a highly political topic in a resolution of 19 July 1946, expressing alarm at Indian settlement and influence and requesting protection from "domination."<sup>99</sup>

Clearly, over the next two decades the issues of deciding and defending the conditions of legislative representation and the authority of statutory bodies—the FAB, the NLTB, the Land Commission—took priority, at the expense of further reform of local government. The Council closely reflected this shift toward dealing with the problems of constitutional advance to greater internal self-government, rather than the concerns of its provincial membership with the more mundane problems of financing rural development. Yet the two—local development and the politics of central decision-making—were closely connected, as visiting specialists and local administrators made clear in the numerous reports and planning conferences of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>100</sup> On the whole, the conclusion of the economic and political surveys of the period lay in the direction of modification, even

abolition, of the edifice of “Fijian Affairs,” in favor of greater integration of common services, an end to separate divisional and provincial taxes, and encouragement of interethnic local government councils for rural populations, as existed for urban populations. By the end of the 1950s divisional commissioners and district officers supported such integration, as did the governor, Sir Ronald Garvey. Most Indian and Fijian political leaders did not, fearing a loss of influence over their provincial constituencies in the villages and the cane fields. Garvey’s reluctant conclusion was that “local government” through mixed rural councils would be resisted: “I think it fair to say that Fijian hereditary chiefs and senior officials are opposed to such change as they fear it would not be best for their people, as well as undermining their influence and eroding their privileges.”<sup>101</sup> Coming from a governor who from 1956 favored a majority of unofficial members in the legislature and direct elections on a common roll, this was a significant warning, reinforced by evidence from his Special Branch of hardening resistance among Fijians to any suggestion of open electoral competition.<sup>102</sup>

Thus, the paradox in Fijian Administration from the late 1940s lay in its vastly improved administrative position at the heart of central government coupled with its failure to meet the challenge of rural development and reform of Fijian councils at the periphery. As Garvey well knew, the mounting dilemmas of Fijian ethnic politics and constitutional advance stemmed also from the consequences of placing Fijian finances under the FAB. The problem was how to pay for the separate structures of rural administration, while, at the same time, channeling departmental expenditure for infrastructure and developmental services into the divisions and provinces. From 1946 to the early 1960s, Sukuna’s promise of autonomous management of “our funds” was undermined by maladministration at the provincial level and by lack of supervision from above. Increased demands by provincial councils for higher rates—up to £3 per head—were met by greater arrears and a high level of embezzlement. Nearly £900 disappeared in this way in 1946, despite new pay scales for bulis. As explained by Sukuna in his report for the year, scribes were supposed to inform subtreasury accountants or commissioners about such leakages—“but this is just what a Provincial Scribe of lowly status is loath to do against officials having high rank.”<sup>103</sup> Cost of entertainment and requests for financial assistance were blamed instead. An example was made of the Roko Tui Lomaiviti, dismissed from office in 1949. The consequences were accumulative and compounded by shortage of local auditing staff and by loading onto councils a large share of provincial teachers’ salaries. The short-term remedy was to increase government subsidies to the FAB to cover its own costs, salaries of provincial officials, and subsidies to councils. At the same time, there was considerable “hoarding” of unspent monies

(called “surpluses”) among councils because of their lack of authority to draw down on provincial accounts held by the FAB and inability, therefore, to plan ahead for a realistic budget once a year.

The problem was not aired much in the Council of Chiefs, though the provincial representatives knew what was going on. They were lectured instead by the FAB’s financial adviser in 1950 on the need for a better understanding of monetary values (“a weak point in your armour”).<sup>104</sup> That did not prevent the FAB venturing into schemes for the development of Fijian lands, housing loans for Fijian officials, and arranging tax exemptions for servicemen in Malaya. But they could not hide the growing crisis in Fijian local administration funding because it surfaced in Legislative Council debates, where Fijian pressure to permit deduction of provincial rates against income tax was disallowed. By 1955 the provinces had to meet a gross expenditure of some £85,000, requiring a subsidy of no less than £75,400.<sup>105</sup> An expert in local government finance was called in to examine the reasons for this seeming penury, which contrasted with record returns from sales of Fijian produce and from rents in 1956. R. S. McDougall, who had much experience in West Africa, advised application of a land tax supplemented by levies on produce sales.<sup>106</sup>

Although much of McDougall’s report was welcomed by the Council of Chiefs and in the provinces, it was sidelined by the FAB, which resented it as an attack on its centralized management.<sup>107</sup> Sukuna’s administration ended in 1954 and fell into the hands of G. K. Roth and his deputy C. R. H. Nott, who were equally unwilling to make changes.<sup>108</sup> Worse followed. For much of the early 1960s, the secretaries for Fijian Affairs failed to deliver annual reports to the legislature in order to conceal the extent of widespread resistance to any taxation in the provinces. As Fijian Affairs entered a critical phase, they were administered by A. C. Reid, 1960–65, together with his deputies Ratu E. T. T. Cakobau and Ratu P. K. Ganilau (who replaced Reid in 1966). By then, the auditors confessed that “the majority of the Provinces collected less than 50 percent of the rates actually due for the year.”<sup>109</sup> Rural Fijians refused to meet the rising costs of provincial government, especially for salaries of minor officials and a share of the salaries for provincial schools. Provincial tax mattered for a Fijian population in which 61 percent of adult males were employed in agriculture.<sup>110</sup> There were signs that the *taukei* felt they had to “reassert themselves in their own country.”<sup>111</sup> But that observation by Reid failed to explain why the *taukei* came in ever-increasing numbers before *tikina* courts, where well over half of the 19,000 criminal offenders were tax defaulters.<sup>112</sup> The line was held, however, against what amounted to a crisis of Fijian confidence in their leaders and a near-collapse in provincial funding by the costly expedient of increasing subsidies for expenditure on current account in the 1960s and by suspending the very large debt of £131,000



owed by provincial councils to the Education Department.<sup>113</sup> In 1969 it was written off altogether.

It was against this background of deterioration in the management of the Fijian Administration and rising political tensions that the Council and its leaders were asked to make decisions on administrative and economic questions raised by the *Spate Report* and the Burns Commission and on Fiji's system of government and its future constitution. From 1956, chiefs and provincial representatives held their meetings, after the usual ceremonies at Government House, suitably entrenched in the Board Room of the new Native Lands Trust Building on Victoria Parade within the bulwarks of Fijian affairs—the Land Commission, the Fijian Treasury, the Fijian Office, the Fijian Development Fund Board, and, of course, the labyrinthine NLTB itself. In 1960 rokos, notables, and elected representatives were afforded by “four representatives of workers in the industrial areas,” in order to co-opt Fijian unions into the political caucus of Fijian representation.<sup>114</sup>

Their main business was to confront some of the choices put before Fijians as a result of Colonial Office pressure for political change, as Governor Maddocks and London officials toyed with electoral models from Tanzania and elsewhere in a search for an acceptable compromise between a common roll and a communal franchise.<sup>115</sup> Like officials in London, they were wary of the recommendations in Professor O. K. Spate's report, and they would certainly have rejected (as did the Colonial Office) his unpublished submissions urging an end to “tradition” and the introduction of direct elections.<sup>116</sup> Governor Maddocks did not support a common roll either. Nor did he perceive local politics solely in ethnic terms, but attributed hardening Fijian attitudes to the formation of the Fijian Association strongly backed by the chiefs and to commoner discontent with taxes paid for so little in return.<sup>117</sup>

Having rejected Professor Spate (whom many Fijian leaders liked personally), the Council turned its attention to dealing with the triumvirate who prepared the important Burns Commission report of 1960.<sup>118</sup> For the first time since 1877, the formal address to Sir Alan Burns and his colleagues was presented in English by the Hon. Ravuama Vunivalu. He laid down entrenched political positions—communalism and custom centered on the *mataqali*, not the individual; protection of resources coupled with development of Fijian lands for Fijians. He repeated the demand of the 1954 Council for NLTB control of former mataqali and other Crown lands, provision for more Fijian leases outside the reserves, better care of lands under Indian leases, and control of immigration (including Pacific islanders). As part of this manifesto, the Council also demanded more generous financing of loans through the NLTB and the Development Fund Board, marketing through registered companies, and an increase in Fijian scholarships.<sup>119</sup>

As the rift between Indians and Fijians grew wider during the strikes and riots of December 1959, there was an even more hostile reaction to Burns following the report's publication, particularly its recommendation to scrap Fijian Administration and its criticism of the FAB.<sup>120</sup> Refusal to pay rates, even at the risk of prison, continued, especially in Macuata and Ba Provinces.<sup>121</sup> There was growing resistance to renewal of Indian leases. The situation was not helped by hostility to the appointment of the first Indian district officer in November 1961. In the face of this reaction, the Colonial Office judged the local response to Burns "rather embarrassing."<sup>122</sup>

At a different level, the Council also had to grapple with its own provincial administration. By 1962 the shortage of revenue from the failed rating system was sufficiently serious for both Governor Maddocks and Acting-Secretary Ganilau to make it a major issue. Maddocks refused any further rise in subsidies and threatened the existence of Fijian Affairs.<sup>123</sup> The Council was asked to consider "which of the functions of the Administration are still essential and which can now be shed." For the moment a chastened Council made no proposals, except to set up a committee.

In effect, the problem was handed over to the FAB and the upper layer of the Fijian hierarchy to investigate, while the Council was drawn by Maddocks into the protocols of ministerial visits and the timetable for constitutional talks and full internal self-government. The governor had begun to regard the assembly as a possible mechanism for safeguarding entrenched Fijian rights. It was clearly a political body and would influence the choice of candidates in district constituencies in elections planned for 1963. The Colonial Office, too, began to cast around for solutions to the problem of representing Fijian interests in what might be a minority government. Officials looked to the example of Malaya's Council of Rulers with built-in privileges under the Constitution for land holding and civil service positions. Maddocks in a secret dispatch stressed that there was no demand for self-government in Fiji, though he recognized that British overrule would not last more than ten years. He warned against pronouncements about a "multiracial" state.<sup>124</sup> It would be possible to have a First Minister, if Fijian, but a mixed local government system he now considered impossible outside urban areas. On the other hand, demarcation of Fijian reserves was complete. Assurances on their restriction to Fijians might harness enough goodwill for a timetable leading to a full ministerial system followed by full internal self-government shortly after.

In pursuit of this agenda the Council of Chiefs spent good deal of time in official ceremonies for a procession of colonial undersecretaries in the 1960s, and the FAB acted as its executive committee to lobby them about a special relationship with the United Kingdom (on the model of the Channel Islands),

Fijian land ownership, and “parity” in the civil service. Such concessions were not ruled out. In return, the Fijian leadership accepted the proposal for a constitutional conference in 1965. Moreover, when Maddocks took his leave of the Council at the end of his governorship, he charged it with the responsibility for approving the Fijian agenda for negotiations in London and required that Fijian politicians would report back to them on the compromises they reached.<sup>125</sup> For this reason and the intelligence reports summarized in Maddocks’ dispatches, the Colonial Office was reassured about Fijian acceptance of constitutional change.<sup>126</sup> The new governor, Sir Derek Jakeway, confirmed this policy of working to persuade Fijian commoners through their own leaders in the hope they might even accept a common roll, if a large measure of communal representation was included in the electoral system. Fijian leaders, in his view, were readier for this kind of change than Fijian commoners were. It was essential, therefore, that both Mara and Ganilau as senior chiefs should have their status confirmed in top positions within the ministerial system to counter any internal opposition.<sup>127</sup> After the 1963 elections, they were brought into the Executive Council as Member with the portfolio for Natural Resources and as Deputy-Secretary for Fijian Affairs, respectively. Reid then vacated the secretaryship and Ganilau became Secretary for the joint office of Fijian Affairs and Local Government and a full minister from 1968.

That gradual elevation left Ganilau, the FAB, and the Council (with Ganilau as chairman) free to deal with their promised “reform” of Fijian administration and its finances in their own way. The committee set up in 1962 combined its work with a survey of rural government by Fiji’s only anthropologist, Dr. Rusiate Nayacakalou, employed as a Rural Planning Officer and made a temporary Council member. He wrote two reports in 1964. One contained a proposal for multiethnic local government, and this was delayed for revision within the FAB.<sup>128</sup> Governor Jakeway insisted, too, that none of his recommendations should be discussed at the London Conference. On the whole, Colonial Office officials welcomed the idea of mixed councils and approved his central proposal to apply a graded system of rates with a land tax. Fijian chiefs and politicians in the FAB, however, excluded any consideration of mixed councils from the final report delivered to the Council of Chiefs, and they limited the land tax experiment to a trial in three provinces only on the unimproved capital value of mataqali lands.<sup>129</sup> In effect, too, provincial rates dwindled further, though provinces still organized voluntary contributions for specific projects.<sup>130</sup> For the rest, Nayacakalou’s final report retained district councils and proposed election of provincial councils by local franchise in the same manner as elections for Fijian Members of the Legislative Council. Councils would elect their own chairmen and appoint their own staff from rokos downwards. Bulis would be abolished.

When all this was introduced to the Council of Chiefs in 1965 by Ganilau, the main proposals were left intact, but "rural district councils" responsible to a Fijian provincial electorate stopped at the provincial council level. *Tikina* councils under their headmen were to be phased out, along with the bulis and minor officials. Moreover, staffing of the provincial councils with officials—rokos, assistant rokos and scribes—would be on the advice of the Secretary for Fijian Affairs. Other officials—commissioners, medical officers, teachers—might attend by invitation. The task of councils was defined as administration of social and public services, and for this they would have to rely on central government funding. The Fijian magistracy and district courts were abolished. Surprisingly, the Council accepted all of this without questioning its effects at district and village levels. Twenty years later, when the operation of the new system had revealed a deterioration in district law and order and a disjunction between provincial council management under ministerial direction and grass-roots participation at the village level, an examination of Fijian rural government would have to be undertaken again.<sup>131</sup>

The Council then dealt with politics and lands. It laid down in recommendations for the London Conference that Fijian delegates were to argue for association rather than independence, and it requested guarantees on keeping communal rolls for electing equal numbers of European, Fijian, and Indian legislators, plus two elected by the Council of Chiefs. They agreed with the proposed membership system in the Executive Council. If there was to be a chief minister eventually, he should be a Fijian. For the rest, the role of the FAB was to be retained, and they agreed with phasing out Fijian civil servants from elected memberships by retirement with the exception of the Secretary for Fijian Affairs, who could remain a civil servant in a highly political role. For the time being they saw no need for an Upper House. Finally, the Council dealt at great length with the clauses of lands under customary tenure under the Native Lands Ordinance and provisions for leases under new Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Legislation.<sup>132</sup>

In all, it was a mammoth session crowded into five days and made possible by the technique of handing down outline papers prepared in advance by Ganilau's secretariat and the FAB. The short length of sessions and the bureaucratic method of preformulating material for resolutions during the 1960s marked a considerable change in the management of Council business from above. More effectively than any of the governors or his predecessors, Ratu Penaia Ganilau turned the Council of Chiefs into a caucus for amendment and approval of policies formulated by senior Fijian politicians within the statutory bodies of Fijian Affairs. For that reason it is hard to agree with Governor Jakeway's judgment in his report on the 1965 session that the chiefs and commoners represented had become "a Fijian Council

of State.”<sup>133</sup> More accurately, the Indian politician, S. M. Koya, discerned that effective authority over Fijians had passed since the late 1940s to the Fijian Affairs Board “which ... amounts to an official political party,” passing judgment on constitutional affairs, handing down regulations, and authorizing by-laws of provincial councils.<sup>134</sup> Greater representation from below had been effectively managed ever since Mitchell’s and Sukuna’s reforms by greater centralization from within the offices of the NLTB on Victoria Parade and greater dependency on government subsidies, after the collapse of Fijian administration finances.

There is no indication that the Council objected to this dependency on central government. In 1968, as a consequence of the advance to a ministerial system there was a reconstitution of the Great Council (as it was now officially titled). All fifteen Fijian Members of the Legislative Council replaced the provincial *rokos*, reinforced by fifteen notables appointed by the governor or the minister. Twenty-eight members elected by provincial councils attended as a mixture of *ratu* and commoners along with half a dozen other invited commoners and chiefs. Jakeway regarded this as a triumph of the elective principle. Fijian members of the Council preferred to see it as entrenchment of their hierarchy and a path for untitled notables into higher office by patronage, given that well over half of provincial representatives, half of the politicians, and all of the governor’s appointees were *ratu*. They voted accordingly to have Ganilau’s post of Minister for Fijian Affairs and Local Government recognized as a political rather than a public office, and Jakeway could hardly refuse.<sup>135</sup> The combination of Fijian Affairs and Local Government under one minister was a curious hybrid but an endorsement of Fijian rights to separate administration. It was allowed because it was in line with a Foreign and Commonwealth Office interpretation of past promises made to Fijians for separate treatment within general administration and was urged on local officials.<sup>136</sup> More immediately, such “pledges” were applied in new legislation on land leases and by refusal of the governor, backed by a resolution of the 1968 Council, to make nominations of non-Fijians to the NLTB.<sup>137</sup>

By 1968, therefore, officials in Suva and London sensed that Fijian leaders would go along with the final stages of Fijian decolonization. They had consolidated their hold on key institutions and reformed (they thought) provincial government so as to relieve the burden of taxation and entrench their control over lands. Although a persistent Indian boycott of the Legislative Council forced by-elections in 1968 and hardened Fijian attitudes at the outcome, feelings were kept in check by Mara and Ganilau. Jakeway reported that “self-government with a built-in Fijian paramountcy should be sought as quickly as possible.”<sup>138</sup> As the Federation Party forced the pace by build-

ing on Indian solidarity, the Fijian Alliance agreed to early independence, before Jakeway adjusted the number of seats on communal rolls in favor of cross-voting (as he indicated he might). The Council of Chiefs, too, became openly a much more a political organization, issuing press releases and policy papers (through the FAB) on the theme of total ethnic control of government.<sup>139</sup> The theme of "paramountcy" was repeated in its recommendations on constitutional matters at a second session in November 1968.<sup>140</sup>

Moreover, the Council began to turn its attention to remedial measures to improve the competitive position of Fijians in education and commerce. But it looked for financial remedies at the tertiary, rather than the primary, end of Fijian education through scholarships and in-service training overseas for ethnic Fijian students and civil servants.<sup>141</sup> And in business it focused not on small-scale entrepreneurship or technical training but on corporate investment through an ethnic Fijian parastatal with shares open only to "Provincial Councils, Co-operatives, or any other purely Fijian corporate bodies." The Fijian Development and Investment Corporation was to be registered as a public company with a capital of F\$2 million. The Council nominated its first board of chiefs and notables, including Ratu Mara's wife and Rusiate Nayacakalou.

On constitutional issues there was still much unfinished business at the end of 1969 and wide differences between party leaders of Alliance and the Federation over safeguards for Fijian "rights" and types of electoral systems. The Council's policy over this period was to consult "Fijian public opinion" through the mechanism of a special committee of the FAB and the provincial councils. But there is not much evidence that this committee played a part in the talks between Mara, Koya, and Sir Leslie Monson, sent by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in October 1969 to rough out a timetable for a handover of power.<sup>142</sup> By the end of the year there was agreement on a conference followed by formal independence in 1970 and elections afterwards. The electoral system would only be settled shortly before or after the conference.<sup>143</sup>

But the Council did play a role in this end-game of maneuvers during the more public talks conducted by Lord Shepherd at the beginning of 1970.<sup>144</sup> Its anxiety over the future of Fijian lands still held by the Crown was met by the reply that this would be a matter for the future government of Fiji. Shepherd was more convincing about the continued existence of a Ministry of Fijian Affairs. But on many of their other points and search for reassurances, he was unable to help. Altogether, it was a worrying confirmation of the uncertainties of political power. Finally, the Council of Chiefs made it clear that if they did not get a large quota of nominated seats in an Upper House they would demand seats in the Lower House, and this was conceded.<sup>145</sup>

The final constitutional conference took place in April 1970, after the Legislative Council had endorsed the official report of Lord Shepherd's visit. It was agreed to retain a large number of seats on a communal roll and three general seats on a general communal roll plus five on a national roll.<sup>146</sup> There was to be a Senate of twenty-two members with eight nominated by the Great Council of Chiefs, seven by the Prime Minister, six by the Leader of the Opposition, and one by the Rotuma Council. The Council, therefore, would have a role under the new Constitution of Fiji, though it was still defined by ministerial regulation and the Ordinances of 1944 and 1966, rather than by constitutional enactment.<sup>147</sup>

### Epilogue and Conclusion

For the remaining three decades of the century, the quality of the sources available for the Council decreases. Much can be gleaned from primary published material produced for the MFA, which enlarged through its subsidies to the FAB and other statutory bodies the range of services in business and agricultural finance available to Fijians, as the Council had intended in the late 1960s.<sup>148</sup> It became possible to raise money for any Fijian project from a beauty salon to a wholesale firm. Popular choices in the provinces and urban centers were small retail businesses, garment manufacture, sea-going vessels, machinery, and "working capital" (unspecified).<sup>149</sup> This was serious investment of up to F\$1 million annually, without much indication, however, of success and failure rates in MFA reports. In addition, the Development Fund Board (derived from Sukuna's scheme for compulsory savings from Fijian sale of crops in 1951 and endorsed by the Council) handled over 10,000 applications and F\$8 million for every type of personal investment in the three decades after its foundation. The Council left the details to the FAB, which continued to hand down policy papers for formal discussion and approval and was in the hands of Fijian parliamentarians. In effect, the FAB acted as an executive council, subject only to its paymaster—the Ministry of Fijian Affairs—allocating funds to the provinces, appointing and paying their senior chiefs and officials. But it was not responsible in any formal sense to the Council of Chiefs, in which it had a strong presence.

Consistent, too, with its entry into corporate investment in the late 1970s, as a way of encouraging Fijian capitalism, the Council at its meeting on 16 February 1984 discussed and approved a ministry plan to raise F\$40 million to purchase 50 percent of Burns Philp through provincial councils and other groups and use the Native Land Development Company (NLDC) as a holding corporation. Unfortunately, the NLDC did not have the skills to do this, so Fijian Holdings Limited was incorporated with participation of Australian

capital to manage investments and take shares in trust for Fiji's statutory bodies—the FAB, the NLTB, and the provincial councils—and for private Fijian clients from the upper reaches of the hierarchy. But it would be too much to claim that the venture was a responsibility of the Council.<sup>150</sup> The line of power and responsibility lay, as it had since 1944, through the FAB to the MFA, and this continuity can be seen in the grandiose, but abortive, “Corporate Plan” constructed within the MFA and approved by the new minister, Adi Litia Samanunu Cakobau Talakuli, on her first day in office as part of “the newly formed and strengthened Chiefly Fijian Political party-dominated government” in 1992, in the aftermath of the coups of 1987.<sup>151</sup>

For, from 1987, the Council was taking its orders more than ever from those in command of military and civil government. After the first coup in May 1987, which removed Prime Minister Bavadra and his Fiji Labour and National Federation Coalition from office, Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka convened a Council for 10 July 1987. Meeting under the chairmanship of the relatively unknown Meli Vesikula, as minister, they brought together an *ad hoc* assembly of fifteen appointees and some thirty of the elected provincial council members. It is not known how many of the Fijian ex-parliamentarians attended the single meeting convened to support Rabuka's actions. From then on their composition changed. Before 1987, in the last precoup assemblies, there had been only 45 chiefs out of a total of 110 present. But once Penaia Ganilau, after considerable resistance, resigned his governor-generalship to become President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief, he and Ratu Mara as head of the Interim Administration, December 1987 to May 1992, took care to reaffirm the position of the chiefly hierarchy by reconstituting the FAB and selecting a new Minister of Fijian Affairs, Ratu V. S. Navunisaravi (a military man who had not been in Rabuka's Military Government). By 1990, there was a pronounced predominance of chiefs over commoners elected by provincial councils.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, in the slimmed-down Council of 1991, nearly three-quarters of elected provincial members were chiefs, while all of the members appointed by president or minister (with the sole exception of Rabuka) were chiefs, including Ganilau, Mara, and other high-ranking title-holders. Compared with precoup Councils and prior to the elections of 1992 and 1994, which brought in a new batch of Fijian parliamentarians, the republican Council had all the hallmarks of a “packed” assembly.

Did it matter in a patently illegal regime, before Ganilau and Mara's “regularization”? Probably not during Rabuka's regime. The approval of his program on one day in 1987 carried no legal authority (though it was confirmation of Rabuka's support among Fijians). But the Council took no part in drafting a new Constitution in 1988 or 1989 and met for only two days to confirm FAB business. While the 1990 Constitution was being drafted, the



MFA took over Rural Development once more—thus ensuring restoration of grants and subsidies to provincial supporters. It was not until 1990, 21–25 June, that the Council got sight of a draft of the Constitution already passed by an advisory committee and by Mara's Cabinet and endorsed it.

As well it might, for the Council features for the first time in the Preamble with its full Fijian title. The appointment of a president and acting-president (or their removal) required approval of three-quarters of its members; its advice was required for appointment of nine senators; entrenchment of laws on Fijian Affairs, Development Funds, lands, and customs was further strengthened; and along with other Fijian statutory bodies, the Council was excluded from any probing by the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

There was only one small hitch. The legal position of provincial councils (and therefore their corporate standing) was in doubt during 1987 to 1994, and for that period they received their MFA subsidies illegally—a matter rectified by inserting a notice in the *Fiji Gazette* much later in 1996.<sup>153</sup>

But the Council was not called together any more frequently in 1991 or 1992, when its political wing—the *Sogoqo Ni Vakavulewa Ni Taukei* (SVT or “Fijian Political Party”), founded as a demonstration of Fijian unity—did well in the May elections with Rabuka as leader and formed a coalition in government with the Fiji Labour Party.<sup>154</sup> Meetings were brief—for one day only in 1992 in the less dignified location of the National Gymnasium, rather than the Trade Winds Centre. On the other hand, the avenue for advancement for chiefs and elected commoners through Mara's patronage now included seats in the Senate, as well as the usual statutory bodies and corporations. But maneuvers between parties in 1994 to agree to a Constitutional Review Commission and subsequent recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee were simply endorsed, rather than debated by the Council.

What is clear is that there were divided views on the actual and potential role of the Council arising from its performance in these years. Rabuka in his tense relationship with Mara was very ambiguous about the composition and value of the Council as a support for government.<sup>155</sup> Submissions to the Review Commission that prepared the way for the 1997 Constitution were also divided between those who thought (mistakenly) that the Council embodied some kind of “sovereignty” to speak and act for all Fijians, and those who thought it should keep out of politics with no more than symbolic functions under the Constitution.<sup>156</sup> The further cultural shock of the Speight coup in 2000, and the patent failure of the Fijian army to contain and end it for so long, further tested the Council and found it wanting in political gravity, when it deliberated for three days before making major concessions to Speight's demands. Although the chiefs formally backed Mara as a way out of the political impasse, they ruled out a return to office by Mahendra

Chaudhry's elected Fiji Labour Party government and accepted the need for substantial revision of the 1997 Constitution—in the direction of a return to the more discriminatory instrument of 1990. Like Fijian political parties, the chiefs were fractious and fragmented, capable of descending into obsequious parleying with the rebels.<sup>157</sup> On the whole the evidence of the Council's conduct during this period suggests it would do well to keep to its advisory and constitutional roles, rather than serve as a platform for populist politicians. While retaining their hierarchy's role in high office, constitutionally and politically, the chiefs sacrificed *mana*.

That, too, was the conclusion of the investigation conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2001–02, that the *Bose* as part of a reformed Fijian Affairs structure should keep to management of Fijian's cultural heritage.<sup>158</sup> It is more likely the Council will remain a part of the “protective paramountcy” established by the Review Commission, accepted by Rabuka, the Parliamentary select Committee, and embodied in the Constitution of 1997. And it can be argued that such protection implies allocation of resources to the Council and other Fijian statutory bodies—which is one definition of political action. Those who claim a role for the Great Council in “reconciliation” in times of crisis are on weak historical ground, given the record of the chiefs and provincial representatives, 1987–2000. It is true Rabuka did rely on their legitimation, though the value of that expedient is questionable. The fact that Jai Ram Reddy, as leader of the Federation Party, was invited to address the chiefs in Council in 1997 is a tribute more to his and Rabuka's brokering skills than to any willingness to enlarge representation to include other ethnic groups.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, the Council is only partly elected and has contained a large proportion of government-appointed chiefs and notables placed there as acts of patronage in return for political support in the provinces. It was not and never has been a constitutional forum or a substitute for the Parliamentary Senate. It is in no sense responsible to the House of Representatives. Under British overrule the governor was the “root” of its establishment and continuity. To some extent its position has been improved by constitutional recognition of its functions. But the Fijian President and Minister of Fijian Affairs have taken over much of the governor's patron role, so far as the chiefs are concerned.

But it has developed and survived after more than a century of variable fortunes. Fijian chiefs were fortunate that their first governors saw a complementarity between local British and Fijian hierarchies, and they were quick to exploit this for their own benefit. In return, Fijian leaders formed a military reserve drawn on before and after Cession in local campaigns and overseas. At the same time, they established their bargaining power over the use of Fijian lands, in return for commutation of taxes, continuation of

communal services, and adaptation of the Council of Chiefs from 1904 and 1911 as a form of electoral college for representation in the legislature, the Native Land Commission, and other statutory bodies. In 1927, the chiefs had the good sense to enlarge this advantage by opening the Council to more provincial councilors, and this enabled them to find favor with an otherwise hostile Public Service Committee of 1936. By then, the Council was well placed for Mitchell and Sukuna to use it as a centerpiece within their reformed edifice of Fijian Affairs, while ensuring that real power passed to the FAB and other bodies under the control of Fijian legislators, and to an executive secretary, promoted within an emergent ministerial system. The Council's survival then became a matter of politics, rather than administration, where it failed to meet the organizational and financial challenge posed by separate rural Fijian government. Unlike "Native Authority" councils elsewhere, Fiji's hierarchy embraced protective centralization, rather than the devolution of responsibility to local assemblies with judicial and financial functions. Through the Council and the FAB, they concentrated instead on safeguarding "paramountcy" of Fijian interests at the center of power in a rapidly developing political argument over the details of decolonization and on preparing the way for forms of "affirmative action" through public funding. By 1970 the Council was part of the new Constitution and even more so in 1990 and 1997, far exceeding in longevity similar assemblies in French Polynesia, the Hawai'ian Kingdom, Buganda, Asante, Nigeria, and the Princely States of India.

### NOTES

The research for this article was funded by a grant from the British Academy. I am grateful for the advice of a number of colleagues—Robert Norton, Jonathan Fraenkel, Stewart Firth, Stephanie Lawson, John Davies—and for the courtesy and help of the staff of the National Archives of Fiji, the Pacific Collection of the University of the South Pacific, and Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

1. Public Record Office, London. Colonial Office (CO) 1036/216, Jakeway to CO, 3 May 1965.

2. *Rabuka: No Other Way*. Eddie Dean and Stan Ritova, eds. (Sydney, 1988), 141.

3. For Cession details, W. P. Morrell, *Britain in the Pacific Islands* (Oxford, 1960), 167; and for the preliminary administration under Sir Hercules Robinson, Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, *Correspondence Respecting the Cession of Fiji & the Provisional Arrangements made for Administering the Government*, 1875, liv, C. 1114.

4. The major political chiefdoms represented were: Bau/Tailevu, Rewa, Lau, Bua, coastal Nadroga, Namosi, coastal Macuata. For a discussion of clans within "provinces," centered

on chiefdoms under early settler and Fijian government: David Routledge, *Matanitu: Struggle for Power in Early Fiji* (Suva, 1985), 145 ff; Deryck Scarr, *The Majesty of Colour*. Vol. 1, *I, the Very Bayonet* (Canberra, 1973) chap. 1; Simione Durutalo, "Internal Colonialism and Unequal Regional Development: the Case of Western Viti Levu, Fiji" ( Ph. D diss., University of the South Pacific, 1985), 91–2. See the boundaries in Commodore J. G. Goodenough's map of the twelve "Provinces in Fiji, 1874" which left much of Ra, Ba, the "Colo Hill Country," and the Yassawa group in western Viti Levu outside of any Fiji-wide authority. *Correspondence Respecting the Cession of Fiji, 1875*.

5. Serua by Tui Namosi (Ratu Matanitobua); Ra (by Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro who was not a hereditary chief in Ra); Kadavu Island (Ratu Kinivuai Nacagilevu, a chief of Tavuki district in Kadavu); Ba and Nadi (signed for by Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, eldest son of Cakobau and so-called "Lieutenant-Governor of Ba and the Yassawa"); Macuata (signed for by both Ritova and Katonivere—rival claimants to the paramountcy of the province). The Seaqqa people in Macuata recognized no chief of Macuata—certainly not Katonivere when appointed roko tui in 1875—and revolted against both the roko and the British in 1897 over the issue of taxation.

6. Scarr, Vol. I, chap 13.

7. *Ibid*, Vol. I, 292–4.

8. In all, nearly £9,000 out of a projected expenditure of £17,900. For the salary scales, *Correspondence Respecting the Cession of Fiji, 1875*, Schedule B.

9. Rhodes House Library, Oxford (RH) 919 s. 5, Fiji Miscellaneous. John B. Thurston, "Memorandum upon the establishment of District Plantations in the Colony of Fiji for the purpose of enabling the Native Population to provide their Taxes in a manner accordant with Native customs" [1874].

10. Sir Arthur H. Gordon, "Native Councils in Fiji. ('Na Veimbose Vaka Turaga.') 1875–1880," *Contemporary Review*, 43 (1883), 712–31. It is noted, however, by J. D. Legge, *Britain in Fiji, 1858–1880* (London 1958) and by Morrell.

11. Gordon, 714; the point is reinforced by David Wilkinson's account of the first meeting at Draiba. RH 919 5.5, "Notes of the Proceedings of a Native Council," in which he remarks on its "freeness and candour of speech which is uncommon in an Assembly of so many High Chiefs, the Fijian customs being that high Chiefs seldom, if ever, meet each other in Council."

12. CO 83/6, Gordon, 20 September 1875.

13. National Archives of Fiji (NAF). "Proceedings of the Native Council or Council of Chiefs, Sept. 1875 – Aug. 26, 1960." University of Hawai'i, Manoa, Hamilton Library Microfilm S53303. The series is continued to 1970 and for some years of the 1980s at the NAF, Suva.

14. Respectfully, legitimately. See Asesela Ravuvu, "Fijian Ethos as expressed in Ceremonies." (Ph.D. diss., University of Auckland, 1985), 679.

15. Literally, chiefs of landowners, subclan chiefs and chiefs of hamlets (*qali* tributaries or *koro* villages)—an incomplete denotation of the relative grades of *turaga*, as distinct from

“landsmen,” “true owners” (*taukei*), and *kaisi* (“people,” “inferiors”). Michael H. B. Walter, “Aspects of Political Evolution in Fiji” (D. Phil. Diss., University of Oxford, 1966), 245–6.

16. Resolution 8, Proceedings, 29 September.

17. Contentious divorce issues were not settled at this assembly, though chiefs made an interesting survey of reasons (failure to consummate and “living apart” were the more usual). The problem of Fijian women living with Europeans they passed to the governor. A detailed discussion of all aspects of the Council’s Proceedings will not be attempted in this paper. For a useful survey of topics in the early assemblies, Dayna Dias, “The Influence of the Fijian Council of Chiefs in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Colonial Fiji 1874–1897” (BA diss., University Hawai’i, 1977).

18. Proceedings, 23 September 1875; see, too, RH 919 s. 5, Fiji Miscellaneous. Thurston, “Memorandum.” Thurston estimated taxable males at 23,000 and the tax at about £11,000—not far from returns of produce sales after 1877. The idea was not Gordon’s, but taken over from Robinson’s preliminary reduction of Fijian taxes in October 1874 and, perhaps, from their knowledge of the system applied in the Dutch East Indies.

19. *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 1877, 60.

20. Gordon, 713.

21. Durutalo, 92, 107, 115.

22. They now included Ratu Vuki, a Bauan ally appointed over Ba and Yassawa; Ratu Isikeli Tabakucoro appointed roko tui over Ra; Ratu Matanitobua appointed over Namosi; Ratu Luke Natulanikoro appointed Roko Tui Nadroga.

23. Gordon continued to receive copies of Proceedings and other dispatches. CO 83/25; 83/33.

24. Gordon, 716.

25. *Ibid*, 722.

26. *Ibid*, 722–3.

27. *Ibid*, 728.

28. For chiefs’ relations with the Methodist Church, Andrew Thornley, “Fijian Methodism 1874–1945: the emergence of a national church” (Ph. D. diss, Australian National University, 1979), 107, 108, 124, 184, 210–12.

29. Gordon, 731.

30. The formal prescriptions were set out in Native Affairs Ordinance No. 35, 1876 which constituted the NRB and the Fijian judiciary and defined councils and their composition under Regulation 1/1877.

31. The title of this official changed several times after 1916. The post was left vacant 1921–23, and then was restored as Secretary for Native Affairs under the Colonial Secretary's Department with an Acting-Secretary, while Fijian provincial and district officials, except for six provinces, came under provincial commissioners. In 1934, there was a restoration of the Secretaryship with a "Native Section" in the Colonial Secretary's Office. In 1936, it was downgraded to Adviser once more and then restored with expanded functions as Secretary for Fijian Affairs after 1944.
32. Subordinate to *rokos* and *bulis* were native magistrates (usually *ratu*), *qali* ("town") chiefs, or headmen of large hamlets nominated by *tikina* councils and better known as *turaga ni koro*; scribes; overseers of tax gardens; village police under the *turaga* of a hamlet; and the district chief of police (*ovisa*). Lesser officials below magistrates and *bulis* were paid after 1912 not from central funds but locally raised rates (set by provincial councils) from which an annual "tax" (set by government) was extracted for central treasury funding of senior Fijian officials.
33. R. R. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji* (Melbourne, 1975) 86–7.
34. For Colo East (Naitasiri) see A. L. Abramson, "Culture, Contradiction and Counterculture in the Life-world of a Fijian Chiefdom" (Ph. D. diss., University of London, n.d.; A. D. Ravuvu, *Development or Dependence. The Pattern of Change in a Fiji Village* (University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1988). For the tension between group identity and territoriality in standard works: Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*; Cyril S. Belshaw, *Under the Ivi Tree. Society and Economic Growth in Rural Fiji* (London, 1964). But none of that disposes of the problem of the historical evolution of rural government in Fiji as an underresearched topic. See F. N. Bole, "Fiji's chiefly system and its pattern of political self-reliance" in R. Crocombe, U. Neemia, A. Ravuvu, and W. Vom Busch, eds., *Culture and Democracy in the South Pacific* (Suva, 1992) for current definition of the hierarchy and its terminology.
35. Thornley, "Fijian Methodism," chap. 5; Martha Kaplan, "Luve ni wai as the British saw it: Construction of Custom and Disorder in Colonial Fiji," *Ethnohistory*, 36, 4 (1989), 349–71; Timothy J. Macnaught, *The Fijian Colonial Experience: A Study of the Neotraditional Order under British Colonial Rule Prior to World War II*. Pacific Research Monograph Series No. 7 (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1982) chap. 6.
36. For example, Proceedings for 1896.
37. Proceedings, 13–14 May 1885; July 1894.
38. Proceedings, 1878, letter by Cakobau, 10 December and Wilkinson's reply on the activities of the Lands Claims Commission; Morrell, 378–9, 385, 388; Peter France, *The Charter of the Land: Custom and Colonization in Fiji* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1969) 115–6. Despite the valuable contribution by Peter France, Fiji lacks a thorough history of land tenure, particularly for the twentieth century. See the useful survey by D. T. Lloyd, *Land Policy in Fiji*. University of Cambridge Department of Land Economy Occasional Paper No. 14, 1982. No more than an overview of the Council's role will be attempted here.
39. Proceedings 1878, Resolutions 8, 23. Claims were settled by 1883, and Crown grants were issued for some 400,000 acres. Morrell, 389.

40. Proceedings 1878.
41. Proceedings 1880–1881, report by bulis and Resolution 18, 10 December 1880. Bulis recommended a rent share-out of 10s. in the £1 to the *mataqali*, 8s. to the *vanua* chief, 1s. to the roko, 1s. to the buli. Proceedings 1881, Resolution 8 (monies from sale of Crown lands—two thirds to government, one third to *tauvei* owners). As the *vanua* was in lineage terms an association of villages under a common roko tui, the provincial roko was the most likely to benefit in his dual capacity as “customary” and “official” chief.
42. CO 83/25 Des Voeux 1 March, 25 March 1881.
43. *Ibid*, Gordon, 28 March 1881. For the CSR concession arranged by Thurston at Sydney 1880 for a 1,000 acres on the Rewa, Morrell, 384.
44. Tony Chapelle, “Customary Land Tenure in Fiji: Old Truths and Middle-aged Myths,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 87, 2 (1978): 71–88; and for the Lau group Michael A. H. B. Walter, “The Conflict of the Territorial and the Traditionalised: An Analysis of Fijian Land Tenure,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 87, 2 (1978): 89–108.
45. Proceedings, 11 May 1888.
46. That is land of extinct *mataqali* reverting to the Crown as “ultimus haeres” (later known as Schedule A lands) and land declared by the Native Land Commission to be unoccupied at the date of Cession (later known as Schedule B lands). Lloyd, 28–31.
47. CO 83/55, 2 March 1892. At that date some 25,000 acres of Fijian land were under lease, about a third of which was pre-Cession contracts.
48. Proceedings, 1 and 5 July 1902. Behind the increased supervision through commissioners lay a deeper issue of accounting for taxes increasingly paid in cash rather than produce.
49. CO 83/77, Jackson, 18 June 1903.
50. Parliamentary. Papers. *Correspondence Relating to Native Taxation and the Communal System in Fiji*, 1905, liv, Cd. 2240, Jackson to Chamberlain, 23 April 1903.
51. Anthony J. Chapelle, “Land and Race in Fiji: the Administration of Sir Everard im Thurn, 1904–1910” (Ph.D. diss. University of the South Pacific, 1975), 68–9, 102.
52. *Correspondence Relating to Native Taxation*, Jackson, 23 April 1903, 8.
53. *Ibid*, 16.
54. *Ibid*, 17–18 for the details of this method.
55. Proceedings, 1903. The scale of rents adopted finally in 1906 was: 12s to the *mataqali*; 1s each to the provincial roko, district buli and the *turaga ni tauvei*; 2s to the *qali* and *mataqali* chiefs. The balance to the *mataqali* could be further subdivided to pay *tokatoka*. There was still a possibility of receipts for dual chiefly functions, and altogether 30 percent went directly to chiefs, while *mataqali* monies were invested on behalf of members. Lloyd, 148–50.

56. Requested by the Council of Chiefs as early as 1881.
57. CO 83/77, Minutes on Jackson, 7 October 1903.
58. im Thurn has been fairly reassessed by Tony Chapelle, but the impression remains that he listened more to some of his officials than to Fijians, and his claim that the Council of 1905 resolved to abolish *lala* was untrue. CO 83/80, im Thurn, 14 April 1905. Nor did he forward the Proceedings of that Council.
59. For the details, France, chap. 9; Lloyd, 135–6. Lloyd claims many chiefs were not opposed to lease or sale of unoccupied lands, but no *mataqali* chose to divide lands among members, as im Thurn's Amendment Ordinance of 1907 enabled them to do before it was withdrawn in 1912.
60. Chapelle, "Land and Race in Fiji." 340.
61. Ibid, 264–8 for the claims and counterclaims of Ratu Kadavulevu and Joni Madraiwiwi. The matter was decided by Native Lands Commissioner, Allardyce, who refused to allow shares over several provinces to the highest Fijian titleholders.
62. France, chap. 10; John Overton, "The Limits to Accumulation: Changing Land Tenure in Fiji," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 19, 2 (1992): 326–42; and for a defense of the system, R. Gerard Ward, "Land in Fiji," in Brij V. Lal and Tomasi R. Vakatora, eds., *Research Papers of the Fiji Constitutional Review Commission*. 2 vols. (Suva, 1997) Vol. 1, 241–57; Lloyd, Conclusion, 387.
63. CO 83/101, May to Harcourt, 11 May 1911.
64. May had paid close attention to the work of Judge F. E. Maning but not enough to the workings of the Land Courts. See Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice. Racial "Amalgamation" in Nineteenth Century New Zealand* (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1974): 181, 107–8, 151–2, 186–7. By 1911 Fijian lands under lease amounted to 140,974 acres. Lands held by the Crown ("waste lands") amounted to 160,608 acres yielding a small rent of £643; and the government held unconditionally a further 160,000 acres. Fiji Legislative Council Papers (CP), 1911.
65. In 1912 May insisted, however, on the original ten percent fee.
66. Proceedings, 1928, Resolution 7; see also CO 83/185/9, Hutson, 10 November 1929.
67. By 1937 the provinces owed £58,278 to the Commission. CP No. 42/1938 Secretary for Native Affairs Report for 1937.
68. Ibid. Sukuna at this date was among the governor's appointments to the Council. There was very little recorded discussion of his proposal.
69. Deryck Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna: Soldier, Statesman, Man of Two Worlds* (London 1980): chap. 7.
70. Ibid, chap. 12.



71. Lloyd, 166.
72. CO 83/227/7. Native Lands Trust Ordinance, 1939.
73. CP No. 31/1955, "Report by Sir Geoffrey Clay" 1954, 6–7; T. L. Davey, *Report on the Native Land Trust Board*, Fiji Parliamentary. Paper No. 25/1977.
74. Ibid. Davey's main criticism was that the NLTB was founded as a "trust" but confused its role by adding other functions.
75. See Ward's comments on this restrictive factor: "Land in Fiji," 51–2.
76. Macnaught, 62–4; Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*.
77. Proceedings, 1930, Resolution 9; CO 83/95/5, J. McOwen, "Memorandum" (he had been twice dismissed before in 1901 and 1914 for similar offenses, but was reinstated as a near relative of Cakobau); for taxes, *Blue Books of Fiji*; Audit Reports in Council Papers, No. 36/1935, No. 31/1936, No. 30/1937.
78. Macnaught, 73–4.
79. For the debate on leasing policies in the 1920s and 1930s under pressure from Indian farmers, Brij V. Lal, *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century* (Honolulu, 1992): 98–9, 100–102.
80. CO 83/185/9, Hutson, 10 November 1929. Desire for outright sales applied particularly to his predecessor, Sir Cecil Rodwell (1918–1925).
81. See Colonial Office minutes on the reorganization of Fijian administration in 1943, where Sukuna is described as "the most outstanding Fijian figure since Thakombau the 'Tui Viti' (King)." CO 83/236/15, Trafford-Smith, 19 May 1943.
82. CO 83/235/4: "Memorandum for Lord Hailey's Committee on Post-War Problems."
83. CO 83/235/5, "Memorandum on Problems of Post-War Reconstruction in Fiji," 23 August 1943.
84. RH MSS Afr: R. 101. Sir Philip Mitchell Diaries, 24–25 July 1942.
85. Sukuna explained to him the outlines of Fijian social structures.
86. C.P No. 11/1942, "Report of the Proceedings."
87. Ibid, Resolution 27. The committee consisted of Sukuna, four rokos, and the Adviser on Native Affairs as chairman. There is no full record of the 1942 Council's discussions in CP No. 11, or in the NAF volumes of Proceedings.
88. Mitchell, Diaries, 16 September 1942.
89. Ibid, 15 May 1943.

90. Mitchell drew on the Tanganyika Ordinance of 1926 (mainly for powers of commissioners): M. Hailey, *Native Administration in British African Territories*, 5 vols. (London, 1950–51), Part iv, 16–17. There were more contrasts than similarities between the two systems. See A. J. Dixon, “The Evolution of Indirect Rule and the Development of Rural and Urban Local Government in Tanganyika under British Administration, 1940–1961” (B. Litt. Diss., University of Oxford).

91. CP No. 24/1943, Mitchell to CO, 16 July 1943. CO 83/235/5, Mitchell, “Memorandum on Problems of Post-War Construction in Fiji,” 23 August 1943 and minutes.

92. For a critique of these figures, Shanta Davie, “Accounting for Imperialism: a Case of British-imposed Indigenous Collaboration,” *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability*, 13, 3 (2000), 19–24, 39–40. Lack of any financial series for provincial administration in this and other studies makes it difficult, however, to reach conclusions about this aspect of government in Fiji. But Mitchell’s low level of central funding was wildly optimistic. See the rising levels of provincial emoluments and government subsidies reported in CP 24/1943, 22/1944, 4/1947, 52/1948. For a general survey (also without a section on finance) see Ropate Qalo, *Divided We Stand. Local Government in Fiji* (Suva, 1984).

93. CP No. 24/1943, 3; CO 83/236/15, Mitchell, 16 July 1943 and enclosed Bill for the Regulation of Fijian Affairs and CO minutes.

94. CO 83/241/3, Mitchell to Gent, 29 November 1943.

95. Ordinance No. 3/1944 “For the Regulation of Fijian Affairs.” See, too, Sukuna’s “Reconstruction Paper,” CP No. 22/1944, which repeats much of Mitchell’s 1943 dispatch.

96. Income tax applied to all social groups, though very few Fijians reached the required threshold in the 1940s.

97. CP No. 4/1947, Report for the year 1945.

98. In addition to its five Fijian Members there were two Europeans—G. K. Roth as secretary and Sir Henry Scott as legal adviser.

99. CO 83/244/, Grantham, 28 August 1946.

100. NAF, C4/42-2, Administrative Officers’ Conferences; CP, District Commissioners’ Reports, 1949–1957; RH MSS. S. 73, Papers of J. A. C. Hill, “Development of Local Government”; Guy Hunter, “Rural Development (Organization and Administration),” CP No. 6/1969.

101. Papers of J. A. C. Hill; Garvey to CO, 29 August 1958. A notable exception to the opinions of European provincial officials was Ratu Penaia Ganilau who, as a district officer, feared “that the general administration of the Colony would become increasingly Indianized.”

102. CO 1036/10, Garvey, 11 February 1956; CO to Garvey, 16 January 1957. For changes in official attitudes in response to Fijian reactions, see Robert Norton, “Accommodating Indigenous Privilege: Britain’s Dilemma in Decolonising Fiji,” *Journal of Pacific History*, 37, 2 (2002) 133–56.

103. CP No. 18/1948.

104. Proceedings 1950.
105. CO 1036/259, "Fijian Administration Finances."
106. CP No. 35/1957, R. S. McDougall, "Fijian Administration Finances."
107. CP No. 38, Fijian Affairs Report for 1955; CO 1036/417, District Commissioners' Reports, 1957--59.
108. Sukuna's time had been largely taken up with Land Commission investigations and demarcation of Fijian Reserves.
109. CP No. 17/1966, 3.
110. CP No. 9/1968, Fiji Census, 1966, 65.
111. CP No. 4/1962, Report for 1960; see, too, CO 1036/701, Intelligence Report, April 1961.
112. CP No. 3/1961, report for 1959.
113. CP No. 14/1968, Report of the Auditor-General for 1967.
114. As Secretary for Fijian Affairs, A. C. Reid's nominees. CP No. 33/960. They attended until 1967.
115. CO 1036/307, minutes; Maddocks, 24 June 1959; Norton, 136-8.
116. CO 1036/307, Spate, "The Fijian Political Scene. Some Reflections," September 1959; CP No. 13/1959, "The Fijian People; Economic Problems and Prospects." For reactions to Spate in the provinces, CO 1036/79 (reports of commissioners).
117. *Ibid*, Maddocks, "Fiji: Political Situation and Trends," August 1959.
118. CP No. 1/1960, "Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Natural Resources and Population Trends of the Colony of Fiji."
119. Proceedings, 1959, 1960.
120. CO 1036/700, Maddocks, 14 March 1960. Maddocks, however, endorsed much in Spate and Burns.
121. CO 1036/701, Intelligence Report, April 1960; CO 1036/791, District Commissioners' Reports, 1960-62.
122. CO 1036/817, minutes 2 November 1961. See, too, Proceedings 1959, Resolutions 3, 10, 12-14, for the main points of the Council's opposition.
123. CP No. 9/1965, Council of Chiefs 1962; CO 1036/1287, "Fijian Administration," 1963-65. Secret., Maddocks, 19 June 1962.

124. Ibid, Maddocks, 10 Oct. 1962.
125. CP No. 19, 1965, Proceedings, 1963, resolution 5.
126. CO 1036/1214, esp. Dec. 1963.
127. Ibid, Report March 1963.
128. CO 1036/1287, Nayacakalou, "Interim Report," 16 June 1964; "Final Report," 1964; Jakeway, 17 March 1965.
129. Ibid, FAB Minutes, 5 April 1965.
130. RH collected Ministry of Fijian Affairs and Rural Development reports for the years 1971–79. No series are given for rates or voluntary contributions, but there is a series for subventions. See, too, Fiji Parliamentary Papers No 36/1983, No. 59/1984.
131. CP No. 18 1966, Council of Chiefs 1965; for the revision of 1985, Rodney V. Cole, Stephen I. Levine, Anare V. Matahau, *The Fijian Provincial Administration: A Review* (East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 1984); and for a critique of this revision Fiji Parliamentary Paper No. 70/2002, "Culture and Heritage. Review of the Fijian Administration" 2 vols. February 2002. A detailed comment on this outcome is outside the scope of the present paper.
132. For the historical background to ALTA under the Native Lands Trust Board, John Davies and Courtney L. Gallimore, "Reforming the Leasing and Use of Agricultural Land in Fiji," 8 June 2000: Te Karere Ipurangi/Maori News on Line (<http://maorinews.com>).
133. CO 1036/216, Fiji Intelligence Committee report and governor's report.
134. Leg. Co. Debates 1966, 87. Two other points were also features of the final legislation. In future, provincial councils might act as corporate bodies with powers to own property, deal in land, and raise loans. Finally, too, the Council was titled in law "the Great Council" as an acceptable translation of the more modest Fijian phrase—*Bose Vakaturaga*. (Chiefly Council). See Ratu Mara's explanation, *ibid*, 92.
135. CP No 5, 1968, Recommendation 8.
136. FO 32/410 "Pledges to Fijians."
137. CP No. 5, 1968, Recommendation 1. An Ordinance of 1968 did make provision for non-Fijians, but was suspended until after British departure: FO 32/406.
138. FCO 32/401, Jakeway to Galsworthy (private), 12 November 1968. For details of the end-game, Robert Norton, "Seldom a transition with such aplomb: from confrontation to conciliation on Fiji's path to independence," *Journal of Pacific History*, 39, 2 (2004): 163–185.
139. Special Branch copy of Conference paper, Council of Chiefs, FCO 32/401, encl. in G. P. Lloyd to Morgan (FCO), 15 Nov. 1968; Special Branch report 30 Sept. 1968 "1968 By-Elections."

140. CP No. 3/1969, Council of Chiefs 1968, Recommendation 3.
141. *Ibid*, Recommendation 8; CP No. 24/1969, Recommendations 1, 2.
142. Koya had replaced A. D. Patel as Leader of the Opposition.
143. FCO 32/571, Minute (Secret) Jan. 1970.
144. *Ibid*, Shepherd to FCO, 18 Feb. 1970. For full minutes of Shepherd's meetings with the Council of Chiefs, Feb. 1970 in the Council Board Room (without ceremonial) FCO 32/594; and also the list of public bodies heard, local settlers—the sensible and the cranks.
145. FCO 32/570, Minutes, 2 Feb. 1970. The Federation had supported this concession.
146. The formula was: 12 Fijians to be elected on communal roll, 10 on national roll, and same for Indians. FCO 32/572 Conference report.
147. *Constitution of Fiji 1970*. Apart from appointment of senators on the advice of the Council, there were no other formal functions defined.
148. For the fate of early investments, Fiji, *House of Representatives Debates*, 1984, September; 1986, April-May (loans to the NLDC).
149. NAF, Ministry for Fijian Affairs and Rural Development, Reports, 1971–79.
150. Steven Ratuva, "Ethnic Politics, Communalism and Affirmative Action in Fiji: a Critical and Comparative Study" (D. Phil. Diss. University of Sussex, 1999), 198–221; USP Library, Pacific Collection, Fijian Holdings Ltd. Annual Reports.
151. NAF, MAF, "Corporate Plan, 1994–1996" (with detailed flow-charts and projections for the Fijian Development Fund Board, the Fijian Commercial Development Unit, and much else including 100 percent government funding of provincial councils by 1996).
152. *Fiji Republic Gazette*, 13 March 1990, 13 February 1991, 18 May 1992.
153. *Fiji Gazette* No. 24, 3 May 1996; *Fiji Parliamentary Papers* No. 35/1996, "Report of the Auditor-General on Accounts of Government for the Years 1993–94," 88–9.
154. For the politics of this period, Brij V. Lal, "Chiefs and Indians: Elections and Politics in Contemporary Fiji," *The Contemporary Pacific*, 5, 2 (1993): 275–301; Robert Norton, "Reconciling Ethnicity and Nation: Contending Discourses in Fiji's Constitutional Reform," *The Contemporary Pacific*, 12, 1 (2000): 83–122; Virginia Horsecroft, "The Politics of Ethnicity in the Fiji Islands: Competing Ideologies of Indigenous Paramountcy and Individual Equality in Political Dialogue" (M. Phil. Diss., Oxford University, 2002).
155. *Rabuka*, 141. Which did not prevent him accepting honorary membership in the hope of using the institution.
156. Norton, "Reconciling Ethnicity and Nation," 94–103.

157. Jon Fraenkel, "The Clash of Dynasties and Rise of Demagogues; Fiji's *Tauri Vakaukauwa* of May 2000," *Journal of Pacific History*, 35, 3 (2000), 297.

158. "Culture and Heritage. Review of the Fijian Administration," Vol. 2 for the evidence of provincial and other workshops, 148–50, 204–6, Macuata Provincial Council thought the GCC should only have a cultural function.

159. Reddy was the first Indo-Fijian to address the Council as part of his deal with Rabuka to promulgate the 1997 Constitution and contest the 1999 elections in coalition with Rabuka's SVT. Independent financing for the Council would seem to have been met by a Fijians' Trust Fund Bill debated by both Houses at the end of 2004 and is especially interesting for Senators' views on the GCC.