Human Consequences for *Kain Nikunau* of Two Centuries of Usages of Accounting by *I-Matang*

Keith Dixon

University of Canterbury

Contact details:

Keith Dixon
Department of Accounting and Information Systems
College of Business and Economics
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8040
New Zealand

Tel: +64-(0)3-3642987 x 3681

Email: Keith.Dixon@canterbury.ac.nz

Acknowledgements

Some participant-observer empirical materials derive from 1997-99 when the researcher was working for the Governments of Kiribati and the United Kingdom: the views expressed in the paper are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of either government. A grant from the University of Canterbury to allow the researcher to visit Nikunau and Tarawa in 2009 is acknowledged. The assistance is much appreciated of various *Kain Nikunau*, including Tiarum O’Connor, and officials of the Nikunau Island Council, Nikunau Island Magistrates Court, Te Bobotin Nikunau and Kiribati National Archives. Comments on earlier versions of this paper from Hegnes Dixon, Dick Overy and two anonymous reviewers associated with the 8th Australasian Conference on Social and Environmental Accounting Research are appreciated. I would also like to thank Michael Gaffikin for providing some direction to the study of which this paper is part.
Abstract

Purpose – This account was compiled in the course of a study to examine consequences that arise from human application of accounting ideas and practices (i.e., accounting usages), and to devise a means of classifying these consequences. The subjects or identities it covers are *Kain Nikunau* (i.e., persons indigenous to Nikunau Island in the central Pacific Ocean). The accounting usages that have had consequences for them mainly originated among *I-Matang* (i.e., indigenous persons of Europe, in particular being fair-skinned). They started from early in 19th Century and have been added to ever since, including recently by other non-*Kain Nikunau*, some from elsewhere in Kiribati.

Design/methodology/approach – An eclectic approach to the concept of accounting usages and consequences is adopted. The empirical materials include secondary sources covering more than two centuries from various disciplines, and participant-observations during a quarter of a century. They are composed into an analytical description of occurrences that paralleled accounting usages for the last several generations of *Kain Nikunau*. These usages have been local and distant. They relate to trade, mining and wage employment, religion-making, government, formal education, medical care and other services, development projects and aid. The analytical description is interpreted partially in terms of consequences for *Kain Nikunau* of accounting usages. The paper stops at full interpretation and theorising in order to enhance the extant literature about consequences of accounting.

Findings – Accounting usages, figuring even mundanely and unobtrusively in various activities and situations, have precipitated conditions of possibility (and some cases caused) wide-ranging and far-reaching alterations to life among *Kain Nikunau*, including that many now live away from Nikunau. These may be regarded as consequences of accounting usages, albeit in conjunction with other actions. The desirability and undesirability of these consequences are ambiguous.

Keywords Consequences of accounting, social consequences, economic consequences, Pacific studies, demographic consequences
1 Introduction

This study is founded on accounting being a form of social technology (Boyce, 2000; J. Brown, 2009; Mellemvik et al., 1988), with all the implications that has for power relations, rights, obligations, subjection and domination. The study is predicated on the potency of knowing the consequences of accounting in particular contexts, which the seminal paper by Burchell, Clubb, Hopwood, Hughes and Nahapiet (1980) advanced as one of the main reasons for investigating accounting as it functions. That such knowledge is of vital importance in general can be expressed from a variety of philosophical perspectives (Kezar, 2005; Roslender and Dillard, 2003). Two contrasting examples are:

A  To know about consequences is to understand the wherewithal of actions and the capabilities of models of which they are the results, in order to reveal both positive and negative outcomes for a community.

B  To know about consequences makes criticising actions possible, along with the theories, beliefs and values on which the actions are founded, in order to stimulate counter-movements to repression.

In a previous article about habitual uses of accounting practices (hereafter, “accounting usages”) associated with Kiribati (ˈkɪrɪbæs/, or using the original English English enunciation, Gilberts) and that accompanied colonialism, and do so still, Dixon and Gaffikin (2014) allude to consequences in line with example B above. The present article acknowledges that the accounting literature with which that earlier article may be associated tends towards “study of the native”, rather than “study for the native”; and that the critical strand in that literature tends to reflect concerns among academic researchers of exposing oppression and related wrongs at their source. While drawing on the accounting history contained in that earlier article, the present article focuses on human history and tries to accommodate example A. In particular, it follows urgings by McNicholas and Barrett (2005) for researchers to take culturally sensitive and empathetic approaches, to incorporate indigenous agency in the history, and to reveal for a community both positive outcomes (e.g., enabling of rights) and negative outcomes (e.g. denial of rights). Implicit in this approach is little expectation of extant roots of oppression and related wrongs changing in a revolutionary way, and so making the best of what is possible.

My approach is consistent with engaging in the history of “ordinary people in their local setting” (Burke, 1991, p. 238). Said people are persons indigenous to the reef island of Nikunau in the central Pacific Ocean (coordinates 1° 21′ 0″ S, 176° 27′ 0″ E). They refer to
themselves as *Kain Nikunau* in their *te taetae ni Kiribati* (or Gilbertese language). For at least several centuries, their ancestors virtually all lived on the island (see Di Piazza, 1999), albeit affected by intercourse with other islands in the Kiribati Archipelago and perhaps further. However, over the past eight generations (or about two centuries) a *Kain Nikunau* diaspora has steadily extended to Tarawa Atoll—the seat of government in the Republic of Kiribati and its only large “urbanised” settlement[1]; other Outer Islands[2] in the archipelago, and the Line and Solomon Islands; and *Kain Nikunau* are part of an *I-Kiribati* diaspora that includes New Zealand, Great Britain and parts of Australia. In so far as accounting usages have been directly and indirectly of consequence, this paper narrates how and why this occurred in order to explain the past and present circumstances of *Kain Nikunau* on Nikunau and of the diaspora. The explanation is predicated on the popular, if inexact, assertion that “History Matters”. That is, on the idea that “Placing [behaviours and events of consequence] in time—systematically situating particular moments (including the present) in a temporal sequence of events and processes—can greatly enrich our understanding of complex social dynamics” (Pierson, 2000, p. 72).

The narrative covers changes occurring to the physical, social, cultural, political and economic conditions of *Kain Nikunau*. It is rich in detail and is intended to be an analytical description: theorising about the consequences of accounting is left to another paper (see Dixon and Gaffikin, 2015). Although earlier times are referred to, it is primarily about how *Kain Nikunau* have fared over the eight generations that *I-Matang* (i.e., fair-skinned persons indigenous to Europe) and other foreigners (e.g., Chinese, Samoan and other *I-Kiribati* (persons indigenous to any of the Kiribati Islands)) have exercised knowledge and power in various areas of activity. From an outside perspective, these areas of activity might be labelled as extracting natural resources (e.g. whale oil, whalebone, spermaceti, ambergris, phosphate, tuna, people to take as slaves), trading for commodities (e.g. coconut oil and copra), recruiting and transporting labour, religion-making, colonial governing, civilising, economic and social developing, commencing, and imperial overseeing, aiding and nation-strengthening. From a *Kain Nikunau* perspective, these foreign activities have been for a long time just a mishmash of things that *I-Matang* and others did, and about which *Kain Nikunau* received little by way of explanation, even when said *I-Matang* and others actually resided on or visited Nikunau (e.g., beachcombers and castaways, traders, missionaries, officials of the Great Powers). However, most have not visited but have plied their authority, expertise, etc.,

In both circumstances, the accounting usages to feature have been enveloped in, and an extension of, the foreign activities, at odds with any indigenous forms of accounting. The usages in question have been mundane and seemingly innocuous and incidental but nevertheless telling, often in circumstances of opacity and secrecy, serving the purposes of the foreigners (Dixon and Gaffikin, 2014). The accounting usages have added to the nature and extent that the various activities have been consequential for Kain Nikunau.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section outlines methods used to generate the empirical materials on which the paper is based and explains the arrangement of the narrative. The narrative is set out in Section 3 in a series of subsections enumerated later. Section 4 is an analysis and synthesis of the narrative. Section 5 comprises a conclusion.

2 Methods
This section explains that the identity of study is a community, not a geographical area. The methods of empirical materials gathering, analysing and interpreting are a mix of participant-observation, and review and interpretation of secondary sources.

2.1 Identity Studied
The question arises of why study the identity Kain Nikunau, rather than some alternatives, such as Nikunau Island or the Kiribati Islands. The choice of identity reflects a trend in the Pacific literature away from studying island groups with European names, or countries that have arisen out of colonies; and towards studying local or sub-national identities, events and circumstances, including those representing the boundaries of pre-colonial polities (Davidson, 1955; Howe, 1979). A further argument put forward by Morrell in relation to the writing of history in the Pacific is that, “The proper subject of history is not an area but a community” (1960, p. 1).

The alternative of using the geographic identities mentioned above would give rise to the following shortcomings. Studying only Nikunau Island would lead to losing sight of significant demographic, economic and other consequences that involved temporary and, it would seem, permanent migration of many Kain Nikunau – in other words, to omitting the Kain Nikunau diaspora. This argument for rejection aligns with Macdonald’s suggestion of studies that examine broader “‘imperial’ or hegemonic relationships affecting the world more generally than just the Pacific, and the underlying forces that drive them” (1996b, p. 30); and
with the considerations of Page and Mercer (2012) in discussing diaspora as agents of change in their place of origin. Studying the Kiribati Islands as a whole would open up too many possibilities because of differences among the peoples of the different islands, which in turn have given rise to different ways that they have responded to similar influences (Macdonald, 1982a), and so to different human consequences.

The validity of an island community as an identity is supported by Macdonald thus:

the primary identity [in the Kiribati Islands] was with the extended family household and its landholdings, then with a larger district grouping, still linked through the male line by common descent, and then with the island. Intermarriage might have established linkages to other adjacent islands to which descent might also be traced but this was usually beyond the horizon in a political as well as geographic sense.” (1996b, p. 39, emphasis added).

This he puts forward in discussing whether even an island is too big. Which is why indeed, as related in Section 2.2, a source of empirical materials is an extended family whose male line of descent originated in a particular district of Nikunau, not the entire island, although there is much extrapolation to such, which is not outrageous given its small area (19 km²) and a population that has barely ever exceeded 2,000, since records began[3], as per Figure 1.

Figure 1 Population of Nikunau 1860 to 2010 (Data sources: Bedford et al., 1980; Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2013; Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services, 2012a)

This is an appropriate point to introduce some political geography. The particular district of Nikunau just referred to is called Tabomatang. Its population at the turn of the 19th Century was no more than a few hundred, and enjoyed much political autonomy. Towards the end of
that century, that autonomy had been whittled away and it was under significant political influence from an entire island authority. Indeed, formally, it was part of an island that in 1892, along with the rest of the Kiribati Islands and the Tuvalu Islands, became subject to British jurisdiction as the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate(s) (see Davis, 1892; Morrell, 1960; Munro & Firth, 1986); that is, at least in I-Matang eyes, there being plenty of room for a “working misunderstanding”, a condition that was rife in colonial situations (see Bohannan, 1965; Lundsgaarde, 1968). That formal status changed in 1916 to being part of the British Empire within the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (GEIC)[4]. Shortly after, the entire island authority mentioned above came under the direct influence of the policies and practices of the Colony Government. Except possibly for a short interruption from 1941 to 1944, because of the incursion into the area of Japanese armed forces, this status of being part of the British Colony continued until 1979. Since then, the district has been part of the Republic of Kiribati, with only slight political autonomy. Its population has fallen below 100.

2.2 Participant Observation - Ana Utu Ekineti

I am in a “privileged position” (Roslender and Dillard, 2003, p. 341) of being part of the Kain Nikunau diaspora, but only by affinity not consanguinity. The latter condition applies to my wife and four children: she and the first of the children were born in the kawa (≅ settlement/converged village) of Tabomatang on Nikunau; and the others were born in New Zealand, on Tarawa and in England. We met elsewhere in 1984; and between 1985 and 2009, we made five social and working visits to Nikunau and Tarawa, and one in between just to Tarawa. The longest was a two-year residence (1997-1999) on Tarawa, where I taught accounting. During our last visit in 2009, particular attention was paid to artefacts related to the secondary sources cited below; and to observing “the present” on Nikunau and Tarawa. Away from the islands, in Papua New Guinea, England and New Zealand mainly, I heard countless anecdotal accounts from expatriate I-Kiribati, including some comprising the Kain Nikunau diaspora, and from I-Matang who had resided in Kiribati for short periods between the 1960s and 2000s. More generally, my mere existence has given rise to participant-observation materials over more than 25 years. Hence, for some time unwittingly, I might be seen as following Grimble and Clarke’s advice to colonial staff working in the GEIC about not expecting “to know the native until you have learned his home life. . . . by constant hut-to-hut visitation” (1929, introduction, no p. no. [the researchers’ apologies for the quote’s condescending tone]). However, I acknowledge that this study suffers from the usual problems of I-Matang writing about Pacific peoples (see Herzel, 1988).
Elaborating on being *Kain Nikunau* by affinity, this inevitably has entailed being part of an *utu*. To explain, *utu* are a vital and longstanding institution of *Kain Nikunau* society, and that of neighbouring islands (Geddes, 1977; Goodenough, 1955; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Maude, 1963; Maude & Maude, 1931). An *utu* comprises persons having biological-social connections. The term *extended family* is close but inadequate, especially as in the researcher’s experience the extended family is not a very strong or common feature of English society, except perhaps among its royal and aristocratic families (see Bortrick, 2014). Membership of *te utu*[5] derives from consanguinity and affinity (e.g., birth, *tibutibu* (adoption), marriage and similar). But a further necessary characteristic is its members share a common social identity, underlain by an unwritten and ever-developing code of customary social and governmental relationships comprising legal decisions, laws, rules, regulations and ceremonial rituals, referred to by Macdonald (1998) as *te katei ni Kiribati*, or the Kiribati Way (see also Rennie, 1981). This “stipulates a behavioural relationship of enduring, diffuse solidarity” (Lundsgaarde and Silverman, 1972, p. 98), and has equivalents in small communities elsewhere, providing them with strong “internal cohesion” (Morrell, 1960).

A further elaboration is inferred by Maude (1963), who explains that a person’s *utu* is in theory an indefinitely extensible category of near and distant kindred, but in practice it is bounded by knowing with whom one shares a common ancestor. In the researcher’s experience, this amounts to scores or even hundreds of people, given the still keen knowledge of genealogy among *Kain Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*, the common ancestor being possibly several generations back and long dead. However, at least nowadays, a distinction is often made between *utu* and *koraki* (personal communications from Hegnes Dixon and Dick Overy). The term *utu* usually refers to near kindred sharing a common ancestor, say, within four or five generations and exhibiting this solidarity; whereas *koraki* usually are more distant contemporary consanguine relatives and do not have quite as much solidarity.

*Te utu* to which I belong by affinity, comprises descendants of my wife’s four great grandparents. In the course of the study, the family tree shown in Figure 1 was compiled, culminating in our four children. It covers the generations just referred to and the one before, so six generations in all (comprehensive coverage of eight generations proved too far).
Figure 2 *Ana utu Ekineti* through six generations
Significant is that the first five generations up to Ekineti were virtually all born on Nikunau, but most of the third generation onwards are either dead and died on Tarawa, or live not on Nikunau but elsewhere and mostly on Tarawa. I refer to these generations subsequently as ana utu Ekineti ni kaan. They provided particular examples of the changing circumstances of Kain Nikunau through the eight generations covered by the study.

2.3 Secondary Sources

During and after residing on Tarawa in 1997-99, I gathered written empirical materials, mostly of a secondary source nature. Initially, this was to enable me to stage accounting courses that set the ideas, methods, etc. in the life context of the students I taught (see Dixon, 2004b); and then it was to perform this study. Most of the secondary sources cited or otherwise consulted to write this paper derive from their mainly I-Matang authors’ participant-observations, informed by older primary and secondary sources. Regarding their efficacy, historians usually argue that primary sources—principally written documentation in accounting’s case—are imperative, traditionally privileging them based on putative objectivity (see Merino, 1998). However, following her argument, “there is no reason to privilege primary over secondary sources” (1998, p. 607), concerned as I am to reflect an I-Kiribati culture and society in which writings of any sort have been considered unnecessary, and so are obviously rare.

As none of the secondary sources was concerned with analysing accounting, I have taken circumstances and events they describe and analyse, and re-assessed, reinterpreted, elaborated and supplemented them in relevant ways; and brought the history up to the present by extending them. This extension has involved drawing on more written sources, as well as observing institutions and practices, and conducting discussions with informants on Nikunau and Tarawa, and away from the islands, as related above.

2.4 Themes in and Layout of the Narrative Description

Processing empirical materials and conducting analysis proceeded alongside the participant observation, and often propelled it. Likewise, the writing of the narrative set out in Section 3. Running through it are four primary themes of analysis and over 20 secondary themes. These are induced from the empirical materials. To prepare the reader I set out the four in Figure 3; and articulate all of them in Table 1. The secondary sources and official publications that informed each theme are also listed in Table 1. However, the narrative itself is set out chronologically.
Figure 3 Primary Themes of Analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Themes</th>
<th>Secondary Themes</th>
<th>Secondary and Official Published Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Macdonald (1982a), Sabatier (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Secondary Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Secondary and Official Published Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Secondary Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Secondary and Official Published Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The narrative is separated into eight parts. This being retrospective analysis, the first part summarises the present on Nikunau, and for the diaspora on Tarawa and elsewhere. The other seven start at the beginning of this history and follow a chronological order mostly; they include sub-parts. The parts and subparts accord with where Kain Nikunau were settled or, in one case, were migrating to, and the nature of their contacts with outsiders. The parts, with numbering corresponding to sub-sections of Section 3 are as follows:

3.1 The Present on Nikunau and Tarawa
3.2 While Kain Nikunau virtually all lived on Nikunau, virtually undisturbed by I-Matang
3.3 While they mostly lived on Nikunau but with continuing foreign presences engaged in new activities (i.e., 1820s-1890s/1910s); and some lived away, mostly temporarily.
3.4 While they mostly lived on Nikunau but as subjects in a British colony (i.e., between the 1890/1910s and 1970s); and some lived away, mostly temporarily.
3.5 Circumstances that have brought about migration and given rise to the present diaspora
3.6 While many have lived on Tarawa for the past four decades
3.7 While many have continued living on Nikunau for the past four decades
3.8 While many have lived beyond Tarawa for the past four decades.

3 The Narrative
This retrospective analysis starts with the present before going to the distant past and working forwards, as alerted in Section 2.3.

3.1 The Present
The number of people presently identifying as Kain Nikunau may comprise as many as 6,500 worldwide, many of whom (≈3,000) take this identity despite never actually having set foot on Nikunau[6]. Only between 1,500 and 1,700 Kain Nikunau normally reside on Nikunau, of whom over 1,200 were born there. Of the rest, between 2,200 and 2,400 normally reside on Tarawa Atoll, including over 1,000 who were born on Nikunau. Between 1,000 and 1,200 normally reside elsewhere in the Republic, either on the Kiribati Islands (≈ 500) or the Line Islands (≈ 600), including over 600 who were born on Nikunau (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2013). Another 1,000 or more comprise those still living Kain Nikunau who emigrated at various times to other countries, and their descendants; notably on the Solomon Islands (≈ 400), other Pacific Islands (including New Zealand (≈ 100) and Australia) and Great Britain (≈ 10). Bedford and Bedford (2010) allude to other I-Kiribati communities of a few hundreds in Vanuatu and the Marshall Islands at about the time the Republic was
instituted, but I am unaware of these comprising any *Kain Nikunau*; the Fiji-based community they report was comprised mostly of Banabans (see Section 3.4.1).

I outline the circumstances of these four groups in the rest of this Section 3.1 but focusing especially on first Nikunau and then Tarawa. This outline is against a background of various human domestic, social and economic activities, in among organisations engaged in trading, religious activities, government and aid. It takes in formal cultural activities; domestic choring and subsistence, copra production, employment and volunteer working; churches and religious activities; micro-, private and public enterprises engaged in mainly imports distribution and services; island councils, public services and the Government of Kiribati (hereafter the Republic Government); and aid activities, largely organised as discrete projects (see Macdonald, 1998). A further feature is an economy and society that is increasingly converging on Tarawa, where life has become increasingly monetised (see ADB, 2002; Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services, 2012b).

3.1.1 Nikunau Island

I was last on Nikunau in 2009. I travelled there on the weekly air service from Tarawa (a 600-kilometre of four hours duration)—the alternative would have been a voyage lasting several days on the cargo and passenger ship(s) that ply the islands intermittently commencing from and returning to Tarawa.

The island’s 19 km² are in the shape of an elongated figure of eight, as per the map provided in Figure 4. (see also EarthStereetView.com, 2014). It is comprised of coral, none of the land being more than a few metres above the level of the vast Pacific Ocean surrounding it. Although there are obvious signs that soils are poor and rainfall is intermittent (see Di Piazza, 2001; Tiaeke, 2007), the island is mostly covered in trees and plants, except for two small lakes, and the cleared areas on which residents dwell. The report below is based on my participant-observation during five visits between 1985 and 2009, and various secondary sources. Although many of the latter are situated on neighbouring islands, I have included them nevertheless because I am satisfied from my participant-observation that some reliance can be placed on them, and there are no equivalent studies of Nikunau.

Much of Nikunau’s vegetation and all its fabricated objects reflect many past activities of *Kain Nikunau* and of various other types of transient residents and visitors. Most *Kain Nikunau* now dwell in *kawa*, which are positioned intermittently along the island’s western shore, adjacent to the reef, and are connected by a dirt road. As shown on Figure 3, running
north to south, there are six such settlements, namely Muribenua, Tabutoa, Rungata, Mwanriiki Nikumanu and the aforementioned Tabomatang. Their size varies in terms of population and households.

Figure 3 Map of Nikunau Island (Source: Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services, 2012a, p. 3)

Each household dwells on te mwenga (≅ a residential plot or dwelling area), on which are erected several shelter-like structures serving as sitting/eating, cooking, sleeping and storage areas built of local materials (i.e., thatch, poles, coconut binding, etc.). There are about 320
households living in mwenga in total (see Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2013). Mwenga forming each te kawa are mostly laid out in two very orderly rows running parallel to the shoreline, and separated by the aforementioned road.

The most striking building(s) in each kawa now are a Protestant church and, in four cases a Roman Catholic (RC) church—the two without the latter are Tabomatang and Tabutoa. Associated with each of these are meetinghouses, referred to as church mwaneaba, and dwellings for the pastor(s) and/or cleric(s). In Nikumanu, there still stands te mwaneaba (≈ traditional meeting-house), although most of its formal uses from before the 1820s (see Section 3.2) have ceased. But in the rest, a few standing stones are all that remain on the now overgrown sites of these once “masterpiece(s) of Gilbertese culture” (Sabatier, 1977, p. 99), which served as social, political and religious centres and inns for visitors, and which one commentator called a “tabernacle of ancestors in the male line” (Grimble quoted by Maude, 1963, p. 11)7. Most kawa also boast a trading store, or at least a kiosk.

Beyond Tabomatang, the road runs past a cemetery and to the island’s southern end, where Taburitongoun (Latouche, 1983; Maude, 1963) is alleged to maintain a spiritual presence and where there is a bangota (≈ stone shrine) dedicated to him as a bakatibu (≈ an ancestor beyond the seventh generation)[8]. In contrast, the northerly end of the road terminates at the island’s airport, whose runway was built by Royal Engineers in the late 1960s.

The other terminus for arriving and departing passengers, and receiving cargo and exporting copra, is about halfway along the island, where a passage through the reef has given rise to the island’s only wharf and the kawa of Rungata. This terminus is of much longer standing, at least 130 years. The once prosperous Te Bobotin Nikunau (TBN) (or Nikunau Cooperative Society) store and copra shed are a stone’s throw from the wharf. A short distance south is the Nikunau Island Council (NIC) complex, including a relatively new administration building (the previous one, and the records it contained, had been consumed by fire in the 1990s), post office, courthouse, prison, a house for visitors and a residential area comprising households with employees of the NIC and Republic Government. Adjacent to that is a recently established, prosperous-looking private trade store, which mainly caters for the aforementioned households and purchases copra from copra cutters living in kawa nearby.

Available also at the NIC headquarters are Nikunau’s other formal links and connections with the outside world, namely postal, money transfer and telephone services to Tarawa, the other islands and beyond. I understand that access to the Internet is now possible from there but restricted by price and logistics—electricity generation on the island is restricted severely to
localised petrol/diesel generators and solar cells. Adjacent also is the Nikunau Junior Secondary School, which has served the whole island for over a decade. Its 150+ students come from the island’s three primary schools (with 350+ students in total), which, along with three nurse-run clinics[9], are positioned along the road between the two kawa each one serves (Republic of Kiribati, Ministry of Education, 2011). The Junior Secondary School’s graduates either go to senior secondary school, including on Beru, Nonouti, Tabiteuea North or Tarawa, or are finished with formal schooling.

Nowadays almost 1,000 people reside in the vicinity of Rungata, including a disproportionate number of the 300+ residents of the island that the 2010 census (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2012) reports as not being Kain Nikunau. While a fair proportion of these 300 may be Kain Nikunau by affinity, the rest are probably only temporarily resident, whilst working with religious bodies, or for the NIC or the Republic Government (e.g., as primary and junior secondary school teachers, nurses at the clinics, or financial or legal administrators). The Republic Government employees are paid for out of appropriations to ministries, in the same was as such employees on Tarawa (see Section 3.1.2). However, the public services provided are much less in extent than the equivalent on Tarawa and those present have fewer resources on which to call. The NIC is also dependent on the Republic Government for funds, 80% of its budgeted revenue coming from there formally but more in practice, because local tax collection from Kain Nikunau is not very effective.

In contrast to the paid employees living at Rungata and adjacent to primary schools and clinics, or pastors and trade store proprietors, Kain Nikunau live, and “earn a living”, in more traditional ways. Mostly, and invariably according to gender, they spend their days performing domestic chores (e.g., fetching water, cleaning, cooking, feeding the pigs); engaging in church activities; going to school; doing what old people do; socialising; and doing subsistence and cash crop (i.e., copra cutting) work on their aba (≅ plots of land) in the buakonikai (≅ bush lands)), the reef and the ocean.

Many of the bushes, trees and other vegetation on the island have been propagated and cultivated in order to yield food and drink (e.g., coconuts, karewe or toddy (i.e., fresh sap obtained from inflorescence of the coconut palm), pawpaws, pandanus fruits, breadfruits, babai, pig meat), medicines, ornaments, buildings, tools, fuel and fertiliser; and, in the case of coconut palms, copra. In addition, Kain Nikunau subsist a great deal from the reef and ocean, using fish traps, canoes and an array of traditional and imported equipment. As alluded to above, the only form of cash they acquire from these activities comes from collecting
coconuts and using the meat to make copra. Other sources of cash include paid work a few might get on a casual basis with the NIC or similar, and remittances from family members working away temporarily or living away permanently. I should guesstimate that the mean fortnightly cash incomes of a *Kain Nikunau* household is of the order of AU$50. Imports are basic, and include foodstuffs (e.g. flour, rice, sugar, tea, canned food), cloth, hand tools and equipment, bicycles and scooters (see Lewis, 1988; Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services, 2012a; Pacific Science Board, 1957; Thomas, 2001, 2002).

This day-to-day routine life is punctuated each week by observance of *Tabati* (= the Sabbath). This sees much church-going, and some activities being encouraged by religious (and secular) laws and legal decisions; and others prohibited, including work, pastimes and games, especially among the near half of the islanders who adhere to Protestantism, rather than the almost as many affiliated with Roman Catholicism. There are various other observances of an irregular nature and usually involving large social gatherings. They are to celebrate or commemorate various critical life passages (e.g., births (particularly of the first-born child), first birthdays, first menstruations (now celebrated intermittently), marriages, deaths and burials) and other occasions (e.g., Easter, Christmas, National Day, and arrival or departure of *Kain Nikunau* absent for a limited period, *Kain Nikunau* diaspora, temporary residents and other visitors/strangers). Participation in these varies according to roles one might be cast in, from *utu* member, through *te kawa* resident or member of a church congregation, to island resident.

Most *Kain Nikunau* resident on Nikunau leave their island only intermittently. Private canoe travel to neighbouring Beru Island is possible logistically but probably infrequent (cf. Bedford et al., 1980). Mostly, people travel by ship or even air, sometimes to other islands (Beru, Tabiteuea North and, mostly, Tarawa), usually for medical, educational, religious or family reasons. Otherwise, they leave permanently, to Tarawa and beyond, following other emigrants for similar reasons to those analysed in later parts of the narrative, especially Section 3.5.

In relating the above, I have made no mention of accounting. However, practices do go on, both in forms *non-I-Kiribati* readers would expect understand, and born out of traditional, pre-1820s material and other culture. I leave the detail until later sections, and suffice it to say that the accounting the aforementioned readers would expect runs alongside copra cutting and export, and the reciprocal trade in goods; taxation and public expenditure, involving the NIC and Republic Government; and fundraising and expenditure of religious organisations. The
earlier, indigenous accounting is also present still, having to do with genealogy, rights of use of aba and of marine areas within and just beyond the reef, and knowledge and skills, including attendant magic, spells and rituals.

3.1.2 Elsewhere

Compared with Kain Nikunau still on Nikunau, those living on other Outer Islands in the Kiribati Islands and Line Islands seem to be living under similar, mainly subsistence conditions, although perhaps on Kirimiti, with its bigger population and various governmental facilities, there are cash employment opportunities, etc. with some semblance of Tarawa. The same seems to apply to the kava of Titiana and New Manra on Ghizo Island and of Kukutin, Arariki and Nikumaroro on Wagina Island in the Solomon Islands, although there too there were cash employment opportunities as early as the 1960s, which Kain Nikunau had knowledge and skills for through working on Nauru and Banaba (see Cochrane, 1969, 1970) and, just as Kain Nikunau have migrated from Nikunau to Tarawa, so inhabitants of Ghizo and Wagina Islands have migrated to urban Gizo and Honiara (Fraenkel, 2003; Knudson, 1964)[10]—in terms of cultural identity and acculturation, the move to the Solomon Islands seems to have been characterised by mixes of what Berry (1997, 2005) labels separation, which was no doubt helped by the settlements being on small islands, and assimilation, helped by the aforementioned possession of knowledge and skills.

In contrast, the rest of the diaspora participate in cash economies replete with varying degrees of the modern infrastructure and amenities many readers may be familiar with, and follow usually a more modern, urban lifestyle than Kain Nikunau still on Nikunau. However, while this is partially true of those resident on Tarawa, there is still a significant difference between conditions there and on other Pacific Islands, such as the urban centres, or rural hinterlands of, Honiara, Suva, Port Moresby, Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Honolulu and Brisbane, let alone the likes of San Francisco and London. Indeed, despite urban influences, Kain Nikunau on Tarawa comprise communities that are based around their utu, and home-island kava, church[11], home island and, to an increasing but still limited extent, work places. As for the other places listed, and (I expect) elsewhere, despite their urban life styles, often these Kain Nikunau are members of communities that retain various social and cultural practices reminiscent of Nikunau, although the smaller the number of Kain Nikunau in the vicinity, the more likely this is to be as a broad I-Kiribati community, rather than one limited to Kain Nikunau.
3.1.2.1 Tarawa

Dealing first with Tarawa Atoll, it comprises several low-lying coral islets forming the shape with the central space occupied by a substantial tidal lagoon. It is less drought prone than Nikunau, so has more fresh water and the vegetation is generally more lush, except that the human population density has resulted in much land being cleared and lacking foliage, and water at a premium in any case—the source of water on both islands is a subterranean freshwater lens, fed by rainwater, floating over seawater (White et al., 2007). The Kain Nikunau there live among another 53,000 I-Kiribati descended from all the Kiribati Islands, including Tarawa itself; the non-Kiribati population is small (< 1,500) at any particular time and mostly transient. Indeed, nearly 90% of this entire population live along South Tarawa, depicted by the horizontal line in the above shape. This part of the atoll comprises several islets through which runs the atoll’s only significant sealed road. Causeways carry the road between the islets (e.g., the Betio-Bairiki causeway) and all told it runs for some 30+ km. from the international container port on Betio in the west to some residential areas a few kilometres beyond the international airport at Bonriki in the east. A ribbon development either side of the road comprises several thousand constructions made up of residences, and community, governmental, religious body and commercial premises[12]. Although the constructions are crammed together in many places, one can still see traces in Tarawa’s longer-established kawa of the orderly patterns, which resemble those mentioned in Section 3.1.1 in relation to kawa on Nikunau. In addition, the ribbon of constructions is punctuated occasionally by ponded, wooded, recreational and otherwise non-built areas, as well as said causeways. In contrast, the rest of the atoll, which is known as North Tarawa, still resembles Nikunau for being less densely populated (≈ 6,000), and mostly covered in coconut palms and other trees, bushes and shrubs, with several te kawa interspersed; although that population is growing through overspill from South Tarawa.

The circumstances of the Kain Nikunau diaspora on Tarawa identifying mostly with communities based around their utu, home island, etc. enumerated above is typical of people from all Outer Islands living on Tarawa: Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services (2012b) points to a striking feature of the Tarawa population is that only 20% identify themselves as being Kain Tarawa, even though 75% were born there. Even so, it is appropriate to characterise Kain Nikunau as in a state of integration, following Berry (1997, 2005). The workings of these communities retain various social and cultural practices reminiscent of Nikunau and the other similar Outer Islands. However, they have adapted their
social organisation to their new, more densely populated and “constructed” surroundings in significant ways. This includes that attending places of employment and school are a well-established part of the daily programme. Even so, these activities seem to have a lower priority than household, utu and religious obligations. Indeed, among those in formal employment for which there are set hours (e.g., 8 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays are the scheduled hours of most public service jobs), it is possible to gain the impression that many lead something akin to a double life. In one life, they and their fellow I-Kiribati are confined submissively during these set hours in structures, processes and procedures, which were either left behind by the Colony Government or recently donated through an aid project, and with which they still do not identify very well. The second life occurs for the rest of the time, when they are engaged in the household activities and other economic, social and political pursuits related below.

Households and Residences

*Kain Nikunau* who have migrated to and settled on Tarawa are exemplified by the 250 or so *ana utu Ekineti ni kaan* living there. They comprise a score or two of households residing in separate residences dispersed intermittently along South Tarawa. In contrast to being on Nikunau, they started out on Tarawa without any traditional lands. While one or two of their residences occupy land obtained incidental to marriage with *Kain Tarawa*, most are on land acquired in commercial ways (e.g., purchase, lease, rent or as part of employment emoluments). Mostly, the land area immediately adjacent to that occupied by their residence is occupied by a household to which they are unrelated, not only in terms of utu but by island of origin, which obviously would not be the case on Nikunau.

Invariably, the land area occupied by a residence is smaller than on Nikunau and is mostly taken up with dwelling areas, rather than having ample land for growing food and keeping pigs. In construction, the residences are something of a hotchpotch, reflecting *mwenga* similar to Nikunau and various foreign ideas of houses, including compact, low-cost, prefabricated units first introduced for I-Kiribati by the GEIC Government in the mid-20th Century. Even in the traditional-looking structures, imported building materials (i.e., timber, cement, bricks, corrugated metal, prefabricated items, fittings, etc.) are common. Reasons for this include shortages on Tarawa of local materials, and transport and other difficulties in obtaining these materials from even nearby other islands; and perceptions of imported materials being superior, which because of the climate is dubious.
Each household typically comprises between 6 and 16 persons, usually of three generations, and sometimes even four. As more utu have immigrated, or grown up and had children themselves, so the number of households has increased. However, this increase has not kept pace with the growth in persons, and so there has been a gradual increase in the numbers in each household, giving rise within households to increasingly crowded living conditions and strains on income and the amount of food available (cf. Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services, 2012b). These are among reasons for members of the oldest generation(s) moving from one household to another at infrequent intervals. However, other reasons are at least as important, including their grown-up children taking it in turns to look after them under te katei, the demeanour of one generation to another, the traditional role of grandparents in teaching grandchildren, the modern need for minding grandchildren while parents attend paid employments places, and the prospect of a household sharing in any pension the old people are receiving.

Home Economics

As had been the practice on Nikunau, except for the very young and very old or infirm, all household members perform vital chores in and around the house, including fetching water and feeding the pig(s), usually according to gender. But in contrast to Nikunau, the amount of subsistence work and the quantity of subsistence produce are constrained by lack of land within residences and not having any rights to aba on Tarawa; and because overexploitation has occurred of the openly accessible lagoon, reef and nearby areas of the ocean (Locke, 2009; Office of Te Beretitenti & T’Makei Services, 2012b; Roniti, 1988; Thomas, 2002). Thus, compared with their counterparts on Nikunau[13], households purchase a much higher proportion of their food and similar needs than they grow or gather/fish themselves, and for that they are more reliant on generating cash.

In each household, cash may come from various sources. Some households receive remittances from utu working/living overseas. Examples include Kain Nikunau graduates of the Marine Training Centre working as seafarers worldwide (see Borovnik, 2006); and Kain Nikunau living temporarily or permanently overseas, including in Great Britain and New Zealand (see Section 3.1.2.2). Former government employees receive retirement benefits from the Kiribati Provident Fund—the retirement age is 50; and for the past few years, the Republic Government has been paying a monthly non-contributory pension of AU$40 to all I-Kiribati over the age of 70 years[14]. However, the most common source of cash is for one or more members of a household, female as well as male, to be in formal employment,
performing casual work and/or being self-employed, including by plying a technical skill one has acquired somehow and running a micro business.

The main sources of employment are government bodies, including with ministries, institutions such as schools and hospitals, public utilities and government trading enterprises. Other possibilities are religious organisations, NGOs and a small but growing number of private businesses that are employing people outside the owners’ families. Regarding the latter, despite long-running trends to the contrary (see Roniti, 1985), kamama (≅ shame, a way of demeaning oneself) is still attached to certain behaviours by te Kain Nikunau (and te I-Kiribati), as follows: obtaining goods from other Kain Nikunau as part of proprietary trade; allowing oneself to be exploited by fellow Kain Nikunau for the latter’s private gain (including by being in their employ); and supplying goods to other Kain Nikunau for self-seeking reasons and ambition. Thus, there are still limits to the organisations that are regarded by Kain Nikunau as legitimate employers (c.f. Duncan, 2014). Jobs held among ana utu Ekineti ni kaan include ministry accountant, bank manager, teacher, librarian, ministry clerk, hotel receptionist and gardener. The self-employed include a baker, a storekeeper and a repairer of white goods.

The rates of pay for most work seem quite low, with the highest public sector salaries being under AU$20,000 per annum (International Monetary Fund, 2011). Most private sector employees seem to be paid less than public sector equivalents, including not receiving any pension contributions. Although it is estimated that fortnightly cash incomes of a substantial minority of households from all sources may now surpass AU$750, the majority are lower and significantly lower[15], but nevertheless substantially more than on Nikunau.

Most cash coming into a household is used to meet daily needs for food, drink and other personal and domestic items (e.g., bus fares, utilities and school fees; donations to various utu, island-of-origin and religious bodies – see Kuruppu, 2009), although it occasionally stretches to durables, and this might sometimes include a motor vehicle[16]. The personal and household goods, and foodstuffs are mostly cheap, basic imports. Invariably, such foodstuffs are in a preserved state (e.g., rice, flour, tea, sugar, oil/fat, powdered milk, cordial, soap, toothpaste, cereals, tobacco, tinned food including corned beef, frozen mature meat such as mutton flaps and boiling fowl, canned beverages); or are items produced locally from these (e.g., bread, doughnuts, ice blocks), although many households make these items for themselves, rather than purchasing them. Exceptions are fish and items from a few areas on Tarawa where there is some market gardening (i.e., vegetables, fruit and eggs); attempts to
source such items commercially from other islands seem frustrated by unreliability of shipping and inadequate trading networks to induce potential producers to switch from copra or otherwise extend production (c.f., Lewis, 1988).

Regarding Tarawa-based fishers and market gardeners, they distribute their surplus produce mainly by roadside hawking or having stalls in the small market areas available, rather than through permanent kiosks, stores or shops. Although prices seem low, households are constrained in purchasing these by several factors. Many households simply lack money to purchase local fish and garden produce regularly enough for it to be worthwhile for suppliers to maintain supplies. Demand may also be affected by perceptions of local produce being inferior to or less fashionable than imported goods (see Lewis, 1988); of there still being some kamama attached to purchasing produce from other I-Kiribati, as it is a sign of not being self-sufficient (see discussion in Section 3.4.2); and of being loyal to mronron (informal cooperative societies) run by community groups one is a member of and that only deal in imports and items produced locally from these (e.g., donuts, locally rolled cigarettes). In any case, supply is frequently affected by climatic conditions (e.g., rough seas, droughts), and in any case fish stocks are declining and agricultural lands contracting. Producers own needs seem to be increasing, so less is marketed. Lack of stores seemingly willing to sell local produce and lack of transport to get produce to market are also factors; the latter applies even within Tarawa, let alone between there and Outer Islands, although bananas do get supplied from Butaritari. Incidentally, regarding pricing, suppliers do not seem to charge particularly high prices for imported goods either, compared with their cost of purchase, including freight. Nor are prices of local or imported goods varied much according to whether supplies are abundant or short, or demand is high or low. This is especially noticeable if fresh imported produce (e.g., apples) is still priced at its original arrival level despite clear signs that it has deteriorated.

Trading

The researcher stayed for a few weeks in 2009 at a residential unit with a trade store out the front. Formally, this micro-enterprise is a te mronron formed by a Kain Tarawa utu, several of whose member households live on their customarily-held aba in the neighbourhood. The store deals in small quantities of basic provisions at all hours. The person organising and administering the store was earning a living through being entitled to a significant part of the trading surplus, so much so that he might be regarded as running a proprietary business and being self-employed, and so the store was something of a hybrid of te mronron form and a
proprietary business. Although this was recognised by the person in question, he also emphasised his household’s motive for operating the store as to provide goods and services to its main customers, that is members of his utu living nearby and other neighbours. He stressed that the income he derived was only incidental and moderate, which it probably was, given the hours of work involved; and that the household was dependant on a wage earned by another member in full-time employment and did not seem particularly affluent in any way.

There are several other mronron nearby in either direction along the road. Indeed, similar mronron seem to be the commonest form of business on Tarawa, there being literally hundreds, if not a thousand or two, of others; and they are frequently forming, dissolving and reforming. They are formed by utu, and various types of community groups based on church congregations, extant villages, home-island kawa, etc. As well as members being mostly loyal to their particular mronron, some work in them without receiving wages. As well as provisions’ kiosks and small stores, these businesses include the aforementioned hawkers of fish and garden produce, lunchtime take-away vendors and moneylenders.

The hybrid nature of the micro-business described above seemed to be increasingly common on Tarawa, in line with a trend observed by Macdonald (1982a) and Roniti (1985), that contrary to what might have occurred before on Tarawa, and still does on Nikunau (apart from in the NIC residential area), their organisers/administrators are earning a living. The proprietors of these hybrids do not seem to be attracting community censure, ridicule and kamama for supplying goods to other I-Kiribati in order to benefit personally and for any ambitions they might seem to have ambitions to be better than their neighbours.

Socialising

As well as choring, employment, schooling, storekeeping, grandparenting, etc., the time of many ana utu Ekineti ni kaan, along with other Kain Nikunau, is taken up with activities that reflect indigenous traditions among utu, albeit greatly tempered by Christianity, colonial rule, participation in formal education and latter-day I-Matang influences, as elaborated in Section 3.2 onwards. Resembling what Sabatier (1977) observed almost a century earlier, much time within and among households is devoted to maroro/winnanti (≅ informal chatting/gossiping), storytelling, playing games, etc. Remarkable, is that utu live on through the stories their members share repeatedly, about micro events about them, living and deceased and, parenthetically, to life changes and matters of interest around them.
Supporting each other in social and economic ways, including households making regular visits to each other, is expected under *te katei*. These visits are notwithstanding how households are somewhat dispersed along Tarawa. However, with television/video equipment, music players and computers becoming more affordable, DVDs and similar being in abundant supply, and the advent of a television service and Internet access on Tarawa, there appears to be a slow but incessant trend towards individualistic and small group pastimes associated with these technologies, ones that are somewhat passive and alien. In particular, these seem to occupy the many able, often young, people who cannot find much paid work, despite seeming very willing to do this work when it is available.

*Ana utu Ekineti ni kaan* are typical of *Kain Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* in holding regular gatherings that are more formal than household visits. The gatherings might involve tens of *utu*, if not a few hundred. Mostly, they are to celebrate or commemorate the various critical life passages, Christian festivals and other occasions that would be accorded similar treatments on Nikunau. In addition, there are gatherings around their identification with a specific *kawa* on Nikunau or with the island itself, and with other community and workplace groups. In *te kawa* on Nikunau, there would have been no employment and similar commitments for these gatherings to have clashed with. As that is now very different on Tarawa, with the exception of funerals, gatherings are often arranged to start late in the day on Friday and go through Saturday. Thus, they usually last for shorter periods than on Nikunau, and avoid days of employment and the Sabbath, which is reserved for attending church and related activities. This observance still has a high priority among *Kain Nikunau* on Tarawa but probably noticeably less than on Nikunau. They also participate in Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter, and these are substantially religious, unlike the marketing extravaganza of modern *I-Matang* culture.

On Tarawa also, gatherings are far more frequent than they would have been on Nikunau, where attendance would almost certainly have been mandatory. On Tarawa, social calendars of *Kain Nikunau* have become ever busier, and time generally is increasingly precious, and so mandatory attendance is no longer practical. There is a high probability that a person could be involved in at least one event of one sort or another each week. This is particularly so when spouses are from a different island or have different sorts of other affiliations. There are also limits to the number and types of events that households can afford to attend, as they invariably involve contributing food and labour to prepare food, and most involve making cash donations.
An annual event that has become of great significance on Tarawa is the four-day holiday in July coinciding with National Day and the anniversary of the Republic being instituted. This also gives rise to celebrations, including dance and other competitions among teams with various affiliations, including affiliations to particular ministries, institutions or enterprises. Extremely popular recent innovations at this event are beauty pageants for Miss Kiribati and Mr Kiribati. This seems to be a bizarre meld of a celebrity culture from parts of the Global North and a strand of traditional I-Kiribati culture (see Grimble, 1921) around the warrior and the dance performer.

Participating in Government

In addition to working for the Republic Government, and using amenities and services on Tarawa provided through its many organisational arms, Kain Nikunau on Tarawa, as well as on Nikunau can participate in the form, structures and processes that rulership or governance takes in the Republic. This dates from the early days of internal self-rule in the 1960s and then through formal creation of a sovereign state under the Constitution of Kiribati of 1979. The governance arrangements are firmly centred on Tarawa as the seat of government, and thence stretch to all the other islands, including Nikunau, as discussed in Sections 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7. They entail representation and elections of representatives.

On the matter of representation, for ana utu Ekineti in particular, the person(s) elected to represent them might include te Kain Nikunau, but unlike before the colonial period on Nikunau in the mwaneaba, they and other utu are not guaranteed direct political representation on the supreme body that governs them. On Tarawa, the people elected as representatives may rely to some extent of home-island support but Tarawa’s constituencies comprise multi-island populations, and so other factors and associations are more important, including the recently emerged phenomenon of being recognised as a national political leader, rather than only mwaneaba district and island leaders (Macdonald, 1982a).

Two Kain Nikunau to attain this status early on were Tiwau Awira and Benjamina Tiinga, who both rose to be Ministers of Finance. These two persons exemplify a pattern that utu, home island and religious groups extended from the social and economic into the political through providing votes and a platform for I-Kiribati seeking political office[17]. It is unclear to what extent that is still true, and to what extent other associations have become more important (e.g., it is commonplace for people who rise to be prominent administrative officials in Republic Government organisations to then attain political office). Nevertheless,
elections and much else in the decades following the inauguration of the Republic have encouraged *Kain Nikunau* to behave less like bewildered subalterns in a colonial state with which they did not identify, and more like citizens in a nation-state of their own. Before delving into that, however, I shall elaborate on the said colonial state and other matters of history in the next few sections.

On the matter of taxation and public finance, *Kain Nikunau* are supposed pay taxes to the Republic Government as individuals on their personal incomes; there are no communal taxes in cash or kind. In practice, it is mostly their formal incomes, if any, that are taxed; the tax system is not very effective in collecting taxes on informal incomes[18]. As on Nikunau, *Kain Nikunau* on Tarawa are supposed to pay local land and other taxes, licence fees, etc. to the island councils and collection of these this is more effective than on Nikunau. *Kain Nikunau* must also pay fees for children who are attending school.

The Republic Government finances most of its operating expenditures from income taxes on individual workers and business owners, and the few companies that operate; and from import duties. It also obtains substantial revenue from licence fees paid by foreign fishing fleets to fish the Extended Economic Zone (EEZ) for tuna (Pretes & Petersen, 2004)[19]; and from investments acquired using the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund (RERF), a fund built up out of sale of World War II scrap (GEIC, 1957), royalty revenues from phosphate mining on Banaba Island (Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985), recurrent budget surpluses arising from fishing licence revenues and reinvestment of investment income (Pretes & Gibson, 2008). Most operating expenditures are on *I-Kiribati* labour, in education, health, law and order, and similar public services, and imported consumables. Most capital finance is advanced by aid organisations, and comes mostly in kind (e.g., non-*I-Kiribati* consultants and expert labour, imported construction materials, plant, furniture and equipment). This capital is on a project by project basis, and most projects are located on Tarawa.

Regarding accounting, as it spends the most cash, and has some involvement in reporting the value of aid projects, the Republic Government is by far the biggest accounting player, and employer of accountants, auditors, clerks, and similar. However, there are persons with accountant knowledge and skills working for private businesses; and most organisations, including the smallest *mronron*, has some form of accounting, even if it is only to write transactions in an exercise book, or separate money into different receptacles as a form of analysing the takings. Again, I leave detail until later sections.
3.1.2.2 Other Cash Economies

It is beyond my capacity to deal with all possibilities here; and even going into too much detail in places I am familiar with (i.e., New Zealand and Great Britain) is probably unwarranted. Suffice it to say that conditions of Kain Nikunau and other I-Kiribati living in places I am familiar with vary according not only to the places but when they arrived and the circumstances in which they arrived, and events since. If one were to characterise their circumstances according to Berry (1997, 2005), then integration and separation are evident. A further point, made earlier but worth repeating is that the number of I-Kiribati living in these places at any one time who may identify as Kain Nikunau in particular is not great, and so in practical social terms the diaspora they are part of is more accurately described as an I-Kiribati diaspora rather than a Kain Nikunau diaspora.

Regarding Great Britain, only a handful of I-Kiribati living there would identify as Kain Nikunau in particular. Most of the older members of the community met their partners (usually husbands but in at least one case, wife) while the latter were residing temporarily on Tarawa as colonial administrators, other colonial professional or technical staff, or aid workers; and went to Britain with them. Their children and grandchildren make up the greater proportion of the present community, and many have visited Kiribati as (usually young) adults. The community in Britain meets frequently for dancing practices and other events, including an annual National Day weekend, which also attracts people who have resided/worked in Kiribati but have no blood or family ties there (see Kiribati and Tuvalu Association, 2015). By and large, the children and grandchildren are conscious of their links to Kiribati, and know something of its culture and language, but otherwise, their lives are generally “normal” for the many parts of Britain they have settled in and British socio-economic class they have most to do with.

Of the I-Kiribati living in New Zealand at any one time perhaps 100 or so may identify as Kain Nikunau, although they will have been resident on Tarawa before coming to New Zealand and may never have set foot on Nikunau. Again, there are insufficient for them to identify separately from the I-Kiribati diaspora, although home island is a keener topic than it is in Britain. Although they are now more noticeable than about a decade ago, the Government of New Zealand still classifies I-Kiribati only as Pasifika/Pacifica (Other). The majority live around Auckland (e.g. Warkworth, Otahuhu, Pukekohe – see Gillard & Dyson (n.d.) and Taberannang (2011)), but there are now significant enough numbers to form community associations elsewhere in the North Island, around Hamilton and Wellington; and
on the South Island, particularly around Christchurch and Invercargill (see Fedor, 2012). Their work is in jobs for which local labour is scarce, so bolstering the New Zealand workforce (Williams, 2008). It is a mix of rural, including horticulture, market gardening, vineyards, orchards, dairying and cheese-making; and urban, including residential care for the elderly, coastal shipping, construction labouring and commercial cleaning. A significant proportion is of school age and looks likely to obtain gain qualifications opening up “better” jobs than their parents have been able to obtain.

The way the majority of I-Kiribati in New Zealand live is more monetised and modern than Tarawa, but not greatly so, and not typical of the majority of the population. I-Kiribati are on the periphery of New Zealand’s supposed bi-cultural (a Māori and non- Māori dichotomy) and I-Matang dominated Society, taking jobs others do not want and living below the official local poverty line, probably, although the parents probably consider themselves far better off than if they were on Tarawa than worse off than most other New Zealanders. The children may be more conscious that they are often poorer than other children they go to school with but seem unfazed. Most things are different from Tarawa, and so have to be learnt/struggled with and much coping goes on within mostly nuclear families and communities of a few families. Examples are (cooler) climate, topography, language, housing, foodstuffs and beverages (greater variety, reversal as to prices (e.g., expensive tuna, cheap cool-climate fruit and vegetables)), illnesses and diseases, economic behaviours, importance of time, use of money, shopping, consumerism, living with modern equipment and amenities, work routines, transport, social expectations, Anglocentricity, broad racial-ethnic spectrum, racism, liberalism/individualism, ascendency of the written (rather than the oral), bureaucracy used in government (including immigration application forms and income tax declarations), and governmental systems of hospitals and for healthcare, of schools and for education, and for labour regulation and welfare. Groups within communities come together frequently, at least weekly in some cases, including for te Tabati; and bigger gatherings occur on bigger occasions, including National Day and New Year/summer camp. There is some extension into the broader community but this is more on the fringe; however, see Eventfinda (2014).

3.2 On Nikunau before 1820s
Most of the ancestors of today’s Kain Nikunau lived on Nikunau up to 1820, albeit affected by intercourse with other islands in the Kiribati Archipelago and perhaps further afield, facilitated by noteworthy navigation and canoe technology (see Bedford et al., 1980; Lewis,
Any Kain Nikunau diaspora then arose mainly from marriage or similar inter-island ties.

As to how these ancestors came to be on Nikunau, long-established, pre-Christian creation myths notwithstanding, they and the other inhabitants of the Kiribati Archipelago in the early 14th century seem to have been descended from people who originated from various places around the Pacific Rim, and southeast Asia/Indonesia. They arrived intermittently and sometimes accidentally over the previous perhaps few thousand years (see Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010; Alaima Talu et al., 1979; Sabatier, 1977); although the present occupation may only date back thousand years, because of sea level issues (see Dickinson, 2003). Archaeological artefacts confirm that Nikunau has been inhabited continuously for at least several centuries (see Di Piazza, 1999). A significant influx is thought to have occurred during the 14th or 15th century with the settlement on Nikunau and Beru of a group of people displaced from Samoa (Maude, 1963). Nei Matang (from Samoa) and Iemarewe (from Beru), who married into ana utu Ekineti about that time (Uering, 1979), are probably of these settlers.

Despite the ability to travel long distances by canoe, the inhabitants of the Kiribati Archipelago were relatively isolated and ethnogenesis occurred, within islands like Nikunau, and among islands, especially those near each other. The account below covers social and material arrangements pertaining to Kain Nikunau at the turn of the 19th Century arising from this ethnogenesis. These arrangements seem to have come about through various political, economic, social, religious, cultural and military developments between the 15th and 19th centuries. The account is based on various ethnographical sources, including from oral records of life practices among I-Kiribati remembered by the older generation of the early 20th century (Alaima Talu et al., 1979; Geddes, 1977; Goodenough, 1955; Grimble, 1921, 1933, 1989; King and Sigrah, 2004, personal correspondence; Lambert, 1966; Latouche, 1983; Lewis, 1988; Lundsgaarde and Silverman, 1972; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Maude 1963, 1991 Maude and Maude, 1994; Sabatier, 1977; Teweiariki, n.d.). In addition, the learned descriptions by Geddes et al. (1982) and Koch (1986) of the material culture of I-Kiribati on Outer Islands, although compiled well after encounters with I-Matang and other non-I-Kiribati had been reflected in this culture, still give inklings about what life was likely probably like in previous centuries.

Kain Nikunau resided on mwenga as co-residential nuclear families of three, or even four, generations. Te mwenga resembled those of today (see Section 3.1.1) but, in contrast to the
tighter and ordered formation that characterises today’s kawa, these mwenga were scattered loosely in kainga (≅ settlements/dispersed villages). The residents of each te kainga comprised persons with biological-social connections not only of the utu form but also of a form known as boti (≅ clan, but see further information about this term below). The founding of particular boti originated in various districts within and beyond Nikunau (e.g., on Beru) (for an explanation, see Maude, 1963), and so boti membership was “transferable” from district to district and island to island (see further information below and about authenticating membership in Section 3.2.1).

In addition to aba that mwenga occupied, te kainga comprised aba over which its residents had various rights. On them, they grew various plants (e.g., coconut palms, pandanus, breadfruit, pawpaw, babai (≅ swamp taro)) for food, materials, etc. In addition, they ventured out daily to hunt and gather on marine areas within and just beyond the reef adjacent to their kainga (see Lewis, 1988, re traditional food). Occasionally, they traversed the ocean to other islands by canoes, using the stars to navigate. They utilised their environment in its totality and their culture evolved in harmony with it. Of necessity, a delicate balance between human and nature was retained.

Aba were, and still are, individually “owned” by males and females. Not only did they represent a scarce resource, and so economic capital, but also they were an important element of Kain Nikunau society, giving rise to social and political capital. Aba were life: Kain Nikunau were born on their aba, they conversed with friends, worshipped and were buried on them; and they were prepared to defend them. They symbolised status and were of social and spiritual significance. Ownership implied enjoying the right to use te aba in life; and, at death, to pass it on as te aba n utu to a member of utu ni kaan. Exceptions are also illuminating: they stemmed from wars, leading to te aba n toka belonging to the vanquished being shared out (and captured former owners being enslaved). Te aba n tibu were given for tibutibu (≅ adoption). Te aba te bora were given as part of tinaba relationships (≅ sexual relationships associated with marriage but not between the marriage partners). Te aba n nebonebo formed compensation for serious wrongdoings, breach of promise of marriage and similar. Te aba ni kakua were given as a mark of gratitude for assistance. Te aba ni mumuta were given as a reward for nursing. And te aba n tangira were gifts for other reasons. Similar customary rights over marine areas within and just beyond the reef were vested in te Kain Nikunau and inherited or gifted similarly (Crocombe, 1987; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a;
Maude, 1963; Maude and Maude, 1931; Pole, 1995; Roniti, 1988; Sabatier, 1977; Thomas, 2001; Trussel & Groves, 1978)[20].

The entire island was separated into *kainga* (see Latouche, 1983, p. 23 for their names and locations). Neighbouring *kainga* were allied socially, economically, religiously and politically. They constituted six districts, each of which had *te mwaneaba* as its focal point, hence the notion of *mwaneaba* districts. For example, the male line of descent in *ana utu Ekineti* (see Figure 2) resided in *te kainga* of Kaokoroa in the district of Te Atu ni Uea (or Teranaanimatang, or land of Taburitongoun) Mwaneaba at the island’s south west end.

According to Latouche, that district included 12 other *kainga*[21]. The religious significance of this and other *mwaneaba* was symbolised by the relics of *te mwaneaba*’s founder being housed there and displayed on ceremonial occasions.

While *mwaneaba* districts were largely autonomous politically, the legislative cum executive cum judicial cum religious arrangements in place were similar from district to district within and among islands[22]. Governance of each district took the form of a gerontocracy. *Boti* representation was a significant feature of this governance. Rule was exercised by a council of *atun te boti* (literally, the heads of *boti*, in practice being the oldest non-senile male(s) from each *te kainga*). For example, *te kainga* of Kaokoroa had three representatives. The council was custodian of the beliefs, rules, rituals and other practices to which Kain Nikunau were subject and which comprised *te katei*. It also oversaw customary rights that applied to gathering, propagating, cultivating, fishing and other usage of *aba* and of marine areas within and just beyond the reef. Precise protocols were followed in the conduct of council proceedings in the district *mwaneaba*. *Atun te boti* participated from specified sitting places, also known as *boti* (e.g., Tabomatang’s *Te Atu ni Uea mwaneaba* had 18 *boti* – for a floor plan, see Latouche, 1983, p. 74)[23]. The proceedings were open to all and usually attracted great interest. Members of each *boti*, male and then female, congregated behind *te atun*. Decision-making was consensual but each *atun te boti* had particular roles in the proceedings—for example, *te atun* of a particular *boti* always acted as *te tia-motiki-tueka* (≅ the speaker of decisions) and announced decisions at which the entire council had arrived. In addition, members of particular *boti* specialised in carrying out particular executive and judicial roles, duties and responsibilities generally. Visitors from another district or island were also received in *mwaneaba*, either according to their *boti*, if it had a presence in the district[24], or as strangers (the latter were literally accommodated in *te mwaneaba* during their stay) (Lundsgaarde, 1968; Maude, 1963; Thomas, 2001).

35
Although their initial establishment seems to have derived from the people mentioned above who arrived from Samoa during the 14th or 15th century (Maude, 1963), the institutions of mwaneaba and boti, and the mwaneaba system associated with them, were maintained and developed through the cultural affinity of neighbouring districts and islands, and the close social ties of participants. In the 17th century, adventurers and aspiring settlers among Kain Nikunau, led by Uakeia among others, spread these institutions northwards[25], with varying outcomes, their permanent adoption being mostly limited to the seven islands of the southern Kiribati Islands[26]. The system seems to have promoted political stability within each of these islands and from island to island, wars being exceptions that proved the rule (see Sabatier, 1977, on Gilbertese wars).

The activities of Kain Nikunau required much knowledge and many skills (e.g. architect, canoe builder, composer, choreographer, warrior), including attendant magic, spells and rituals, all passed from generation to generation but, for reasons of place in the community and honour, many jealously guarded within utu[27]. Other religious features were that kainga had bangota (≅ stone shrines) dedicated to bakatibu and other anti (≅ spirits, possibly of the first human bakatibu of the boti), which was adorned regularly and an offering of food left. Each boti had its totem, usually a real creature, whom boti members held in high regard and, for example, were forbidden to hunt or eat (Grimble, 1989; Lewis, 1988; Maude, 1963

Knowledge and skills associated with these practices and exercising these rights were sustained by unimane (≅ wise and respected old men) and unaine (≅ wise and respected old women) instructing the young in what was required to live on Nikunau. The instructing was divided along gender lines, and while some knowledge and skills were open to all, some of them were conveyed in secret, from old person to young person (Grimble, 1921; Teweiariki, n.d.). Further to these circumstances, from whom te Kain Nikunau learnt and took directions, and to whom te Kain Nikunau accounted or was answerable, were dispersed according to descent, as reflected in his or her boti and utu (Geddes, 1977). Similarly, aba and other “assets”, namely rights to do with marine areas, were widely distributed within and among boti. These wide distributions reflected, determined and reinforced the way power was shared among boti, and within boti among utu, under te katei.

The earliest recorded I-Matang glimpse of the above arose from the around the world voyage of the Dolphin (accompanied by the Tamar) under the command of Commodore John Byron (Maude, 1968). Officer on Board the Said Ship (1767, pp.135-138) relates the “discovery” of “Byron’s Island” (i.e. Nikunau) in July 1765. The officer tells of the ships’ boats being bound
for the south-west shore, and therefore the mwaneaba district of Tabomatang, whence a multitude of “outrigger” boats came out to greet them. These were sailed by upwards of a hundred “Indians”, all male and naked, except for one seemingly well-regarded female “distinguished by wearing something about her waist” (this would be a riri, or micro mini-skirt of coconut leaves). He describes Kain Nikunau as being of an “olive colour” with “fine long black hair”, and “remarkably white” teeth. Observations of their behaviour during the 24 hours or so that the Dolphin and Tamar were anchored led Officer on Board the Said Ship to induce that Kain Nikunau had little idea of private property and that “it is probable that they enjoy all things in a manner in common amongst themselves” (p. 137).

Using Uering (1979) and other family knowledge of genealogy, including accounts transcribed by Latouche (1983), some members of ana utu Ekineti were traced back over several centuries. Thus, it is probable that Ribu, his wife Tekaro and their teenage son, Taraiwene, were among the members who were present at the above encounter. Unfortunately, no corresponding Kain Nikunau description of the encounter exists. There may be a clue though in what Kain Nikunau thought of their visitors from the way aboriginal Europeans are now referred to as I-Matang. Having white skins, they were thought in the early days to come from the land of Matang, the land of white people, whence originated the first te bakatibu, Te I-Matang, and to where the souls of the dead are believed to return (Grimble, 1952, 1989; Sabatier, 1977).

Regarding whether this was the first encounter between Kain Nikunau and I-Matang, the description by Officer on Board the Said Ship (1767) clearly indicates that Kain Nikunau were excited, but seemingly not that much more than they used to be by the arrivals of the weekly international aeroplane in the 1980s, which makes me wonder. However, no further interactions, if any, between Kain Nikunau and I-Matang before and after Byron are recorded until the 1820s, since when they have been continuous.

Not much is known about the size of the population on Nikunau during the period just outlined. The earliest reliable population estimates for Nikunau and the other Kiribati Islands are devised by Bedford et al. (1980) and put the population of the island at between 1,800 and 2,000 in 1860 (see Figure 1). By then, it had seen much coming and going because of whaling and labour trading, as covered in the next section, and so the pre-1820 population may have been a little higher, and so higher than today’s population, which includes non-Kain Nikunau who reside there temporarily because of their employment with the Republic Government and NIC. But, in contrast to today, the Kain Nikunau diaspora then could

37
probably be measured in barely hundreds, mainly arising from marriage or similar inter-
-island ties effected by canoe travel.

Another contrast with today is that the population was dispersed among between 40 and 50
kainga, comprising perhaps 400 mwenga, rather than in the six kawa of today. Also absent
today are boti and all but one of the original mwaneaba, and the independent polities and, to a
significant extent, the gerontocratic form of governance, although community control of the
individual is still strong.

3.2.1 Kain Nikunau Accountings before 1820

Forms of indigenous accounting were practiced as part of life’s processes among Kain
Nikunau as described above. They related to many aspects explained in Section 3.2:
genealogy, rights in aba and in marine areas within and just beyond the reef, and technical
knowledge and skills, including attendant magic, spells and rituals (Grimble, 1989). The
accounting records were oral, and kept by individuals to whom they pertained and, where
applicable, by unimane. As artefacts for this study, they cannot be authenticated by
inspection, and so the best method available are extrapolations from recitals reproduced in
writing, for example, by Latouche (1983) and Eren O’Connor-Palmer (Uering, 1979)[28].
That they are accounting is supported by the striking similarities between them and, first,
those in Winiata’s typology of NZ Maori resources (see Gallhofer, Gibson, Haslam,
McNicholas and Takiari, 2000); and, second, those in Gibson (2000) and Greer and Patel

Regarding how this accounting developed, its purposes and the usages to which it was put,
the more prominent were to do with membership of te boti and te utu. A person could
authenticate this membership by reciting their ancestry through several generations. This was
part of the rights of passage to adulthood and into memberships just referred to (as reported
by Grimble, 1952). It was particularly significant in going to distant mwaneaba: unknown
visitors could prove their entitlement to participate in their te boti during, for example, formal
social, spiritual and political proceedings of mwaneaba, as well as receive hospitality. They
would recite their ancestry and have it compared with the local oral records of their boti and
utu kept by unimane at the place visited.

The rump of these practices exist today still, in my experience, but in relation to te utu, as the
institution of boti seems to have perished (see Section 3.3.4). Given the spread of the Kain
Nikunau diaspora, it is significant in introductions among not only Kain Nikunau but also I-
Kiribati generally. One of the first things someone does when meeting a fellow I-Kiribati they do not know personally, is to check for utu and similar to see how closely related they might be, as well as whether they have friends or acquaintances in common. In particular, one of the first things I-Kiribati who might be sexually attracted do is to compare their ancestry, so as to avoid committing karikira, the limits of which are shown in Figure 2. In former centuries, the same comparison was required, although then marriage was mostly arranged by parents—Nikunau is also reputed to have entertained the quaint custom of marriage by rape (see Grimble, 1989), perhaps actual in the distant past but mostly symbolic for some time, the latter being equivalent to elopement.

As for accounting of a kind that I-Matang would likely recognise, the most obvious objects to record were assets. These consisted of rights pertaining to aba and marine areas. Oral records or understandings were needed of what belonged to whom, alongside knowledge of individual utu, in whom these assets were vested. Thus, unimane were reputed not only to know the name of every aba held by members of their utu but also could recall descriptions of them, their boundaries and their history of ownership. Notwithstanding, if today is a good guide, land disputes would be at the centre of island politics. These could be resolved by courts in the form of unimane sitting in mwaneaba, but sometimes fights were arranged between individuals or wars occurred between mwaneaba districts (Lundsgaarde, 1968). The Colony Government stamped out combat and instituted land courts (see below) (Crocombe, 1987; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1963; Pole, 1995; Sabatier, 1977)

Beyond the above, other aspects of the concept of assets seem to have been absent.

Regarding oral records, they were relied on, valuable in a socio-cultural sense and a source of knowledge-power, although whether the absence of written records was because of lack of need or lack of technology is unclear, save that once writing technology was introduced, by I-Matang, it began to be used. For example, Sabatier (1977) refers to people before the 1930s recording their genealogy in exercise books, along with knowledge, skills, songs and magic spells, and keeping these records secure (c.f., Uering, 1979). Another practice I saw in the 1980s among ana utu Ekineti ni kaan was of Tiare, Ekineti’s grandfather, recording his descendants’ births, marriages and deaths in a pro forma at the back of the family bible.

Regarding other accounting ideas, while social and political obligations were important, economic liabilities were incidental to the process of these, rather than something tangible and worth recording. Bubuti is a common long-standing example of this and is of continuing
significance in the distribution of goods (c.f. Duncan, 2014). Basically, it entails a right of a person to solicit goods or services from another and an obligation on the possessor of the goods or provider of the services to agree, without a direct corresponding exchange, although there is an implication of reciprocity in the future[29]. Concepts of trade, commercial manufacture, revenues, costs, and economic profit and loss, or surplus and deficit, were alien. The closest to a notion of a tax on income or wealth in the mwaneaba system probably arose in the frequent ceremonials that were held. There would be a council meeting to arrive at an agreement about kainga contributing items to the botaki (± festive or other social event, invariably involving a feast)[30]. I witnessed these kinds of discussion in the 1980s on Nikunau, except all unimane participated, the position of atun te boti having lapsed two or three generations ago, along with the institution of boti. Kazama (2001) reports similarly in his analysis of the role of the mwaneaba on Tabitueua South.

### 3.3 On Nikunau and Elsewhere 1820s to 1890s/1910s

Byron’s company apart, interactions, face-to-face or at a distance (including through I-Matang accounting systems), between Kain Nikunau and I-Matang, if any, are not recorded until the 1820s. Since, they have been continuous, and in I-Matang English language histories come under the headings of exploring, trading, evangelizing, governing, warring and aiding, by I-Matang and other outsiders (Macdonald, 1982a; Routledge, 1985). This subsection covers most of the first century of that continuum, during which arose what external observers might regard as informal colonialism (see Davie, 2000; Dixon and Gaffikin, 2014; Horvath, 1972). It is appropriate to start with a contextual outline of goings on on Nikunau’s periphery that were to affect the island and its inhabitants. The rest of the section deals with events and consequences for Nikunau and Kain Nikunau to do with commodity seekers and private traders; new reasons that arose through such as them for Kain Nikunau leaving the island, primarily as labourers in marine, agricultural and mining activities; and Christian missionaries.

#### 3.3.1 Events on Nikunau’s Periphery

For much of the 18th Century, Britain’s East India Company exerted much authority on commercial rights in the Indies and Pacific. It was disinterested in exploiting the Pacific, probably seeing the Pacific as remote, and unaware of its potential, commercial and otherwise; and it deterred others from doing so, controlling shipping there, assisted by Britain’s Royal Navy. However, things started to change when, in 1788, the British Government established two penal colonies, at Sydney Cove and Rosehill, in the vicinity of
Port Jackson (Sydney, New South Wales) on New Holland (Australia). Convict ships sailed from Britain and returned via Canton (China) and elsewhere on the Cathay Pacific coast to pick up cargo bound for Europe. Of relevance are that one such ship commanded by a Captain Gilbert, in seeking out what became the Outer Passage route from the south to the north of the western Pacific Ocean, put on the Royal Navy’s maps islands that still bear his name, albeit spelt as Kiribati; and in time this route gave rise to a passing trade (e.g., ship repairs, servicing and provisioning, crew entertainments) for some islands. In addition, the inhabitants of these penal colonies needed supplies, and British and other traders responded to their demands with produce from various islands in the south and then central Pacific. In a separate development, from 1789, whalers, whose home ports were mostly either side of the north Atlantic, shrugged off interference from the East India Company about operating in the Pacific. Their activities had extended to the On-the-Line[31] grounds by the 1820s, and were sustained for several decades, until the stock of whales was depleted and the demand for whale products declined in the face of alternatives for, among other things, street lighting, heating, cooking, lubricating, and soap, glue, corset and umbrella making (Best, 1983; Lever, 1964; Maude and Leeson, 1965; Mitchell, 1983; Morrell, 1960; Ward, 1946).

As one thing led to another, so port towns, whaling stations and similar centres arose on various coasts of Australia and Oceania, supplementing similar centres on the west coasts of North, Central and South America, and those that were flourishing in the Indies and on the Cathay Pacific coast. These centres and territories associated with them came to supply commodities to industrialising countries on the Atlantic Rim. Plantations, farms and mines, and shipping from Queensland to Guatemala and on most other Pacific Island groups all expanded, and so needs grew for I-Matang ship’s officers, entrepreneurs, managers, tradesmen, etc., bringing increasingly more I-Matang men (gender roles were extremely strong then) to the region, without and with families. It also grew for manual labour from the Pacific (and Asia) region, for which demand continuously outstripped supply, with various consequences (e.g., blackbirding, indentured labour systems).

On the heels of the whalers, traders, planters, farmers and miners, and the commercial structures and processes they brought with them, came social and political structures and processes, and specialists who went with them. Notable were heralds of various branches of the Christian religion (which generally divided between Protestant and RC), who extended their activities beyond their European expatriate congregations to carry out missionary work not only among labourers associated with the plantations, farms and mines but also
established missions among communities on even the remotest islands. Protestant-RC rivalry was fierce and one reason for the French authorities renewing their longstanding rivalry closer to home with their British counterparts. Both stationed warships to patrol the ocean and the various island groups.

Other so-called Great Powers emerged as the 19th Century wore on, and they too began taking greater interest in the region, sometimes reluctantly. Among subsequent events were the British Government enacting the Pacific Islanders Protection Acts 1872 and 1875 to establish the Western Pacific High Commission in Suva in 1877, and making the Kiribati Islands among others subject to its intervention; and the British and German Governments signing secretly the *Declaration between the Governments* (1886). In among these or consequent to them, the various Great Powers extended their jurisdiction to each of the Pacific Island territories and/or annexed them as formal colonies, which again was done with reluctance, not least because of the potential cost and difficulty in exercising control over the distances involved, including control of expenditures (Ward, 1948). One of the last was the British “protection” of the Kiribati Islands in 1892, apparently at the insistence of Germany, which was anxious for Britain to adhere to a stipulation in their secret declaration of 1886 in order to secure the supply of labour from the islands to German plantations in Samoa. The governance practice of the second resident commissioner Telfer Campbell (1896-1908), especially the central and northern Kiribati Islands, soon resembled that of a colony, although this status was not de jure until 1916 (Munro and Firth, 1986, 1987, 1990).

The closest to a port town in the Kiribati Islands was Butaritari, which is several hundred kilometres north of Nikunau. Having an easily negotiated lagoon entrance, good anchorage, friendly people and stable *uea* (= monarchical leader or chief)-based system of government (see Lambert, 1966), it was conducive to the passing trade arising initially from the Outer Passage route, and then other trans-Pacific routes; and things gained momentum from that trade. Maude and Leeson (1965) cover events there and in the vicinity in the mid-19th Century in analysing the coconut oil trade and the activities of Richard Randell and his Sydney-based partners, and other businesses with bases there. They also mention the precursor activities of the whaler then coconut oil trader Ichabod Handy, who was associated with Abaiaiang; and the subsequent trade as it affected Abemama, Kuria and Aranuka, under *uea* Baiteke and then Binoka (see also Macdonald, 1982a), and elsewhere, by which time coconut processing technology developed by Godeffroy and Son of Samoa and Hamburg had been put to full effect (see Bollard, 1981). Instead of copra cutters pressing coconut meat to
extract the sought after oil, they were only required to dry it, the resulting copra being shipped to distant destinations and pressed industrially. Maude and Leeson also delve into beachcombers and traders representing the oil and copra companies, and Maude (1964), goes further into the activities of beachcombers and castaways.

Accounting was a necessary but not sufficient condition for this expansion not only of commerce but of religious organisations. Accounting facilitated the monitoring, control and evaluation of businesses by principal companies and creditors located in, for example, London, San Francisco, Sydney, Canton, Apia, Jaluit and, eventually, Butaritari, once there was a network of traders and agents in the Kiribati Islands. This functioning of accounting increased the willingness of principals and creditors to capitalise stations and supply consignments of cargo. Initially, traders in the Kiribati Islands were itinerants but from the 1880s, they became resident, and comprised both I-Matang and Chinese (see Couper, 1967; Davis, 1892; Maude, 1977b; Sabatier, 1977; Willmott, 2007). Accounting facilitated the administration of consignments and then stores/stations. Accounting had consequences because it facilitated trading, and circumstances and occurrences associated with trading and traders. Regarding the churches, both the London Missionary Society (LMS) (Goodall, 1954) and RC missions used accounting for financial administration, as exemplified in several incidental references by Sabatier (1977) to the administrative, budgeting and fund-raising activities of his RC colleagues.

Both Butaritari and the accounting going on there figured in how and when the Kiribati Islands were annexed by the British. The first resident commissioner, Charles Swayne (1893-95), who to all intents and purposes constituted the Colony Government, spent most time there and in visiting the northern islands in particular. The local but secondary reason for the British authorities to extend their jurisdiction to the Kiribati Islands (see above for primary reason) seems to have been disputes arising between traders and I-Kiribati in these northern islands from the clip system[32] (Macdonald, 1982a). Swayne diffused the situation by arranging for repayment of the debts and restoring the use of lands to owners. In doing so, he established a native government on each island and made each one responsible for discharging any debts to traders on its island through communal collection of copra.

A further event of profound significance to the Colony occurred in the late 1890s, when Albert Ellis is reputed to have realised that a rock in his company’s Sydney office was likely to be rich in phosphate and that it came from Nauru (Pleasant) Island. The company comprised English and English-Australian interests, namely the Pacific Islands Company,
and his discovery led to it engaging in phosphate mining on Nauru and nearby Banaba, which was found to be similarly endowed with phosphate in 1899. To carry this out, the company needed labour, and the Colony became a main source of that labour for over 70 years. During this time the official name of the mining operators changed to the Pacific Phosphate Company and then, under the Nauru Island Agreement 1919, the British Phosphate Commission (BPC). However, some of the participants were present whatever the name, notably the aforementioned Albert Ellis; and the Colony Government was closely involved in recruiting, transporting and eventually repatriating said labour in the Colony (King and Sigrah, 2004; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985). Matters in the BPC period (1919-1980) are elaborated in Section 3.4.1.

3.3.2 The Coming of Commerce

Nikunau was adjacent to the On-the-Line grounds and on the sailing route south from Honolulu. Both these circumstances, and that ships could stand off and on close to settlements, brought visitors whom Kain Nikunau interacted with socially and commercially. The visitors created a demand for coconuts and other fresh provisions (including, eventually, meat bred from the livestock mentioned below), kaokioki (≅ coconut rum) (this is produced by distilling fermented toddy), the services of nikiranroro (i.e. captives, slaves and single women known to have had sexual relations[33]), and mats and other handicrafts. In exchange for these, Kain Nikunau obtained a gradually extending list of imported kaako (≡ cargo), starting with iron, various tools and weapons made of same, trinkets, poultry and pigs, plugs of tobacco and tobacco pipes.

This trade between Kain Nikunau and foreigners continued to extend in volume and range, including that Kain Nikunau produced coconut oil (1840s-1870s) and then copra for supply to itinerant traders (1840s-1880s) and then resident traders. In return, their acquisitions of foodstuffs, hardware, cloth, implements and other materials, moved closer to what they are today (see Section 3.1.1) (Druett, 1987; Lawrence, 1992; Lévesque, 1989; Lewis, 1988; Maude, 1964; Maude and Leeson, 1965). However, unlike today (see Section 3.1.2), neither Kain Nikunau or anyone else were recompensed by the whaling companies for the right to operate on the whaling grounds[34].

Events and circumstances associated with the above visits and trading interactions included that I-Matang ships’ captains, etc. became less fearful for their persons and property (c.f. Officer on Board the Said Ship, 1767), and so the site of trade moved from ship to shore. The
stays of some visitors were extended, so that their status became beachcomber (including castaway): by 1840, their number was about 12, as part of 50 on the Kiribati Islands and Banaba as a whole (Maude, 1964). Beachcombers, who provided they generally conformed with local customs, particularly when sharing goods was concerned, helped Kain Nikunau become used to I-Matang and other non-Pacific Island races (e.g. Chinese (see Willmott, 2007), Africans). Kain Nikunau ceased to either revere them as gods[35] and regard them as an exotic curiosity from a race superior in material goods and technology (see below)[36]; or, conversely, to strip them of their possessions as flotsam, etc., or take revenge on any for past misdeeds of others[37]. Beachcombers also came to exert some influence among Kain Nikunau in their local mwaneaba districts (Maude, 1964).

These various interactions paved the way for said captains who required crew to draw some of these from Kain Nikunau, who then might only go as far as the On-The-Line grounds but sometimes went further both in the Pacific and the other oceans (see Section 3.3.3). Similarly, they required pilots, interpreters and commercial go-betweens, and drew one or two of these from Kain Nikunau who had acquired English while working on ships and travelling around the Pacific. It also paved the way for oil company agents, permanent resident traders, missionaries, representatives of Her and His Majesties’ Governments, phosphateers, etc. to be accepted by Kain Nikunau over the next several decades. However, although these interactions took place, as described and explained throughout the sections that follow, actually getting to and from Nikunau became increasingly more difficult until air travel was introduced in the 1970s because the annual rate at which ships were call at Nikunau was to decrease steadily after the days of whaling and coconut oil trading.

The early trading had some effect on the material culture and way of life of Kain Nikunau. For example, Kain Nikunau quickly became addicted to tobacco and also used it as a form of money (i.e. to measure the value of other goods, as a medium of exchange and, presumably, as a store of wealth). However, this change was not as great as that arising when the trade in coconut oil (1860s-1870s) and then copra (1870s-) was underway across the island, not to mention the missionaries becoming established (late 1870s-) (see Section 3.3.4).

Kain Nikunau were already applying coconut oil to their bodies and in food preparation[38], and to fuel simple oil lamps introduced by beachcombers. Their initial response to the oil trade was to increase cultivation of coconut trees and the time they spent on collecting coconut meat and pressing it for oil. The new trees were mostly on previously uncultivated land, so as not to affect their few other land-based subsistence resources. Although the time
available for other activities was reduced (c.f. Lewis, 1988), some labour saving devices were among goods that *Kain Nikunau* could trade for their oil, thus making them more efficient at conducting some of these other activities. The change to copra had even more profound effects. Although, coconut by coconut, the price received for copra was lower than for oil, *Kain Nikunau* could produce copra much more efficiently, and so they expanded cultivation and production even further, the dry climate and poor state of the ground notwithstanding. Indeed, such was the change that copra replaced tobacco as the form of money/currency, and remained ascendant for several decades if not a century or so[39][40], including to pay taxes (known as “tax copra”), church and civil fines and school fees (Couper, 1967; Lawrence, 1992; Maude and Leeson, 1965; Morrell, 1960). As explained in Section 3.1.1, today copra is still the main source for households to acquire daily goods, although Australian dollar coins and notes now figures in the transaction (see Section 3.7.4).

In addition to these changes to daily activity patterns and land use, the trade in oil/copra led to significant modifications in other aspects of the material culture of *Kain Nikunau*, through new materials, and new knowledge and skills being introduced. Although there have been no formal studies of these phenomena on Nikunau, it seems from my participant-observation that some reliance can be placed on studies of neighbouring islands (Couper, 1967; Geddes et al., 1982; Koch, 1986; Lewis, 1988; Lundsgaarde, 1966; Macdonald, 1982a). The range of foreign manufactures became an accustomed part of *Kain Nikunau* life. For example, tobacco became an addiction. Iron implements were used alongside shell and wooden ones. Livestock were bred and some traded back to visiting ships but soon pigs became an essential part of *botaki*. Imported cloth was used, among other things, to make clothes—*Kain Nikunau* wearing clothes mostly arose after the 1870s from missionaries’ banning nakedness and championing modesty (see Section 3.3.4). Flour, sugar, tea and rice became staples, alongside seafood and subsistence foods, lowering the frequency with which the latter were consumed, although in total food and beverage consumption increased, with various health consequences subsequently (see Lewis, 1988).

*Kain Nikunau* acquired knowledge and skills *I-Matang* beachcombers and traders divulged sparingly, alongside goods being traded and just in general. This included food preparation techniques (see Note 38), distilling *kaokioki*, metalworking, carpentry (e.g., installing wooden pumps in outriggers), coopering and mechanics. However, the traders’ superiority of knowledge, technology and material goods prolonged the idea of deferring to *I-Matang* as a race. Indeed, it has often seemed as if *I-Matang* were thought of as possessing wide expertise
in all technology associated with the outside world (e.g., repairing muskets, watches, computers). Even today, this gives their often-unchallenged opinions far more weight than might be the case among fellow I-Matang, for example concerning governance, law making, planning economies and deploying accounting technology.

The genetic stock of Kain Nikunau was renewed by the resident traders in particular. Atun te boti permitted some women to take I-Matang husbands and the resultant children all became part of utu[41]. Some traders left the island accompanied by their families (e.g., Jong Kum Kee, whose descendants are now prominent business proprietors on Tarawa). Others remained for the rest of their lives (e.g., Andrew Turner – see Maude, 1977b), and their descendants have assimilated into Kain Nikunau. An example in ana utu Ekineti is Charles O’Connor (see Figure 2), whose ship was among those regularly plying the Kiribati Islands out of the Fiji Islands in the 1880s (Couper, 1987) but was wrecked off Nikunau. He was adopted by a couple in Tabomatang, where he lived for a few years, married Ritia and had two sons, Arabert (≅ Albert) and Anare. Although Albert trained as an LMS pastor and eventually followed his father to Kadavu in Fiji, Anare remained and is one of Ekineti’s great grandfathers. Both brothers inherited lands from their mother and from their father’s adoptive parents (see Land (Copra) Tax Register 1910-1916). Most of this land is now in the charge of a first cousin of Ekineti.

Encounters with traders, and I-Matang and Chinese generally, raised the curiosity of Kain Nikunau and generated a fascination about the world outside their particular island and the rest of the Kiribati Islands. This led to them entertaining stories, in mwaneaba and at other opportunities, of social conditions, events, leaders, customs, religious practices, technologies, economic systems and so on. It also led to an interest in travelling away from Nikunau, over far greater distances than had proved possible intentionally and routinely with outrigger canoes, and this resulted in Kain Nikunau being willing to join ships’ crews and otherwise travel abroad for work and other reasons, as taken up in Section 3.3.3.

Although Kain Nikunau derived cash incomes for the first time from coconut oil/copra, this was and never has been excessive in absolute dollar value, amounting to a few pounds/dollars per head per year. Nor was it excessive as a percentage of the price that their produce realised elsewhere (i.e., Sydney, New England, Western Europe, etc.), starting out as barely 5% and probably hardly ever reached 15%. Kain Nikunau were disadvantaged vis-à-vis I-Matang by ignorance of what I-Matang were doing with the oil or copra (e.g., using it in the manufacture of soap, candles, butter substitute, explosives and livestock feed), and by ignorance of I-
Matang markets, trading and accounting practices. Some Kain Nikunau and other I-Kiribati realised that traders’ profits were substantial, the prices they were receiving for copra were low, the prices they were paying for goods were high, and the quality of goods was often poor. This caused anguish and social unrest from time to time (Couper, 1967, 1968; Macdonald, 1982a). However, it was not until the 1930s that these issues contributed to private traders being displaced by local trading organisations – see Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.3.

3.3.3 Kain Nikunau on the Move

Up to the early 19th Century, a small but steady stream of Kain Nikunau would have moved to other islands, for reasons such as marriage and inter-island family relations stemming therefrom (the contra flow is indicated among his ancestors by Uering, 1979). After the 1820s, as a corollary to events analysed in Section 3.3.2, Kain Nikunau began travelling away from Nikunau mostly with work involved and mostly intended to be temporary. Initially, this was seafaring for a season on whaling ships. Then, they began going further on whaling and trading ships: sometimes they were seen in Sydney, Canton, and various ports in New England, the West Indies, the Cape Colony and Europe. Examples were Peter and Thomas Byron, so called because they were from Byron’s Island (Lawrence, 1992; Macdonald, 1982a). Labouring in agriculture and mining as part of the Pacific labour trade followed in the second half of the 19th century. Kain Nikunau were in high demand in every direction: they went mostly to the Fiji, Navigation (Samoa), Sandwich (Hawai’i) and Society (Tahiti) Islands, and Washington and Fanning in the Line Islands (now part of the Republic of Kiribati); and to Queensland, New South Wales, Mexico, Guatemala and Peru. They worked mostly on copra, sugar and coffee plantations, in mines and on sheep farms (Bedford et al., 1980; Bollard, 1981; Couper, 1967; Firth, 1973; Lewis, 1988; McCreery and Munro, 1993; Morrell, 1960; Munro and Firth, 1986, 1987, 1990; Sabatier, 1977; Shineberg, 1984; Siegel, 1985; Ward, 1946).

Kain Nikunau mostly engaged in the labour trade willingly, rather than being kidnapped by blackbirders. Their motives varied: for example, curiosity and wanderlust; earning cash to purchase foreign manufactures; escaping the effect of droughts and other natural hardships; and fleeing the stern discipline of their communities, effected by unimane and, after the 1870s, Protestant pastors (see Section 3.3.4). The Kain Nikunau involved were not only men, who did most of the waged work, but also wives, if applicable; and possibly younger children (the older children often stayed behind with close utu). Further children were sometimes born during excursions. Based on Bedford et al. (1980) over half the Kain Nikunau who went on
these excursions were repatriated eventually, sometimes with marriage partners from elsewhere. Reasons for non-repatriation include perishing and joining communities at the location of work or from other islands, including through marriage, and so settling permanently other than on Nikunau.

Statistics about Kain Nikunau involved in this trade in labour are not available separately from those for the Kiribati Islands as a whole. However, Bedford et al. (1980) estimate that from the coming of the whalers up to 1900, between 6,000 and 10,000 adult I-Kiribati spent some time (years rather than months) working away from the archipelago, and that for every five adults a child accompanied them, and so between 1,000 and 2,000 children were involved. This was during a period when the total population of the islands was always less than 40,000, and Nikunau’s population was not in excess of 2,000 (see Bedford et al.). Thus, even on a proportionate basis, the numbers of Kain Nikunau who travelled to places outside the Kiribati Islands were of the order of 400 to 600. However, it is probable that Kain Nikunau formed on balance a greater proportion of the numbers of I-Kiribati working away than they were of the population. Reasons for this include the high numbers of whaling ships in Nikunau’s vicinity, its proximity to Fiji and Samoa, and its climate being less conducive to coconut production than Kiribati Islands further north. As to how many were away at a time, incidental to his visit as part of extending British jurisdiction to Nikunau, Davis (1892) estimated that 200 Kain Nikunau (10% of the population) were working away but expected to return.

Particularly as regards material culture, the repatriation of Kain Nikunau was an important change agent on Nikunau, arguably as important socially as incoming I-Matang traders and missionaries (Macdonald, 1982a). In addition to any earnings they were able to remit home as goods or cash to utu during their absence[42], repatriates brought home not only cash but durable goods that were unaffordable or unavailable from traders on Nikunau. They shared stories in mwaneaba and among utu of the nature of the lands they visited, and of technology, customs, economic systems and religions. Some of the religious stories derived from some having been converted to Christianity by missionaries, and so practicing their new religion on Nikunau after their return. In this, they not only might clash with longstanding beliefs among Kain Nikunau but also with the Christian missionaries who came to Nikunau to convert Kain Nikunau; the latter was exemplified by clashes between RC converts returning from Tahiti and the Protestant LMS mission, who had arrived from Samoa in 1870 (Macdonald, 1982a; Sabatier, 1977).
The experiences of *Kain Nikunau* in the course of working away varied, including presumably the instances of economic exploitation, social abuse and virtual slavery that occurred to islanders generally (e.g., see Shineberg, 1984). These abuses and the islanders’ responses led to the Great Powers, including Great Britain, expressing a paternalistic responsibility to protect them (General Act of 1885; Pacific Islanders Protection Acts 1872, 1875) (see Ward, 1946)[43]. Notwithstanding the risk of maltreatment and the exploitation, the durables and the stories encouraged other *Kain Nikunau* to go on work excursions, as did the steps taken by the Great Powers. Thus, at the time of Davis’s 1892 visit, absences through the labour trade were as high as ever. Indeed, as indicated in Section 3.3.1, the supply of labour from Nikunau to German plantations in Samoa was one of the factors associated with it. However, by little over a decade later this had backfired on German interests because of the British authorities’ desire to support the Pacific Islands Company’s phosphate mining on Banaba and Nauru (see Section 3.4.1). The company exerted political pressure in Suva (i.e., the Western Pacific High Commission) and London, leading to the Colony Government being instructed to curtail such as *Kain Nikunau* from travelling outside the Colony for purposes of work (see Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (Consolidation) Regulation 1908)[44]. *Kain Nikunau* would be involved in this “within-Colony” labour trade for over 70 years. For this involvement post-1920, see Section 3.4.3.

### 3.3.4 Religious Change

An LMS Protestant mission was present on Nikunau from 1870. From that arrival date until the early 1900s, the mission was performed in each mwaneaba district by pastors of Samoan and Tuvaluan origin, who had been trained at the LMS regional headquarters at Apia. In 1900, a local LMS headquarters was established on Beru under the stern leadership of William Goward—Sabatier (1977), an RC cleric, likened Goward’s style to that of a prince bishop. Goward was greatly dissatisfied with the Samoans for being “inconsistent, incompetent and un-Christ-like” (Macdonald, 1982, p. 89), and anyway wanted pastors who would defer to him. He trained *I-Kiribati* pastors, including some *Kain Nikunau* (e.g., Arabert O’Connor – see Section 3.3.2), on Beru; and over the next few years replaced the Samoan pastors on Nikunau and elsewhere, despite their reluctance to be replaced.

Goward used this stratagem to bring about an extensive politico-religious structure centred on Beru and covering the several southern Kiribati Islands within his *de facto* jurisdiction, including Nikunau. Although Goward’s actions led to some changes in how the LMS functioned, these were not necessarily for the better as far as *Kain Nikunau* were concerned.
Indeed, despite the occasional foray onto Nikunau of RC missionaries after that, and the formal extension of British jurisdiction to the island through Davis’s visit in 1892, the LMS mission was ascendant both spiritually and secularly until about 1917 – Sabatier (1977) characterised this as “constant tyranny from the Protestants” (p. 181). Arthur Grimble, who was based on Beru from 1917 as the Colony Government’s Southern Gilberts District Officer, complained that missionaries had made te Kain Nikunau ashamed of his ancestry, history, legends and “practically of everything that ever happened to his race outside the chapel and the class-room” (cited by Maude, 1989, p. xxiii). He also expressed regret that the British authorities had neglected the southern islands for so long.

The appeal of the new religion(s) to most Kain Nikunau seemed to lie in the stories they entailed about the outside world and the hymns they caused to be sung. In producing written translations of the Bible, hymnbooks and similar into te taetae ni Kiribati, the English- and French-speaking missionaries (e.g., Hiram Bingham, Ernest Sabatier) adapted the Modern Latin alphabet to suit the language in a way still ascendant today. Kain Nikunau learnt to read and write, and quenched a thirst for knowledge, including at mission schools, which at first catered for all ages but then concentrated on children. These schools were the main supply of formal, I-Matang-oriented education until the mid-20th Century and are still significant today, particularly at secondary level. This source of knowledge was an alternative to that available from unimane and unaine (see Grimble, 1921, 1989; Teweiariki, n.d.), and so satisfied a desire among some Kain Nikunau to be less dependent on elders and predisposed to their authority. However, it was also complementary to that knowledge, and so even today there are demarcations. For example, traditional dances are learnt from ones elders, not from teachers at schools.

In addition to these appealing consequences, the LMS had other consequences of varying propitiousness. Kain Nikunau converts were encouraged and coerced by pastors to relocate from boti-based kainga to kawa adjacent to the missions, and so away from the unconverted; and otherwise lessen their identification with boti—boti were perceived as having links to “ancestor worship” and as a barrier to the missionaries’ authority to govern. As the converts increased, so the kawa became the ascendant form of settlements. Indeed, Goward added impetus to this change using his town planning knowledge in kawa development on Nikunau and other islands. Concomitant to the demise of kainga, the institution of boti gradually lost significance, being somewhat incidental probably by the mid-20th Century. So too did the distinction between atun te boti and other unimane, and the autonomy of Kain Nikunau’s
several mwaneaba districts and their gerontocracies. This eventuality is reported by Davis (1892), who indicated that although councils of unimane governed in each kawa they were subservient to a single federal body of 70 to 80 unimane drawn from the entire island. All these bodies were under the theocratic influence of Samoan and Tuvaluan pastors, and later under Goward’s influence, through his I-Kiribati pastors[47] (Lundsgaarde, 1978; Lundsgaarde and Silverman, 1972; Maude, 1963).

Alongside this undermining of boti and autonomous mwaneaba governance, artefacts and symbols that pertained to established politico-religious beliefs, rules, rituals and other practices (e.g., bangota, totems, relics) were scorned and destroyed by the Samoan pastors and those who succeeded them. These actions were emulated by many Kain Nikunau, although some Kain Nikunau also secreted some of them away and pre-Christian beliefs continued, albeit below the surface, and still exist today (see below).

The LMS’s social accounting was based around the Day of Reckoning and having to answer generally in the Next World to Jehovah for their Earthly actions. This answerability included the intermediate stage on Earth of wide-ranging rules and regulations drawn up by pastors and agreed to by councils of unimane; a copious force of kaubure (≅ wardens and police constables) –10% of the population, according to Davis (1892); and frequent incurrence of economic, social and physical penalties for infringing the rules and regulations, particularly minor ones, by all Kain Nikunau, regardless of some having different religious affiliations, including traditional and RC.

Under the rules and regulations, te Kain Nikunau was obliged to set apart Tabati or Sundays as days of devotion and on which work and play (e.g., copra cutting, fishing, swimming, sports, games and pastimes) were banned. Names for other days of the week (e.g., Moanibong (or first day) = Monday, Kaonobong (or sixth day) = Saturday) and an annual pattern of holy days were also instituted. Te Kain Nikunau was restricted or curtailed, with varying effect, in behaving in ways that the LMS pastors viewed as animistic, pagan, heathen, etc., or which shocked their sense of decency. Thus, they forbade nakedness and prohibited birth control (e.g., abortion, infanticide – see Bedford et al., 1980), tibutibu, intoxication from nicotine and alcohol, and sexual promiscuity and lewd acts. They associated the last of these not only with nikiranroro but also with baterere, ruoia, kabure, mwaie and kabure (≅ various forms of dance) and in tinaba relationships and eiriki relationships (≅ sexual relationships between a husband and his wife’s unmarried sisters) (see Grimble, 1957, 1989). The rules
and regulations also encouraged and required *te Kain Nikunau* to attend to matters of orderliness and cleanliness, including in personal matters, dwelling design and settlement layout—these rules were reinforced in laws supposedly made by native governments (e.g., Native Laws 1894) and confirmed in queen’s or king’s regulations (during the protectorate period) or ordinances (during the colony period) made by the high commissioner in Suva or the resident commissioner (e.g., Gilbert and Ellice Islands (Native Laws) Regulation 1912) (see Section 3.4.1).

The various rules, regulations and legal decisions instituted by the LMS’s representatives have had widespread and long-lasting consequences. Obliging *Kain Nikunau* to wear clothes led to the import of cloth, acquisition of skills needed to make clothes, and afflictions such as tuberculosis and skin diseases. Restrictions addressing promiscuity led to the diminution of polygynous relationships and customarily-sanctioned extramarital sex. Dance, songs and poems, and music were never stamped out but took more mellow forms (which the RC clergy encouraged, including incorporating them into the Mass – see Sabatier, 1977). They have since re-emerged as a matter of national pride in which participation is widespread (see Dambiec, 2005; Whincup, 2005). Restrictions on tobacco failed miserably but when the researcher visited Nikunau in the 1980s, it was still “dry”. *Te Tabati* observance was still very evident among Protestants in 2009, and RCs also observed *te Tabati*, but in their own way. The institution of days of the week and holy days imposed a new sense of chronological order on *Kain Nikunau*.

They were also highly significant processually. Before, to whom *Kain Nikunau* accounted or were answerable to, for various matters that might be classed as social, political, economic, cultural and religious, had been dispersed according to descent, as reflected in one’s *boti* and *utu* (see Section 2). After, the *boti* aspects of it were more compacted, around Jehovah and his Earthly representatives, nominally in distant Apia, Beru, London, and later Sydney and the Vatican City, but in practice among resident pastors (and later priests and nuns). As explained below, they had worldly, political, judicial and economic facets. Noteworthy also is that the idea of criminal acts, particularly serious ones, being against the state and possibly entailing the punishment of imprisonment or, in the case of murder, execution. Formerly, under *te katei*, these acts had been civil matters and offended private parties had been entitled to compensation (e.g., payment of copra or transfer of *aba* to the offended party, or even enslavement of the offender to that party).
The identification that *te Kain Nikunau* had had to his or her *utu* before the Christians entered his or her life was also challenged. However, this was far from eradicated by the new Christian accounting usages, probably because it had much less to do with religious, ceremonial, political and judicial matters than *boti*. It was mainly about blood ties, rights to land and other resources, and temporal knowledge (Grimble, 1952; Macdonald, 1971; Maude, 1963, 1977b).

The economic, social and physical penalties referred to above were mostly in the form of fines paid in copra and forced labour. A continuous, significant stream of resources arose in each district from the aforementioned penalties, and from other copra and unpaid labour contributions *Kain Nikunau* were expected to make. The pastors used them to erect impressive churches (see Section 3.1.1), and the equally impressive pastors’ dwellings adjacent to them. They also kept the Samoan, Tuvaluan and, later, I-Kiribati pastors, and their *Kain Nikunau* deacons, in somewhat more comfortable circumstances than the rest of *Kain Nikunau*. Macdonald’s interpretation is that these were “a living example of the accomplishments that could follow from Christianity and civilisation” (1982a, p. 49). Despite this spending by the pastors, significant amounts left the island for the *I-Matang* missionary-run LMS headquarters, whether in Apia or Beru.

For a while, church buildings and pre-Christian *mwaneaba* seem to have been used side by side in the six *mwaneaba* districts. Except, *mwaneaba* were shorn of their religious status and the churches looked the more splendid of the two, particularly as cement, glass and other imported materials were used in their construction. Later, church halls that looked like *mwaneaba* were erected and came to be used for various occasions by congregations, with a corresponding decline in use of district *mwaneaba*. As the RC Church became established, it too built church halls in the *mwaneaba* style, and so added to the decline, as well as dividing the population for various events, not all of them entirely religious. This trend and lack of maintenance eventually took their toll on the district *mwaneaba*, and by the 1960s, *Te Atu ni Uea* was dilapidated. A similar fate befell four of the other five *mwaneaba*—only one was still standing in 2009 (see Section 3.1.1)—resulting in difficulties in making arrangements for large gatherings of *Kain Nikunau* independent of their religious affiliation. However, not all remnants of pre-Christian beliefs (e.g., *anti* worship, long-established myths, religious beliefs and practices) have been obliterated. Indeed, the researcher visited *bangota* in 2009, including completing appropriate rituals. Another interesting sight was of relics of some early-arriving Christian clergy preserved in one of the churches.
3.4 **On Nikunau and Elsewhere 1890s/1910s to 1970s**

Following on from the informal colonialism that characterised the first century of *Kain Nikunau*’s interactions with *I-Matang* and other non-*I-Kiribati*, this sub-section covers the 60 to 80 years when Nikunau was subject to formal colonialism (Horvath, 1972). The vagueness of 60 to 80 years, and the inclusion of the spread 1890/1910s in the heading, reflect how Nikunau was only gradually integrated into the Colony’s administration after Davis’s declaratory visit in 1892. The Colony Government that materialised under Resident Commissioner Campbell, including after he departed in 1908 and its headquarters were relocated from Tarawa to Banaba, did not take any more than a cursory, distant interest in Nikunau’s affairs until about 1917, leaving it and the other southern Kiribati Islands largely to the devices of the LMS headquartered on Beru (see Section 3.3.4). Notwithstanding, the Colony Government did regard Nikunau as part of the Colony; it saw its orders in council, regulations, ordinances, etc. as applying; it levied taxes; it drew *Kain Nikunau* labour from there for phosphate mining on Nauru and Banaba; and its representatives visited occasionally, particularly to deal with disputes. Indeed, Campbell visited the island on several occasions, usually to try to deal with sectarian issues[48]. On one such visit in 1898, finding only a few *Kain Nikunau* willing to admit to being RC, he famously declared all *Kain Nikunau* should be Protestants. This turned out not to resolve the matter (Macdonald, 1982a; Sabatier, 1977).

It is again appropriate to start with context by outlining of goings on on Nikunau’s periphery that were to affect the island and its inhabitants. After that, the section deals with events and consequences for Nikunau and *Kain Nikunau* to do with government, commerce and social affairs on the island, and *Kain Nikunau* leaving the island temporarily. The leaving of the island permanently during this period and subsequently is dealt with in Section 3.5.

### 3.4.1 Events on Nikunau’s Periphery

Between 1890 and 1980, among world events that are of some relevance here, probably most important are the continued formalisation of colonialism in the Pacific in the first few decades of concern. These decades were punctuated by World War I, whose outcomes included territorial redistribution provisions in the Treaty of Versailles[49] and the Nauru Island Agreement 1919; the Great Depression, which affected commodity prices and much else in the 1920s and 1930s; and the occurrence of World War II, resulting in the British authorities evacuating its personnel from the Colony in late 1941[50] and returning to Tarawa with American forces just over two years later, by early 1944[51]. After this second war, formalisation of colonies gave way to general decolonisation by the various mainly European
and quasi-European imperial powers—the United Nations Organisation established a Special Committee on Colonialism, in effect to monitor decolonisation; and colonial powers, Cold War adversaries and developed countries became involved in economic, social, political and military development (e.g., see Morgan 1980). Part and parcel of the Cold War was the testing of nuclear bombs on various, allegedly remote, Pacific islands, including Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, and Kiritimati (then spelt Christmas) Island in the Colony. In contrast to those after World War I, the decades following World War II were characterised by economic growth, rises in commodity prices and expansion of trans-Pacific and international trade. This was notwithstanding the British Government being in dire financial straits for some years after the war, which affected how quickly reconstructions plans drawn up for its many colonies could be implemented (Morgan, 1980).

At the level of the Colony, administrative structure and process, ordinances and regulations, and native laws, courts and finances were continuing concerns for resident commissioners. After Swayne and Campbell (see Section 3.3.1), there were five resident commissioners on Banaba (1908-1941), where much of their effort went into matters consequent with the phosphate mining; and eight on Tarawa (1944-1979), where economic, social and political development of the Colony was high on their agenda. Each was supported by a slowly growing bureaucracy, based mainly around the residency (re 1912, see Grimble, 1952) but with representatives resident on a few other islands, whence they could tour all the islands. At first, this bureaucracy comprised mainly I-Matang, who in any case continued to dominate senior executive roles throughout the Colony period; and then Tuvaluans and I-Kiribati were recruited in increasing numbers, mainly as clerks and labourers. From the 1960s, internal self-rule saw the advent of I-Kiribati in political roles but without much authority for very long before the Republic was established in 1979 (see Macdonald, 1982a).

3.4.1.1 Before the Colonial Evacuation of 1941

The Colony Government continued confirming laws it got native governments to agree to (e.g., Revised Native Laws 1916), the resident commissioner signing the necessary ordinances (e.g., Native Laws Ordinance 1917); and it made its own regulations (e.g., Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (Consolidation) Regulation 1908; Regulations for the Good Order and Cleanliness 1933) and ordinances (Co-operative Societies Ordinance 1952) (Lundsgaarde, 1968). Officially at least, these applied throughout the Colony, although what was intended from Banaba and what happened on islands making up the rest of the Colony were often different. Between the 1890s and early 1930s, those affecting control on I-Kiribati
behaviour and life-style were ever more intense and imposing than the previous ones. Indeed, during his time as resident commissioner (1926-32), Grimble formulated a Museum Policy, based on his previous exploits on various of the Kiribati Islands. His intention seems to have been to conserve for *te I-Kiribati* a simple life, in keeping with his (Grimble, 1952, 1957) romanticised view of *I-Kiribati* society (Lundsgaarde, 1974; Macdonald, 1982a). The Museum Policy was reflected in the 1933 Regulations he compiled as resident commissioner and provide “a classic statement of the paternalistic nature of the administrative structure that had emerged” (Macdonald, 1982a, p. 127): the regulations contain an extended array of provisions concerning matters from adoption, through bathing, *bubuti*, canoes and fishing, communal work, curfew, dancing, defecating, feasts and entering the Government Station, to latrines and wells. The policy derived from belief that there was no prospect of the Kiribati or Tuvalu Islands developing, and so they should be kept “a close preserve inviolate from European rapacity” (Maude, 1977a, p. v).

After Grimble departed the Colony, a more liberal attitude started to be taken by British officials. This change in attitude in the Western Pacific and the Colony was attributable to the efforts of recently arrived officials in Suva, notably Harry Luke (Western Pacific High Commissioner 1938-42) and the Kiribati Islands, notably Harry Maude, who was eventually resident commissioner (1946-48) (Macdonald, 1982a; Maude and Doran, 1966; Morgan, 1980). There were signs of it earlier at King George V School (KGVS), a post-primary boarding school that the Colony Government established at Bairiki on Tarawa in 1922. It started with an annual intake kept low deliberately to only 20 or so of the most intellectually gifted young men from among all the Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands to be trained as native government officials and for other positions. Its *I-Matang* teachers fought to extend its pupil population and its purpose, to that of providing an academic education, which was based on a secular curriculum reminiscent of English grammar schools: indeed, English was used as the medium of teaching, learning and everything else, at least officially (Burnett, 2005; Macdonald, 1982a). The attitude was eventually reflected in the Gilbert Islands, Island Regulations 1939 and Native Governments Ordinance 1941, although these could not put into effect until after the Colony Government was restored, by when the emphasis of colonial rule was less on civilising and more on developing (see Macdonald, 1982a; Morgan, 1980). Maude championed various decentralised social and economic development proposals in conjunction with restoring the Colony Government (see Section 3.5.2.1); but even in the 1930s he was involved in establishing cooperatives, as related below.
The financial arrangements of the Colony Government between the 1890s and 1920s reflected a concern in London that territories should not be annexed as colonies if they were expected to be a financial burden on London. Furthermore, any that were annexed should be financially self-sufficient, relying neither on London or on British commercial interests in the colony; in particular, social and economic development expenditure was to be avoided (Bush and Maltby, 2004; Macdonald, 1982a; Morgan, 1980; Ward, 1946). To wit, the Colony Government was accounted for as an entity separate from the Western Pacific High Commission even, let alone other parts of the Colonial Empire. The BPC was accounted for separately again; indeed, its accounts from the 1920s to the 1970s were classified as part of the Dominion Empire (e.g., see House of Commons, 1940b).

The Colony Government was financially self-sufficient from 1895 until the evacuation, and again after 1950 (in the interim, it survived on subventions from London). Most of its operating revenue, and the little capital outlay it expended before 1941, came from local taxes and duties, including poll, land and copra taxes on individuals; except it received a very small contribution from the phosphateers on Banaba, but this was in lieu of taxes, duties, etc. that might otherwise have arisen from either the company (e.g., export duties, profits tax) or its employees (e.g., income tax, sales tax/import duties on purchases from the company store).

This coincided with the BPC perpetuating the idea initiated by its precursors that only the most meagre phosphate revenues should be applied on Nikunau and the other Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands for economic and social development. Thus, little of the obvious but unaccounted for surplus of phosphate value over costs of mining (see Weeramantry, 1992) ended up in the treasury of the Colony Government until at least the 1960s. The latter is supposed to have changed then and through the 1970s, when the contributions are supposed to have more closely reflected the value of phosphate (Macdonald, 1982a; Williams and Macdonald, 1985)—the accounts of the BPC and its successors (e.g., the New Zealand Phosphate Commission) from after the mid-1970s are proving difficult to track down.

By the 1960s also, capital of more significance had started to derive from London, mainly through grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. These were made possible by the Colonial Development Act 1929, passed as part of a response to the Great Depression (see Abbot, 1971), but apart from one grant in the late 1930s for the occupation of islands in the Phoenix Group and Christmas (now spelt Kiritimati) Island (see Section 3.5.1), it was the 1950s before any results of this capital were in evidence (see below).
Regarding the bringing about of financial self-sufficiency, Campbell at first got supercargoes of trading companies’ ships (e.g., the supercargo of Henderson and Macfarlane’s SS. Archer – see Macdonald, 1982a) to act on the Colony Government’s behalf and collect tax copra from islands. Subsequently, he appointed a few I-Matang agents (e.g., George Murdoch – see Grimble, 1952; Horwood, 1994) to perform various revenue collection and related administrative functions. By 1916, this system had maturated such that the Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands were divided into four districts, each with a district officer. With only his family (if any) accompanying him, and no other Colony Government staff present in support, a district officer was expected to perform judicial, executive and native government oversight duties, and so be something of a “Jack of All Trades” (Bevington, 1990, p. 39). As far as the people on each island were concerned, the district officer was te kamitina (i.e., the local enunciation of commissioner) and perceived not only as the king’s direct representative but also assumed to be related to the king (e.g., King George V) (Grimble, 1952).

Associated with this district officer structure was a structure of indirect rule, comprising native governments on each island, with the district officer acting as advisor, supervisor, overseer, auditor and, de facto, appointer of native officials. (Grimble, 1952; Grimble & Clarke, 1929; Macdonald, 1982a; Sabatier, 1977). This featured tight control of administrative expenditures through annual estimates and appropriation accounting, to ensure those expenditures could be met from taxes raised locally. Native government and financial control are elaborated in Section 3.4.2.1 in analysing Nikunau becoming part of the Southern Gilbert Islands District of the Colony.

3.4.1.2 From Restoration to Formal Decolonisation 1944-79

While at the Colony level, the Japanese Occupation followed by the American Occupation did not have long-lasting effects in themselves, the period itself marked a watershed in British colonial rule. Although Tarawa had some importance when Banaba was the Colony headquarters (e.g., the Education and Medical Departments were centred there, and Burns-Philp had its main base in the Colony there), the evacuation wiped the slate clean almost as far as British authority and British institutions were concerned, and the seeds of metamorphosis were sown in the aftermath of the 1943 Battle of Tarawa. This was between the Japanese forces, who had seized the islands from British control, and USA forces, who were en route, as it transpired, to Japan. Although the Pacific War soon moved northwest after the Battle, some American military personnel remained on Tarawa and other islands, mainly to the north until 1948. Logistically and economically, these circumstances helped the
restoration process and precipitated something of a (temporary) cash economy involving I-Kiribati on Tarawa and adjacent islands (Maude and Doran, 1966; re Marakei Atoll, see Lewis, 1988); in contrast to how things were first under the Japanese and then on other islands distant from where the Americans were based.

However, it seems that restoring British rule was the intended medium term policy among the Allies; and the Colony Government in exile in Suva had been working on this understanding. When that happened, the restored Colony Government, particularly under Maude, had economic and social development in mind. It made applications to London in keeping with ideas for decentralised development among the various islands of which Tarawa was only one. However, post-war shortages arose of physical resources and of Colonial Development and Welfare Fund capital, and so very few projects were approved here or elsewhere in the Pacific and the Empire (see Macdonald, 1982a; Morgan, 1980). In any case, parsimony was encouraged by operational funding being constrained, both locally and in the form of subventions from London, on which the Colony Government had to rely until 1950. Indeed, by the early 1950s, even projects approved, which were mostly on Tarawa, were virtually at a halt for lack of externally-sourced physical resources and the ships to import them, and indifferent internal leadership by Resident Commissioner Peel (1949-1951). In fact, it took a few years for the restored Colony Government to be operational, including for tax copra to start flowing and for there to be any sort of district administrative structure and system.

On the latter, the system again included native governments but these were left much more to their own devices than previously. Indeed, the post-war Colony Government district structures and processes were a pale shadow of the not exactly elaborate pre-war arrangements. The Kiribati Islands were established as a single district within the Colony, with the district officer headquartered alongside the Colony Government offices on Tarawa. Then, in 1956, this was reduced even further, by merging the two districts of the Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands under one district commissioner, who was supported by two touring district officers. These officials were all based on Tarawa and preferred to stay there, because of its amenities and because lack of shipping made it difficult to tour[54]. On tours they did make to each island, they scarcely had time to deal with matters of immediate importance and meet senior I-Kiribati officials, let alone engage in longer-term issues and development (Couper 1967; Doran 1960; GEIC, 1957; Lawrence, 1992; Macdonald, 1972, 1982a; Maude, 1977b; Maude and Doran, 1966).
The stationing of district officials on Tarawa and continuing neglect of Outer Islands was symptomatic of Colony Government policies in the 1950s and 1960s. Maude’s rehabilitation plan (GEIC, 1946) envisaging moderate and dispersed social and economic development was frustrated by the associated funding he was reckoning on from the British Government’s Colonial Development and Welfare Fund not materialising, either quickly enough or at the requisite level (see Macdonald, 1982a; Morgan, 1980). Two of his successors, Michael Bernacchi (1952-61) and V.J. Andersen (1962-69), planned and succeeded in presiding over more substantial, but centralised (rather than decentralised) infrastructure development focused on Tarawa, and so neglecting Nikunau and the other islands. By the mid-1960s, the neglect that was occurring of these islands was causing concerns among some Colony Government officials and their counterparts in Honiara[55] and London, not least because of the flow of migration to Tarawa. Indeed, during his research, Couper (1967) recognised the circumstances arising as *backwash* (Myrdal, 1957; Brookfield, 1972), which I corporate in Section 3.6.2. The concerns prompted some token Colony Government development efforts to be exerted outside Tarawa in the late 1960s and 1970s, as elaborated in Section 3.4.2 in relation to Nikunau. These included a revamp of island governments, including in 1966, when native governments (e.g., the NNG) were dissolved and island councils (e.g., the NIC) established; a district station being established on Tabiteuea to serve several Colony Government departments with interests in the southern Kiribati Islands; and the pre-war arrangement of having a Southern Gilberts District Officer stationed on Beru being resurrected, instead of the ineffective arrangements of district officials residing on Tarawa and making tours from there (see above).

As alluded to above (and first mentioned in Section 3.1.2.1), in addition to native governments, cooperative enterprises were another native organisation type to emerge on the Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands. They were called *boboti*, which referred to an official consumer cum copra producer cooperative society; and *mronron*, a consumer cum copra producer proto-cooperative society. *Boboti* came first in the 1930s, linked to the adverse effects of the Great Depression on the copra trade (i.e., like other commodity prices, the world price of copra crashed), and so on access to imports. The downturn in copra prices finally put paid to private traders functioning profitably at the island level, although another reason was the anguish and social unrest that had arisen from time to time from trade being more favourable to the traders than to *I-Kiribati*. Starting in Tuvalu, and then introduced by District Officer Maude in the Southern Gilberts District, *boboti* took over the private traders activities on
every island. They obtained supplies from and sold copra to three companies of longstanding operating at the pan-archipelago level (i.e., On Chong, Burns-Philp and Carpenter). However, these companies themselves were not immune from financial difficulties and On Chong was taken over by Carpenter in 1935. Trade picked up just ahead of World War II because of wartime demand from Europe but the spread of the war to the Pacific led to these companies evacuating, and trade was brought to a halt in 1941 (Couper, 1967; Maude, 1949).

The companies never returned. After the war and American forces had moved on from Tarawa, the restored Colony Government monopolised the import-export trade through the Colony Government Trade Scheme[56]. This played a major part in the Colony’s reconstruction and development (see GEIC, 1946). The scheme was financed using capital grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and loan capital from the British Treasury. As part of the project, *te boboti* was set up on each island. A world shortage of oils and fats arose after the war, resulting in increased demand for copra, which lasted well into the 1950s. Profits from the Trade Scheme were plentiful, and were used to redeem the loan, and then were ploughed into the *boboti*-owned, Colony Government-run Wholesale Society, which again was reasonably successful commercially for importing and distributing goods to *boboti*; the GEIC Copra Board, which handled copra collection from islands and its export from Tarawa (the idea of such produce marketing organisations came from other colonies – see Morgan, 1980); and the (Copra) Producers’ Development and Stabilization Fund, the first of various income equalisation and subsidy schemes that were significant for *Kain Nikunau* over succeeding decades (Maude, 1949). However, apart from a brief period of buoyancy in in the early 1970s (because of the world oil crisis), the general trend in world copra prices in the last four decades of the 20th Century was downward (see Razzaque et al., 2007), so putting financial pressure on organisations engaged in the trade and affecting copra cutters. Incidentally, during the world oil crisis, the Colony Government provided subsidies to copra cutters to encourage cooperative development of smallholdings and improvement of trees.

Regarding commercial activities on Tarawa generally, the expansion of other government activities gave rise to some in-house trading enterprises, for example, around procurement, and building and vehicle maintenance. In the 1970s, all these were brought within one umbrella organisation, known as the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Development Authority (GEIDA). However, when that proved inefficient and ineffective, it was broken up into several separate government trading enterprises. These were ascendant in the commercial
sector (e.g., import-export, banking, finance and insurance, telecommunications, utilities) on Tarawa for over two decades. Following the interventions of neo-liberal thinking aid agencies, many were designated as companies, or *state-owned enterprises*. One or two were privatised subsequently, and a few were allowed to close down through being insolvent, but the rest are still present in part, alongside some longstanding private businesses run by families of mixed I-Kiribati-I-Matang/Chinese descent and at least one recently established branch of a Fiji-based retailer (Couper, 1967; Dixon, 2004a; Duncan, 2014; Macdonald, 1982a; Roniti, 1985).

The Trade Scheme and GEIDA epitomise the post-war reconstruction, and economic and social development activities that characterised the final three decades of colonial rule. During these, Tarawa increasingly became precedent over what emerged as the Outer Islands (Macdonald, 1982a; Maude & Doran, 1966). This was in keeping with British Government policy of colonies emerging as independent nation states based on the colony boundaries and centred on the colony headquarters, rather than on the separate polities that, in most cases in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, existed in pre-colonial times (Morgan, 1980). And so it turned out, with internal self-rule, initiated in 1967, giving rise to the Republic of Kiribati in 1979.

Regarding phosphate mining, as alluded to previously (see Section 3.3.1) the BPC took over the mining, shipping and distribution activities as part of the Nauru Island Agreement 1919 concluded among the Governments of Britain, Australia and New Zealand, contemporaneously with the Treaty of Versailles[57]. The agreement provided for ore mined from Nauru and Banaba to be shipped to Australia, New Zealand and Britain in agreed proportions, although in practice only a small quantity went to the third of these. There, it was processed and then distributed to farmers, all priced only at cost, and so helped increase and sustain agricultural production but kept production costs down, including of the significant amount of produce from Australia and New Zealand that went to Britain[58]. The BPC was a separate corporate entity from the partner governments, and from the Colony Government and the equivalent Australian administration on Nauru. However, the Colony Government continued to assist in mining not only by administering Banaba and helping the BPC dispossess the Banabans of land required for mining but also by its district officers and other officials facilitating recruitment and transportation of *Kain Nikunau* and residents of other islands as labourers for both Banaba and Nauru (King and Sigrah, 2004; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams and Macdonald, 1985).
3.4.2 Events on Nikunau

*Kain Nikunau* and Nikunau as they were before the 19th Century, and the effects on them of the coming of commerce, the labour trade and missionary activities up to the second decade of the 20th Century are analysed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. I now pick up the history from 1917 and take it through to 1980, bringing in the periphery events, etc. referred to in Section 3.4.1. In 1917, it is probable that there were about 1,700 *Kain Nikunau* residing mostly in the six *kawa* existing today (see Section 3.1.1) but more evenly spread among these settlements than today. By 1980, the population of the island had increased to about 2,000 (see Figure 1), again more evenly spread than today. However, in 1917, *Kain Nikunau* residing elsewhere were a mix of permanent emigration for longstanding reasons associated with inter-marriage to peoples of other islands, and of being away temporarily for work, and perhaps numbered only a few hundred men, women and children. Whereas in 1980, the *Kain Nikunau* diaspora was much greater and for reasons of recent origin, which are mentioned in various places in the subsections of Section 3.4.2 and dealt with in Section 3.5.

3.4.2.1 Nikunau as part of the Southern District of the Colony

Sections 3.3.1 and 3.4.1 both make allusions to the reluctance the British Government showed in laying any territorial claims to the Kiribati Islands, let alone Nikunau, or even getting involved in their affairs, because of the financial burden that might arise. After protectorate status was declared the need for British officials to avoid any such burden was transmitted through British officials in Suva to Butaritari, Tarawa or Banaba (Morgan, 1980). This was probably significant in the circumstances prevailing between 1892 and 1917 that no official was stationed in the vicinity of Nikunau (i.e., on any of the southern Kiribati Islands), except for short periods (e.g., see Wilde, 1998); that visits there by officials were infrequent and ineffectual (see Macdonald, 1982a); and that the LMS was largely unfettered in imposing its version of colonial rule there (Grimble, 1952, 1957; Macdonald, 1982a; Sabatier, 1977). However, that did not mean *Kain Nikunau* were exempt from paying the Queen’s or King’s Tax first imposed during Campbell’s tenure of the Colony Government, although regardless of the official form of the tax, the Colony Government seemed satisfied by the total taxes it levied being remitted from the island periodically. In practice, these were collected communally as tax copra, after elaborate negotiations in *mwaneaba* about how much Nikunau could afford, given climatic conditions that affected copra yields, and how the burden should be distributed amongst everyone (Grimble, 1952, 1957; Macdonald, 1971; Maude, 1963, Maude, 1977b).
It was 1917 before the Colony Government laid down any earnest challenge to the political ascendancy in the southern Kiribati Islands of the LMS in general, and Goward in particular, by appointing Arthur Grimble as virtually its first resident representative there. This coincided not only with the LMS replacing Goward because of concerns about his behaviour (Macdonald, 1982a; Sabatier, 1977) but also with the official change of the territory from being a British Protectorate to being a Crown Colony and the virtual end of financial and related autonomy of kabowi n abamakoro or native governments, including the Nikunau Native Government (NNG), vis-à-vis the Colony Government[59] (see below).

Grimble’s title was District Officer of the Southern Gilberts (Grimble, 1952, 1957)[60]. He and his six successors up to 1941 (including Maude (1977a, 1977b); and Bevington (1990)) were headquartered on Beru; whence they made tours to Nikunau and the several other islands in the district. An outline of their duties is given in Section 3.4.1. Above all else on Nikunau, they oversaw the native courts (i.e., kabowi n aomata or island court; and kabowi n aba or lands court) and the NNG. The courts dealt with criminal and civil law, which included making legal decisions to effect social control and resolving land disputes[61] (see Grimble, 1952). The laws a district officer was to work with and enforce (e.g., Revised Native Laws 1916) related to various matters. Although they were now more temporal than religious, they resembled many introduced by the LMS, as enumerated earlier (e.g., abortion, tinaba, “under age” sex, sorcery). They applied to the NNG and to Kain Nikunau, and the missions and traders for that matter.

As set out in Colony Government laws and regulations, starting with Native Laws Ordinance 1917, the NNG was responsible for administering the island and maintaining good order. This included ensuring land not already in use was planted with coconuts; all children from 7 to 16 years of age attended school; and maintaining and enhancing public infrastructure and amenities, such as the road and the Government Station. The latter grew to comprise a flagstaff, office premises, courthouse, prison, rudimentary island hospital, accommodation for visitors, post office (with postal and money transfer services), and dwellings for officials, hospital orderlies and dressers. Although many of the public infrastructure and amenities were necessitated by Colony Government regulations and district officer interventions, in the main they were provided with Kain Nikunau resources and efforts, with very few project grants or similar funding from the Colony Government—such financial support did not arise until at least the 1950s.
The NNG was headed by *te tia-motiki-taeka*, a name reminiscent of the pre-Christian *mwaneaba* proceedings (see Section 3.2) but actually referred to in English as the magistrate—this and other positions in native governments are enumerated in *Native Laws Ordinance 1917* in English and *te taetae ni Kiribati*. He was vested with the duties and functions of mayor and judge[62]; including presiding over all three *kabowi* bodies listed above. The NNG had two other principal officials. The first was *te tia-koroboki*, which is translated as the scribe (≡ clerk and treasurer); eventually, this position was divided into island clerk or executive officer, and island treasurer. The second was *te mataniwia kaubure*, which is translated as the chief of *kaubure* (i.e., chief warden in matters of order and cleanliness of the island). Appointees to these three positions were not necessarily *Kain Nikunau* and often were from other islands in the Colony and trained at KGVS.

There were two other groups of officials, all made up of *Kain Nikunau*. At different times, they were elected by *Kain Nikunau* as a whole or from constituencies comprising each kawa, or else appointed by the district officer, after consultations with the NNG or with *Kain Nikunau* conducted in *mwaneaba* assemblies. Working to chief of *kaubure* were *kaubure* (i.e., wardens in matters of order and cleanliness in each *kawa*). They together with the magistrate and scribe met from time to time as a council, but the authority of this varied over time as to whether it made decisions or it received information, decisions and instructions from the magistrate. The lowest level of officials were *bureitiman* (which is a transliteration of policemen) *n aon te aba*, which is translated as island police. They were responsible for law enforcement and being gaoler at the island prison. Examples are Anare O’Connor (see Figure 2), later followed by his grandson, Tiarum. The combined number of *kaubure* and *bureitiman* was far less than under the LMS, as reported by Davis in 1892 (see Section 3.3.4).

The place of the NNG and of the district officer in the formal colonial structure between the 1920s and 1941 is shown in Figure 5. The structure comprised a chain of hierarchical authority and accountability featuring the British monarch and his secretary of state, the Western Pacific High Commissioner, and the Crown Colony Resident Commissioner. It stretched the great geographical distance from London, through Suva, Banaba, Beru, and the Government Station near Rungata on Nikunau, to the *kawa/mwaneaba* district of Tabomatang.

Communication, authority, responsibility, answerability and accountability were affected along this chain by, among other things, accounting documents, as per the following advice from Resident Commissioner Grimble and Colony Treasurer Clarke issued to district officers
(seemingly in the face of said officers neglecting to give the matters referred to their full attention):

These returns [from the headquarters island in each district] summarise statistically the life and condition of the Colony . . . for the preparation of the Colonial Annual Report [on Banaba] and for the information of the High Commissioner [in Suva] and Secretary of State [in London] on special subjects. (Grimble and Clarke, 1929, p. 28)

Figure 5 Structure of Governance incorporating Tabomatang in the 1920s to 1941 (Kain Nikunau held posts in italics, I-Matang in regular font)
The advice reflects the Colony Government’s insistence on political, legal and administrative conformity across the whole Colony and that district officers and the native government officials they oversaw were expected to comply with standardised practices in accounting and other functions (Lundsgaarde, 1968; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a). This was when shipping had become intermittent, and before telecommunications, other than the most basic telegraph, and aeroplanes. It could take several weeks to send a substantial message and documents between even Beru and Banaba and receive a detailed reply. Examples of a district officer’s return are available within the Tuvalu National Archives major project (e.g., see Ellice Islands District Report for the year 1936).

Under the change in financial autonomy mentioned above, the NNG was part of the Colony Government accounting entity. It acted as the agent of the Colony Government, to whom all revenues it collected belonged by virtue of Revised Native Laws 1916[63] and subsequent ordinances. These revenues from taxation, fees, levies, fines for civil misdemeanours, licences (e.g., for bicycles and dogs), etc. had to be accounted for separately from expenditures. The latter were appropriated as part of the Colony Government’s annual estimates process, and so specified as line items in the Colony Government’s budgets and accounts. They were paid from an imprest advanced and replenished periodically by the district officer to the scribe and held in the Island Chest. As treasurer, the scribe oversaw collection of revenues, incurrence of expenditures and compliance with financial regulations (Macdonald, 1971). He had to account for money held in the Island Chest, and transactions in and out, the records being subject to periodic audit by the district officer. After each visit to Nikunau, the district officer would expect to leave with cash belonging to the Colony Government surplus to that required to cover island expenditures. Among his other accounting and finance duties were preparing annual estimates, accounts and reports about the district; and submitting cash and returns (see quote above) to the Colony Government Treasury on Banaba.

Significant is that the amounts of money and the number of transactions in which the NNG was involved were not great. For example, the year 1922 was typical of the 1920s, and the total amount of annual expenditure was less than £300 (< AU$21,000 at 2014 prices) (NNG Cash Book 1915-33). Similarly, the expenditures involved in agency arrangements (e.g., paying medical orderlies on behalf of the GEIC Government) would have been well under £100 (< AU$7,000 at 2014 prices). These amounts were a tiny fraction of the GEIC Government’s annual revenues and expenditures (e.g., it total annual revenue in 1930 was
£55,000 (≈ AU$3.5m at 2014 prices)) and an even tinier one of those of the BPC (e.g., its annual revenue in 1921-22 was £1,200,000 (≈ AU$84m at 2014 prices) and its annual surplus was £200,000 (≈ AU$14m at 2014 prices)) (figures from Macdonald, 1982a, pp. 116, 121).

Notwithstanding how paltry the revenues and expenditures on the NNG were by outside comparison, they legitimised the district officer having a hand in its financial administration and administrative accounting during his intermittent tours to Nikunau (Macdonald, 1971, 1972). Thus, administrative accounting and public finance, and the colonial practices they reflected and constituted, had further wide-ranging socio-political consequences for Kain Nikunau.

3.4.2.1 Political Response among Kain Nikunau

The colonial structure of governance the NNG worked within appeared initially to allow Kain Nikunau to participate in the indirect rule now facilitated by the district officer. Indeed, the Kain Nikunau-composed NNG attained some civil authority separate from the LMS, especially as “non (I-Kiribati) natives, except (Colony) Government Officials” were not permitted to be present at its public meetings (section 8(6) of Revised Native Laws 1916); and for Kain Nikunau a distinction arose between religion and politics. However, the structure became as authoritarian in many ways as that previously impressed by the LMS, although this authoritarianism was more secular in character. Kain Nikunau increasingly and enduringly regarded the NNG not as a grass roots body but as an extension of the Colony Government, or Te Tautaeka, as they called it. Its practices were alien to Kain Nikunau by virtue of even fundamental matters, such as entailing the unusual technology of writing and dealing with external parties in English. They precipitated reports about I-Kiribati that were directed primarily at I-Matang, as per the quote in 3.4.2.1 from Grimble and Clarke, 1929). This amounted to a primarily temporal accountability to men outside utu and what remained of boti.

For several decades, unimane struggled to stem this additional (to the LMS and RC) source of erosion of their capacity for self-rule, and gradually began to re-assert more influence of a grass roots nature and a little independent of particular religious affiliations. Among ways they did this were to stay aloof of the NNG by not taking positions such as te tia-motiki-tueka and kaubure, and so distancing themselves from formal Colony Government controls and supervision by not being formal participants. At the same time, they influenced the NNG by nominating, from among their juniors, candidates for election. These candidates were of
election because they had nominated them by unimane; and custom demanded that these younger members should defer to their requirements. They also behaved in quasi-traditional ways at the level of kawa: this included frequent gatherings in te mwaneaba, whence they exercised authority in accordance with the now much modified te katei (modified that is by trader and missionary influence over the previous 100 years). Unimane also played significant parts in boboti and mronron and this also increased their influence (see below) (Macdonald, 1971, 1972; Maude, 1963; Sabatier, 1977).

This approach by unimane of keeping the NNG at a distance lasted until at least the late 1960s, despite the Colony Government’s repeated attempts in the 1950s and 1960s to increase their involvement (see Macdonald, 1972, 1982a). Indeed, use above of the word “enduring” is appropriate because an inherent suspicion of the Republic Government continues on Nikunau. This is notwithstanding that the NIC seems closer now to the islanders and their unimane than before (see Section 3.6.2).

In Section 3.4.1, there is an outline of the change in the Colony Government’s district structure after World War II[64] and so when Tarawa was again in British hands. On rare tours that Tarawa-resident district officers did make to Nikunau in the 1950s and 1960s, they scarcely had time to deal with matters of immediate importance and meet senior officials of the NNG (GEIC, 1957; Macdonald, 1972, 1982a; Maude and Doran, 1966), despite what might be inferred from the previous paragraph. On the one hand, this might be interpreted as a reduction in the quality and quantity of communication, oversight and advice given to NNG/NIC and TBN officials by Colony Government staff. An alternative interpretation is that there was less face-to-face interference by outsiders in Kain Nikunau governance processes at the kawa level, and even the island level, and greater autonomy for Kain Nikunau.

3.4.2.2 Social Matters on Nikunau

In the 1920s and 1930s, the personal and community conduct of Kain Nikunau continued to be affected in various, increasingly imposed ways through provisions in laws, regulations, instructions and legal decisions made by officials of the Colony Government, and, indeed, of the NNG; and the need for informing and having the consent of kaubure to do a wide range of things (e.g., see Regulations for the Good Order and Cleanliness 1933). Substantial changes continued being occasioned to Kain Nikunau’s style of settlement and dwellings, incorporating ideas about being “model” from an aesthetic perspective and easy for the civil
authorities to patrol and inspect (Geddes, 1977). Mwenga had to abut the street at right angles and conform to standard designs, which incorporated wells and reef-latrines. Maintaining the street and paths adjacent to each mwenga was the responsibility of the occupants of that mwenga, giving rise to the still daily occurrence there, and elsewhere in the diaspora, of sweeping the areas in question. Instead of burying their dead within mwenga, Kain Nikunau in each kawa had to establish a cemetery on its outskirts, including the one beyond Tabomatang, where Taburitongoun is said to maintain a presence—this practice seems to have relapsed to varying extents, and particularly on Tarawa.

By this time, it seems there were no Kain Nikunau still living in kainga; but if any were, they were obliged to relocate to the six kawa, more or less as they exist today along the western shore of the island. This final clearance of kainga further eroded relationships that constituted the institution of boti, continuing its path towards being a mere historic curiosity[65]. However, wider awareness of and relationships with koraki (i.e., broader-kindred utu) were maintained, including because of customary prohibitions on karikira (≅ incest) and they figured in customary inheritance, transfer and authentication of rights in aba and marine areas within and just beyond the reef, and technical knowledge and skills, including attendant magic, spells and rituals.

Regarding aba in particular, this customary inheritance and transfer had always entailed naturally coherent land areas having many owner-users. However, this potential fragmentation was less of a practical issue when Kain Nikunau lived alongside other boti members in kainga because this usually meant living close by the other utu members who shared usage rights on adjacent aba. When people were resettled in kawa this adjacency reduced and individuals were more likely to insist on their aba rights. Furthermore, as one generation of landowners willed rights to the next, the beneficiaries were becoming more widely distributed across kawa. Thus, each person’s assortment of aba was becoming more widely dispersed over the island, and increasingly further away from the kawa in which its owner resided. Furthermore, there was little by way of a countervailing force of practical usage and efficiency to prevent fragmentation; in particular, ownership only meant possessing certain usage rights and precluded trade aba as a commodity (Baaro, 1987; Lawrence, 1992; Lundsgaarde and Silverman, 1972; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1963; Pole, 1995; Sabatier, 1977).

The circumstances of fragmented land ownership led I-Matang to see land tenure on Nikunau and similar islands as economically inefficient and legally unclear, a perception that was
reinforced by the number of land disputes that occurred. However, attempts to permit the selling of land (including changing official laws) were thwarted by selling being seen as bringing kamama. Sellers would be regarded as putting themselves ahead of their descendants: they would making easy money instead of making a living in other ways (Baaro, 1987; Crocombe, 1987; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1963; Pole, 1995; Sabatier, 1977). Half a century and more later, land is still not something that is easy to trade in the Kiribati Islands group for the most part, either under te katei or laws enacted by successive central governments, and this is still regarded as a “problem” by I-Matang (see Duncan, 2014). Indeed, to assess the value of land, one needs to think in cultural terms rather than financial ones. This certainly applies on Nikunau, where many aba are probably owned in customary terms by Kain Nikunau diaspora and being utilised, and perhaps maintained and regenerated, in their prolonged absence by utu. As time passes, and one generation replaces another and diaspora never visit, let alone return permanently, one can see possession becoming the basis of usage rights.

On the matter of religion, Grimble’s arrival coincided with Goward’s departure and the arrival of George Eastman (1918-47) to replace him. Eastman and the LMS pastors he appointed to Nikunau were less involved overtly in the government of Nikunau, although they were still extremely influential among unimane and Kain Nikunau generally. The LMS also adopted a less high-handed, more tolerant approach in various matters, including towards the RC Church, which thus gained the political and social space to develop its activities with less hindrance, which happened particularly in the case of the kawa of Rungata, and so it became permanently established among Kain Nikunau. However, grievances stemming from previous imposition of LMS rules on everyone and similar contributed to an intense and continuing rivalry between members of the Protestant and RC congregations. This included claims and counter-claims of discrimination, and sectarian persecution, hostility and violence, although some of this was probably a continuation of intra-island animosity existing before the Christians arrived (Maude, 1967; Sabatier, 1977). Although today violence is rare, rivalry and reaction continues to characterise relations among these and other religious denominations, which arrived later and are mostly on Tarawa (e.g., see Maude, 1967).

Regarding formal education, religious bodies continued to be significant. Nnotwithstanding the Colony Government stipulating that young Kain Nikunau must attend primary school, until the 1960s the actual schools were provided by the LMS and RC churches; and the teachers were mission trained and affiliated. Indeed, among other things, each denomination
felt an obligation to provide such primary schools “for fear of losing the young people” (Sabatier, 1977, p. 212) to the opposing camp. This continued the sectarian divide, especially in the four kawa that had two schools, situated at either end of te kawa. Although unimane and unaine still figured in the personal development of young Kain Nikunau, compared with the past (see Grimble, 1921; Teweiariki, n.d.), this was diluted, as compulsory schooling meant that responsibility for teaching continued being transferred from them to school teachers.

Concomitantly, the school curriculum continued to reflect what religious bodies especially, and I-Matang more generally, regarded as appropriate knowledge and skills. Legends, history and ancestry of Kain Nikunau seem to have been considered by mission teachers as unbefitting, and so were left to unimane and unaine to cover outside school. However, how much of this occurred is not clear, and it is only to be expected that they did it erratically, having themselves been deprived of much of this knowledge while under LMS governance (see complaint by Grimble set out above and cited by Maude, 1989, p. xxiii (see also Macdonald, 1982a, p. 133)). Indeed, much knowledge of this today seems to have been transmitted through I-Matang anthropologists, etc., such as Grimble, Maude, Latouche and Geddes, rather than through traditional means; and this seems also to have affected knowledge relevant to material culture and sustaining of life in general (c.f., United Nations Development Programme, n.d.).

Although not providing any primary schools, the Colony Government did establish an Education Department in 1920, but it seems not to have tried to change much through direct intervention at the primary level until after the restoration[66]. Consistent with the Museum Policy, there seems to have been a basic assumption that after completing school virtually all pupils would spend most of their lives on Nikunau and pursue a kawa life (to fish, cut toddy and copra, be parents, contribute domestically, be Christians, etc.), perhaps going to Nauru or Banaba as labourers for short periods. Most teaching was in te taetae ni Kiribati, although a little English was taught.

The Department, which was based on Tarawa rather than Banaba, was responsible for the aforementioned KGVS from 1922, and a fair few Kain Nikunau went onto that school between then and the early 1960s[67]. Regarding its curriculum, the official view of the Colony Government, personified by the resident commissioner, was that even there the curriculum should not be particularly academic, but to focus on training I-Kiribati to be clerks for the Colony Government, the BPC, the NNG, etc. In addition to the Museum Policy,
this view reflected an underlying concern among British officials in London and on Banaba (and later Tarawa) that educating *Kain Nikunau* to too high a level could cause social disgruntlement and political discontent by raising their expectations too high (Burnett, 2005; Macdonald, 1982a). Furthermore, in the view of the missions, it might make them unwilling to accept church discipline. However, a contrary view was taken by the Education Department and the head and teachers at KGVS, who putting aside directions issued from time to time from distant Banaba, extended the curriculum to academic subjects and the main language of instruction to English. Incidentally, the latter presented difficulties for *Kain Nikunau* taught on Nikunau, compared with anyone taught on Banaba and, later, Tarawa, and anywhere else where pupils were exposed more to English while at primary school than on Nikunau, as continues to be the case (see Burnett)—English for the vast majority of *I-Kiribati* for almost all the time is but a “school language” (c.f., Gillard & Dyson, n.d., re predicament of *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand when it comes to language).

Another Department of the Colony Government with a Tarawa base before the evacuation was the Medical Department. One of its functions was to select and train medical dressers, and deploy them to Nikunau and other islands to conduct what have become the present-day nurse-run clinics and island hospitals. However, as related in Note 9, the range of diagnoses and treatments available the latter are rudimentary, and so to access outpatient or short stay medical care only available on Tarawa, *Kain Nikunau* residing on Nikunau had to travel to Tarawa by ship or, later, aeroplane. Generally, this travel was economically and logistically very difficult, if not impossible[68], and so they have been largely prevented from participating, except on specially arranged occasions (e.g., a visit for a *Kain Nikunau* group to receive hospital treatment from a team of visiting Australian eye specialists). This has also applied to most other amenities only available on Tarawa, and participating in secondary education, as per above, and politically in governmental organisations, including as elected representatives.

### 3.4.2.3 Economic Matters on Nikunau

*Kain Nikunau* having to comply personally with ever more stringent regulations had resource implications for them in various ways. They had to gather materials for and work on maintaining and improving *mwenga* and *te kawa* to *I-Matang* specifications. They also had to provide resources for the expansion of island infrastructure and administration. They had to contribute to the gradually increasing costs of the Colony Government administration. These all had consequences in terms of the daily activities in which *Kain Nikunau* were involved,
besides obligations to their utu, kawa and churches, and satisfying their personal demand through producing copra for an increasing but still basic range of trade goods, and obtaining subsistence produce from their aba, the reef and the ocean (see Maude, 1952). Only a portion of these impositions was offset using imported technologies in order that activities could be completed more efficiently.

As related in Section 3.4.2.1, taxation had been imposed officially on individuals from early on in the Colony period but mostly in practice had been agreed and raised communally. While this practice continued to some extent, it altered gradually, resulting in Kain Nikunau being assessed more individually, as supported by rolls of residents and land registers. Surviving records of the collection of land taxes (e.g., Land (Copra) Tax Register 1910-1916) show, for example, that Anare O’Connor (see Figure 2) was one of about 120 payers of land tax living in Tabomatang district. He held four aba and paid tax copra amounts annually on each of them totalling about £5 in value (≈ AU$360 at 2014 prices).

Regarding the acceptability and consequences of particular taxes paid in copra, as land taxes were easier to understand and bore some relationship to the ability to produce copra, they were more acceptable than poll taxes, or similar regressive taxes and other forms of revenue (e.g., licences). However, several I-Matang-inspired attempts to compile land registers since the 1900s (e.g., Register of Landowners and Lands 1908) and turn them to other uses, such as to regulate land transfers, proved to be dismal failures. The premises on which these written registers were based implied British views of land and systems of land ownership. These were far removed from Kain Nikunau practices of ownership, usage, conveyancing and meaning, as reflected in long-established oral accounting records maintained by unimane (see Section 3.2) (see Baaro, 1987; Lawrence, 1992; Lundsgaarde, 1968, 1974; Macdonald, 1982a; Pole, 1995).

In addition to tax copra, another type of taxation and form in which taxation was levied, took an altogether different quality: communal workdays; or, as it was regarded by Kain Nikunau, forced labour. With a few exemptions, every Kain Nikunau between 16 and 60 years of age was required to perform annually a specified number of days of communal works. When Campbell initiated this practice elsewhere in the Colony in about 1900, 78 days per year were specified, but because it was so unpopular, not to mention controversial in Britain (see Correspondent, 1913), this was later reduced to 52 (see Regulations for the Good Order and Cleanliness 1933) and then 24 days, until being abolished in the 1960s. It was extremely unpopular among Kain Nikunau even though the labour was used, according to official
rhetoric at least, to create and maintain island infrastructure. A continuing legacy of this unpopularity is a still strong aversion to performing unpaid work or making other efforts “for the Government” (see Macdonald, 1982a), including the Nikunau Island Council[69]. This is in complete contrast to the willing and cheerful attitude Kain Nikunau have towards exertions on behalf of utu, friends, their religious bodies and visiting strangers.

As related in Section 3.4.2.1, the amounts of money spent from Colony Government revenues on Nikunau was not great, and so a significant proportion of each individual Kain Nikunau’s tax contribution must have been appropriated for Colony Government expenditure elsewhere, which would have been mainly on Banaba (and later Tarawa), without any obvious benefit for the Kain Nikunau taxpayer or his/her island. In addition, Kain Nikunau had to pay school fees to churches for their children’s compulsory attendance at school. That Kain Nikunau continued meeting both central operational and capital expenditure burdens was notwithstanding the change in the British Government’s policy signalled in the Colonial Development Act 1929. This change hardly affected Nikunau or Kain Nikunau until the 1960s, except in respect of the TBN (see below), and the settling of Kiritimati (Christmas) Island and of islands in the Phoenix Group, and the subsequent Phoenix Islands Re-Settlement Scheme in the Solomon Islands (see Section 3.5.1).

Taxes being levied on individuals and individuals being required to perform communal workdays increased Kain Nikunau consciousness of various matters. They became more conscious of their individual selves. They saw themselves more as part of an immediate family. They were clearer as regards responsibilities and obligations they had in these capacities for various matters. Geddes (1977), writing about Kain Tabiteuea, the occupants of a neighbouring island, points out that this individuality existed before I-Matang entered the scene. It was based on land holdings and knowledge of technology. However, because the changes outlined above wrought by traders, missionaries and Colony Government officials weakened the social, political and religious structures and processes that had obscured this individuality, so the individuality was made plainer. This greater or plainer individual awareness among Kain Nikunau had consequences, for example extending to how they regarded land: te Kain Nikunau assumed a greater sense of personal and exclusive usage rights to particular aba.

On economic obligations to religious bodies, a significant development was that with the extension in practice (rather than only formally) of the Colony Government to the southern Kiribati Islands in 1918, the LMS still collected fines for religious misdemeanours, but only
from members of its congregation. In order to make up for lost income, it had its congregations turn to other ways to gather revenue for local and headquarters’ use. These included informal tithes, staging social events, operating religious body trade stores and producing handicrafts (e.g., coconut mats, fishing hats, knives of sharks’ teeth) for sale to visitors and temporary residents, particularly on Banaba and Tarawa. This placed greater work burdens on its members, leading to some switching their allegiance. Indeed, some Kain Nikunau had previously found favour in the RC clergy paying them (including in tobacco) to build churches and supply the clergy’s domestic needs (e.g., food, house materials), as distinct from the LMS compelling them to contribute labour or copra towards the costs of erecting churches (Macdonald, 1971, 1982a).

In Section 3.4.1, the response is related of district officers in Tuvalu, the Southern Gilberts District and elsewhere to the demise on individual islands of private traders in the early 1930s, by introducing the idea of boboti; as is the revival of these in the late 1940s, using capital from the Government Trade Scheme. I have not ascertained how many boboti were established on Nikunau first time around, but it could well have been three or four, given how many kawa had private trade stores[70]. After the restoration, although there was just the one, TBN, which was headquartered in Rungata, it had at least three branch stores, with copra sheds. Moreover, more in conjunction with TBN than in competition with it, a few church congregations on Nikunau established small mronron stores. Not only were these boboti (and mronron) vital to the copra cutting activities on which households were so dependent, but they were significant as a primary vehicle for the re-emerging political influence of unimane vis-à-vis the NNG and, in turn, the Colony Government (Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1949, Roniti, 1985).

Elaborating what is alluded to in Section 3.4.1 about the 1950s’ circumstances of TBN, senior Colony Government officials and managers of the Colony Government Trade Scheme (all based by then on Tarawa) devised and codified governance, operating, accounting[71] and auditing rules for TBN. Among other things, they provided for were I-Matang registrars and other Colony Government officials to oversee TBN’s workings; including approving annual estimates, performing audits and helping decide about distributing profits and appointing managers. Officials could exercise other influence, or forms of intervention, because of TBN’s source of capital (i.e., the Trade Scheme) and the Co-operative Societies Ordinance 1952 and other regulations under which it was obliged to operate. Moreover, the goods that TBN sold to Kain Nikunau were purchased from the Trade Scheme and its
successor organisations, all Colony Government monopolies or duopolies until at least the late 1990s. The copra it bought from producers was sold onto and shipped to Tarawa to what was initially the Trade Scheme and then GEIC Copra Board, but both part of the Colony Government set up (Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1949, Roniti, 1985). The influence was reinforced from time to time by events. When copra prices began declining in the 1960s, the cooperative societies in general were kept going in part by the Colony Government, including through the Producers’ Development and Stabilization Fund and successor schemes. Indeed, when prices picked up again during the 1970s world oil crisis, the Colony Government intervened by providing subsidies to copra cutters to encourage cooperative development of smallholdings and improvement of trees, which had the intended effect of increasing capacity and harvesting among Kain Nikunau. However, this was short-lived and the downward trend resumed, giving rise to further intervention by the Colony Government and the successor Republic Government (see Section 3.7.4) (Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1949, Roniti, 1985).

Roniti’s (1985) experience elsewhere suggests that this exercising of influence and regulatory intervention might have led Kain Nikunau to change their opinions about TBN and regard it, in like fashion to the NNG, as an extension of the Colony Government. However, this was not the researcher’s impression when on Nikunau in the mid- and late 1980s. As Macdonald (1972, 1982a) relates, in stark contrast to them continuing to be aloof from the NNG/NIC, unimane predominated in TBN’s governance, notably on its governing body) and the appointment of a paid I-Kiribati manager (e.g., Taniera, whose influence in the boboti movement went far beyond Nikunau), notwithstanding the circumstances of greater central control of TBN compared with its pre-war precursors. They derived significant influence from this, as TBN was crucial to Kain Nikunau being able to resume paying taxes, school fees, licences, fines and other payments to governmental and religious organisations, and these funds flows were crucial to these external organisations maintaining the revival of their activities in the post-war era after external assistance (e.g., subventions from the British Government) subsided.

Concomitantly, boboti and (and mronron) led to Kain Nikunau becoming more involved collectively in the governance and management of trading than hitherto, including because the codified rules provided for meetings of members (i.e., the whole population of Nikunau. The cooperative form of these entities meant they were in tune with te katei (Macdonald, 1982a), and the kamama enumerated in Section 3.1.2.1 was avoided. Initially, boboti were a
Kain Nikunau grass roots way to overcome the jeopardy in which low copra prices and lack of private profitability had placed the importation of goods that Kain Nikunau had become used to and the export of their sole cash crop, copra. Copra prices were high either side of the wartime disruption of trade, because of world shortages of oils and fats, and in the second of these periods Kain Nikunau again responded by increasing cultivation and production. This allowed them to increase their purchases of imported goods, including replacing hardware that had deteriorated during the war but for which replacements had not been available.

Although the post-war boom created the potential for boboti to make significant profits and for Kain Nikunau to share these, they decided to keep them low through low mark ups and discounts. The profits that were made were appropriated for acquiring shares in the Wholesale Society and re-investment in the enterprise itself, including expanding into functions that were novel to Kain Nikunau, such as providing a savings and loans bank, and the showing of feature films.

The latter were the first opportunity for many Kain Nikunau to observe the world outside, albeit as slanted by Hollywood and other English-language filmmakers. The arrival of the reels of film was subject to the vagaries of shipping during the 1950s and 1960s. However, when the internal air service materialised in the 1970s, a film arrived each week and was shown on successive nights in the six kawa along the island: the seventh night was te Tabati, which was still observed strictly. Although few followed the dialogue or felt an inclination to relate to the plot, Kain Nikunau attended enthusiastically at these showings, and wondered at a world only a few had had chance to experience first-hand, as seamen or students—temporary work overseas was still restricted to Banaba and Nauru (see Section 3.4.2.4) until the 1980s.

3.4.2.4 Nikunau as a Source of Labour for the BPC

Phosphate mining on Nauru and Banaba is outlined in Section 3.4.2. These affected Kain Nikunau, first, as subjects of a Colony Government that was preoccupied by the mining and under the direct and indirect (through the British Government in London) influence of mining organisation staff; and second, as being among the labourers recruited to go and work there. The first is alluded to in several places in previous sections, Banaba having been the Colony Government headquarters, and Nikunau only one island in one of the districts of the Colony. As to the second, labouring took many Kain Nikunau away from Nikunau for years at a time. For example, among ana utu Ekineti ni kaan, at various times between the 1930s and 1970s,
Ekineti’s two grandfathers and her father worked on Banaba and Nauru, and in the first case his wife and one of their children accompanied them. Indeed, on at least one occasion, he was contracted not as a labourer but as *te unimane*. This was in accordance with the policies of the BPC and respective governmental authorities on the two islands. These organisations tried to maintain order and social stability through existing cultural means, including by housing *Kain Nikunau* families adjacently to form a community of mixed gender and varying ages from each labour supplying island, with *unimane* providing governance and discipline. Two other famous examples of *Kain Nikunau* on Banaba were Nabetari and Kabunare, who both were there when the Japanese occupied the island; they escaped the executions that were meted out to most workers by different stratagems (see Macdonald, 1982a).

Another policy that fitted with *Kain Nikunau*’s values and culture was that men/families took it in turns to be contracted, and so everyone on Nikunau could share the experiences and earnings. Although wages, other emoluments (e.g., housing, rations) and conditions were low by the standards of white labourers in Australia and New Zealand, they compared favourably with those for other overseas work that *Kain Nikunau* could obtain. Thus, they seem not to have felt exploited by the work, although disputes arose occasionally over wages and conditions, including because these varied according to the race of the workers, some of whom were from Asian countries (see Williams and Macdonald, 1985)[72]. Besides, *Kain Nikunau* earned significantly more than they would have from copra and subsistence; and were alleviated of the obligation present on Nikunau of completing days of communal works. They could also spend their earnings at the BPC stores, which because they catered for *I-Matang* staff, Nauruans (in the case of Nauru) and the labourers of various nationalities, sold many items not usually available on Nikunau—the stores seem to have been run to benefit the *I-Matang* employees, rather than to make (monopoly) profits for the BPC. They also had access to public service and recreational facilities they were not used to on Nikunau, or were more elaborate than there (King and Sigrah, 2004; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams and Macdonald, 1985).

During their work absences, *Kain Nikunau* usually remitted cash and goods to *utu* on Nikunau. These remittances, which could be a few multiples of the amount that Nikunau residents were earning from copra[73], satisfied the economic dependence that *utu* on Nikunau had on *utu* working away, but satisfying social dependence was more difficult. The cash was transmitted using rudimentary banking arrangements, not dissimilar to those of the present, administered through the Colony Government Treasury, the district officer and the
NNG scribe. This cash helped *Kain Nikunau* meet increased living costs they were facing (see Section 3.4.2.3, including school fees and religious body donations) and to acquire durable goods (e.g., tools and other hardware, bicycles, radios). However, the latter goods were mostly sent from the respective phosphate island to Nikunau on the recruiting ships, because the BPC stores were better stocked and could be cheaper. At the end of their contracts, *Kain Nikunau* added to these durable goods by bringing home more, rather than bringing home too much of their savings as cash, because there was not that much on Nikunau to spend it on, although they did bring some cash savings home with them, usually to share these among *utu*.

A range of other experiences was enjoyed while away. *Kain Nikunau* worked set hours in return for cash. They were overseen and instructed in their work by another person from outside their *utu*, sometimes *te Kain Nikunau*. They lived off many foodstuffs included in BPC-supplied rations to which they had had little, if any, exposure, either because of high price or non-availability on Nikunau—these probably included items that are now regarded as staples or ceremonial delicacies, such as rice, tea, flour and tinned corn beef (Lewis, 1988). They learned to use tools and machinery to which they were unaccustomed. They lived in dwellings of *I-Matang* design and construction, which had walls and rooms. They possessed furnishings and fittings, and rudimentary appliances, which were powered by electricity. Their exposure was increased to working with and, to some extent living alongside (and even marrying), *I-Kiribati* from other islands, Tuvaluans, Chinese, *I-Matang*, etc.

When they arrived home, *te Kain Nikunau* might find that while *utu* had utilised his *aba* during his absence, they had not done much to maintain and regenerate them. For children brought up on the phosphate islands for even the two or three years of a contract, adjusting to the more austere life on Nikunau could be daunting. In later years of mining, when more skills were entailed in labouring jobs (e.g., because machinery replaced pick axes and shovels), the BPC tried to save on training costs and to retain the most efficient workers by renewing contracts. This might entail a family being absent from Nikunau for an entire childhood. It resulted in children not being exposed to knowledge and skills essential to live on Nikunau. They might not be able to fish, cut toddy and perform other chores; survive on Nikunau foodstuffs; and behave in keeping with expectations of other *Kain Nikunau*. They would find most aspects of life very different. The no doubt well-meant BPC-sponsored schools did not provide learning that was relevant to this life (personal communication from Keetia Kititan).
Kain Banaba suffered various wrongs at the hands of the British Government, the BPC and British dominion interests, including over dispossession and exploitation of, and banishment from, their land, their deportation to and continuing exile on Rabi (Hindmarsh, 2002; Kempf, 2003; King and Sigrah, 2004; Sigrah & King, 2001; Silverman, 1971; Tabucanon, 2012; Teaiwa, 2005; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985). It may seem strange that Kain Nikunau seem not to have felt aggrieved for Kain Banaba; or about how little of the financial benefit from mining accrued to the population of the Colony. However, there is an explanation for this: Kain Nikunau regarded Banaba as a separate social and political entity from Nikunau, notwithstanding the two islands having been established by British authorities within the same single polity by 1900. Indeed, it seems to have been only since 1979 that the identification with a single polity has gained ground among I-Kiribati, including Kain Nikunau. Even then, this is usually more so among those educated on Tarawa prominent in the political and technocratic leaders who now reside there (see Lundsgaarde, 1968; Macdonald, 1982a, 1996a, 1998). The main interest of Kain Nikunau in Banaba was as a place to labour, and they seem not to have regarded themselves as entitled to a share in the phosphate wealth. For their part, Kain Banaba were probably as upset by what Kain Nikunau did on their island as they were by what I-Matang did. They showed this in acts of protest that they staged when the last of the phosphate workers were leaving in 1980 (personal communication from Keetia Kititan).

In contrast, applying some present day I-Matang thinking about property rights, indigenous peoples and nation states, a case could be made that all residents of the Colony/Republic of Kiribati had some macroeconomic entitlement. Indeed, from the late 1960s, such an entitlement actually eventuated, when Nauru’s independence obliged the BPC to recognise the world market value of the phosphate ore from the two islands. From then until mining ceased in 1980, the BPC paid to the Colony Government several millions of dollars annually. Some of those receipts were applied to economic and social development of the Colony, but far more on Tarawa than on Nikunau or elsewhere. The rest was used to build up an investment fund the aforementioned RERF. As elaborated in Section 3.6.1, it has provided the Republic Government with a substantial proportion of its revenue in recent years (e.g., in 2010, AU$22m ≈ 25% –see Kiribati Government, 2012). A small proportion of this finds its way to Nikunau but is mostly expended on Tarawa. This benefits the many Kain Nikunau now resident there, following the migration to there outlined in Section 3.5.2 and life for the Kain Nikunau diaspora there in Section 3.6.
3.4.2.5 Nikunau Becoming an Outer Island

The relative vibrancy on Banaba and Tarawa, as a result of Colony Government, BPC and associated economic and social development activities, contrasted with torpor on Nikunau and the other Outer Islands. As outlined in Section 3.4.1, in response to concerns recognised by the mid-1960s on Tarawa and in Honiara and London, some Colony Government development efforts were exerted on or in relation to Nikunau. They were linked to new district facilities on Tabiteuea and a district officer on Beru to serve Nikunau and the other islands in the Southern Gilberts District (see Section 3.4.1). They included some infrastructure and public facility projects and were in addition to developments related earlier about subsidies to encourage cooperative development of smallholdings and improvement of trees (see Section 3.4.2.3); the subsidies were extended to guaranteeing the price the copra cutters received for their produce, and so boost Kain Nikunau incomes. One of the objects of the projects was to try to make living on Nikunau more attractive to Kain Nikunau, in an effort to stem the flow of migration to Tarawa.

At first, the proposed projects mostly derived from I-Matang ideas, and were designed and would have been implemented with I-Matang project management assistance. Thus, among Kain Nikunau they often fell into the category of being “for the Government”, and so did not proceed smoothly. Unimane withheld their approval, and so Kain Nikunau were reluctant to agree to tax increases that were needed to provide local contributions towards a project’s costs (Macdonald, 1972, 1982a). Realising this was not working, the Colony Government associated subsequent projects with the NIC and involved unimane and other residents of each kawa. These projects did proceed, being seen as having community benefits: indeed, unimane proved adept at devising creative arrangements for raising funds under the auspices of kawa and churches. Gradually, the number of projects deemed as in the latter category increased and there arose several new or revamped facilities. The consequences for Kain Nikunau included not only some extended infrastructure, facilities, communications, and education, health and welfare services—the structures included classrooms, clinics, staff houses, an island courthouse and NIC buildings, water and sewerage systems, a deeper channel in the reef, roads and causeways, and the scheduled airline and telephone connections—but also a greater influence for unimane in governance and court proceedings, as well as trade. In addition, how Kain Nikunau regarded the Colony Government seemed to change a little, from being regarded as an instrument of authoritarian control from Tarawa to
one of constructive control and source of conditional external funds (Macdonald, 1972, 1982a).

These developments involved various administrative and accounting changes for the NIC compared with hitherto under the NNG (see Macdonald, 1972). However, the changes did not alter fundamentally the way that the local government on Nikunau was subservient, financially and otherwise, to the Colony Government, and subsequently the Republic Government. Although the pre-1917 concept of an Island Fund, replete with revenues, expenditures and (surplus-generated) balances (see Note 59), was resurrected, the NIC was made responsible for many of the recurrent costs of projects, including some salaries and physical maintenance. These expenditures exceeded local revenues and left the NIC dependant on specific and general grants and subventions from the Colony Government. These grants and subventions entailed financially restrictive conditions, including in matters of process, reporting and audit, all of which meant a continuing lack of financial autonomy (Macdonald, 1972, 1982a).

Notwithstanding these moves in the 1960s and early 1970s, they were minor by comparison with Tarawa, and the difference widened between life on Nikunau and life on Tarawa. Anyone who migrated there, including Kain Nikunau, soon got into that different life on Tarawa, no matter how peripheral their situation compared with people at the heart of it; that is, I-Matang and the inklings of an emerging I-Kiribati élite. However, migration then was restricted to anyone having customary links with Tarawa or an acceptable reason for going there, such as education or official employment. This difference in lifestyles, including its monetised nature, the modern facilities and the seemingly higher standard of living increased the perception of Nikunau and similar islands being Outer and less attractive to Kain Nikunau, whose aspirations had been raised by education, the lives of BPC staff on Banaba, the images they viewed on movies, etc.

3.5 Making of the Kain Nikunau (or I-Kiribati) Diaspora 1930s-2010s

The Kain Nikunau diaspora refers not only to a group or community of people who identify with Nikunau and who have dispersed beyond the island, but also the actual dispersion, and the collection of places inhabited by such a group. Various references are made in Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 to Kain Nikunau being in diaspora, in addition to those who left Nikunau only for temporary periods, short and long. The places making up this diaspora include Tarawa Atoll, Outer Islands of the Republic in the Kiribati Archipelago and in the Line Islands, Ghizo, Wagina and Honiara in the Solomon Islands, and New Zealand Australia and
Britain; although in the case of these three I-Matang countries, the diaspora is more accurately described as an I-Kiribati diaspora rather than a Kain Nikunau diaspora. How some of these places came to be part of the diaspora is dealt in turn below.

3.5.1 Phoenix Islands Settlement and Re-Settlement

As foreshadowed in Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.3, a change in British Government policy vis-à-vis its colonies was marked by the Colonial Development Act 1929. Although the Colony Government only received one grant before the wartime evacuation that first grant affected Kain Nikunau and it is still of significant consequence for them today, having given rise to that part of the diaspora we find in the Solomon Islands. The grant set in motion the ill-fated resettlement scheme to Manra (also known as Hull), Orona (Sydney) and Nikumaroro (Gardner) Islands in the Phoenix Group[74], in which a significant number of Kain Nikunau participated. The scheme was predicated on a view that arose frequently and enthusiastically among I-Matang about the number of Kain Nikunau having increased beyond what their drought prone island could sustain, especially as they needed more by way of copra to meet the obligations imposed on them by the Colony Government, the churches and the level of trade goods they were now used to. The other variable in the equation was that the Phoenix Islands were empty but habitable. Participants in the scheme were persuaded to relinquish, at least as far as I-Matang were concerned, their rights to aba on Nikunau in exchange for land in the Phoenix Group, and were relocated there just before the wartime evacuation. The settlements they created closely resembled kawa on Nikunau, replete with mwenga, mwaneaba, boboti stores and churches, and families were allocated aba to cultivate, including for copra (Laxton, 1951; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1952).

However, it transpired that the initial settlement was only temporary, albeit that it lasted about two decades. The settlers were said to have experienced various setbacks, mostly to do with what was sustainable on their new islands, as they too were drought prone, and with the islands being remote from Nikunau. The post-war Colony Government, now following a policy of centralisation, also found the islands inconvenient and costly to administer, being remote from Tarawa (Laxton, 1951; Macdonald, 1982a). It addressed the problem by a further resettlement, not to Nikunau but to the then British Protectorate of the Solomon Islands, and this was again funded from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Thus, between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, the settlers and their descendants were re-located at intervals, the first lots to Ghizo and remaining lots to Wagina (e.g., see Cochrane, 1969, 1970; Fraenkel, 2003; Knudson, 1964; Larmour, 1984). Again, the settlements and other
living conditions they created resembled those on Nikunau. Their descendants are still there and in Honiara (Fraenkel, 2003); and are still in regular contact with, and even visit, their utu in Kiribati, including ana utu Ekineti.

3.5.2 Drift to Tarawa

Whereas the diaspora arising in the Solomon Islands arose through an organised movement of groups of significant numbers, the diaspora elsewhere arose from an individual, immediate family or similar small number moving in dribs and drabs; and, in the case of (South) Tarawa, settling physically within existing settlements comprised of Kain Tarawa, Kain Nikunau and I-Kiribati from other islands, and rejoining socially utu and other Kain Nikunau with whom they or their utu had links on Nikunau. As indicated in Section 3.1.2.1, the size of this component of the diaspora living presently on Tarawa is difficult to ascertain, partly for reasons of definition, as there has been much intermarriage there with I-Kiribati from other islands, and with a few foreigners. However, from the 2010 Census (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2013), between 2,200 and 2,400 Kain Nikunau normally reside there, including over 1,000 who were born on Nikunau, and there are possibly upwards of another 1,000 persons there with at least a tentative link by blood, tibutibu or marriage to Nikunau.

This is out of a total population on (South) Tarawa of over 50,000 and rising quickly, having grown eightfold since the 1960s, and more besides compared with before that. The incessant pattern of this growth is illustrated in Figure 6. However, it is probable that the 1947 figure shown there was affected by the war, and a better base number is probably that before the war, when the population of North and South Tarawa combined was probably stable at around 3,500 (Maude and Doran, 1966).
In any case, it is not the exact number that is important here, but the nature of the migration that gave rise to the circumstances of Kain Nikunau’s diaspora on Tarawa. The migration may be passed over as just another example of the common phenomenon of *urbanisation* (see Bryant-Tokalau, 1995; Connell and Lea, 2002); and may just as easily attributed to *colonialism* (see Wickramasinghe and Hopper, 2005) or *climate change* (see Locke, 2009). However, it is possible to delve into the phenomena further, including to see what part has been played by accounting ideas, applications and usages.

### 3.5.2.1 Tarawa’s Physical and Financial Metamorphosis

An appreciation of the metamorphosis that has occurred on Tarawa in the decades since the 1950s is relevant to understanding how and why migration from Nikunau and other Outer Islands started and has continued unabated, making a substantial contribution to the growth shown in Figure 6, compared with the contribution of natural growth. The migration can be connected to a combination of economic, social and political occurrences and conditions of possibility on Tarawa compared with elsewhere. Furthermore, how accounting usages have contributed to these occurrences and conditions is not difficult to exemplify. The people most prominent in the relevant usages have been comprised of:

- *I-Matang* officials of the Governments of Great Britain and of the Colony in restoring the Colony Government administration, and reconstructing and developing the Kiribati and other islands comprising the Colony; and then

- *I-Matang* and other foreign representatives of organisations involved in social and economic development through the aid industry in continuing to develop and exert influence over the territories comprising the Republic, assisted by an emergent *I-Kiribati* élite of politicians, officials of the Republic Government and persons prominent in institutions inherited from formal colonial times.

The one set of *I-Matang* officials involved in the situation referred to in the first bullet point was in Tarawa applying for capital from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to develop infrastructure and service facilities, and raising local revenues to fund their running costs. The other set was in Suva for a while, then Honiara, and in London evaluating the applications, and then approving them, usually with some revisions, or refusing them or not actioning them. Accounting usages were clearly implicated in this application process (e.g.,
using project evaluation techniques) and in how successful applications were implemented (e.g., using project accounting and auditing). Although not great, the projects undertaken between 1950 and 1980 were in stark contrast with the low level of Colony Government involvement in such activities only a generation or so earlier. Similar happenings and usages of accounting have occurred and continue to occur in the situation referred to in the second bullet point, but in ever more diverse and sophisticated ways. I leave these to Section 3.6, which deals with Kiribati after formal colonial rule ended.

Tarawa would probably have risen to some position of precedence in the Colony, and then Republic, even if Maude’s plans for economic and social development along decentralised lines (see GEIC, 1946; Lawrence, 1992) had materialised, rather than being thwarted by post-war shortages of physical resources, financial support and leadership (see Section 3.4.1.2). On arriving in 1952, Resident Commissioner Bernacchi substituted a policy of centralised development for the one Maude had drawn up and which, under Peel, had stalled (Macdonald, 1982a). The several reasons for this policy change were a mix of external, internal and personal.

The British Government made a fundamental change to its policy about decolonisation of its remaining empire, and this was reflected in its priorities for distributing the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. The existing policy had been consistent with a territory continuing to be a colony and receiving support to spread infrastructure, institutions, etc., so that it was dispersed in subservient local government jurisdictions of the colony, which often reflected pre-colonial or other territorial divisions. The new policy involved transferring sovereignty to a single government covering the entire territory within the existing boundary of a colony and all the native peoples therein; and to use the Fund to locate infrastructure, institutions, etc. at the intended seat of the government (Morgan, 1980). In the Colony’s case, assuming that sovereignty might be forthcoming eventually (but bearing in mind that that eventuality was by no means a foregone conclusion even in the early 1970s – see Macdonald, 1982a; Morgan, 1980), Tarawa quickly emerged as the intended seat of the government[75].

At the level of the Colony, the Colony Government had always had to be concerned about economy, containing costs and being financially self-sufficient. It had successfully struggled to achieve and maintain this until the Japanese invaded, and without receiving much by way of contributions from the BPC (see Section 3.4.1.1). Centralising new amenities on Tarawa reduced its needs for capital from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, compared with spreading such amenities across a score of remote islands. Moreover, it incurred less
expenditure in operating them, both because of economies of scale of individual services, and because administering the Colony Government as a whole would cost less. *I-Matang* staff were the largest item of operating costs and the resource in shortest supply, despite never having had to be recruited in great numbers[76]. It was believed that centralised facilities would mean having to have fewer of these staff than otherwise, and that they would be more productive by being in close proximity. They would also be easier and less costly to recruit and maintain if they and their families had ready access to amenities of reasonable quality (e.g., *I-Matang* doctors working at a central hospital on Tarawa would be able to send their children to high quality primary schools if they too were on Tarawa) (Macdonald, 1982a).

For Bernacchi in particular, personal control was a further reason for choosing to centralise: he favoured having as many functions and amenities as possible at the Colony headquarters within close proximity, in order that they would be under his forceful leadership and watchful eye (see Macdonald, 1982a). The money, personnel, activities and other operations aspects they entailed could be administered and controlled without the difficulties that would arise if they were dispersed to remote islands. Accounting was still essential to this control, especially when HM Treasury were involved up to 1955. However, paperwork relating to most transactions and events, of which there seems to have been a great deal, would not be delayed either by the vagaries of inter-island shipping or by any officials being stationed on Outer Islands being well out of the reach of the resident commissioner, should they be misguided enough not to give appropriate priority to completing accounting and related paperwork.

The extent of centralisation even by the mid-1950s is evident from the finances of the Colony, if not from the proportion of the *I-Kiribati* population living on Tarawa—that was still only about 10%, whereas it has increased since to around 50%. GEIC Government annual recurrent expenditures were about AU£600,000 in the mid-1950s and Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and other grants to the GEIC Government were about AU£100,000 annually (GEIC, 1957). These contrasted completely with annual expenditures by the NNGs in the late 1950s of less than AU£1,000 (Island Fund Estimates – Nikunau, 1957-67); which was not much different from the equivalent on the other Outer Islands—by this time, Banaba was more like a private BPC industrial complex than an island in the Colony.

Between 1952 and 1969, Bernacchi and Andersen succeeded in re-engineering the trading enterprises operating across the Colony and in developing centralised amenities. As related in
Section 3.4.1.1, the thriving Colony Government Trade Scheme had been transformed by the mid-1950s into the GEIC Wholesale Society and the GEIC Copra Board. At least three retail cooperative societies were well established on Tarawa and giving a lead to TBN and its counterparts on other islands. These successive resident commissioners also presided over the construction of amenities that supported these commercial activities, as well as ones that were governmental and social. Thus, prominent among amenities established on Tarawa by the 1970s were the port; the paved road and causeways; houses of various classes for I-Matang and I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan employees of the Colony Government; the central hospital and subsidiary medical facilities; and a revamped KGVS for (more) boys, EBS for girls (these were subsequently amalgamated as KGVEBS) and other education facilities. The latter were mostly primary schools run under the auspices of the Colony Government, rather than religious bodies (c.f. Section 3.4.2.2). They also included lower tertiary level institutions, comprising specialist institutions for teachers, seafarers and nurses, and a technical institute with a range of trades and clerical courses[77]. Many of the places available at KGVEBS and the tertiary level institutions included the possibility of boarding for Kain Nikunau and other Outer Island residents, and even for some Tarawa residents.

Andersen also instituted political bodies that gave rise under his successors to various semblances of internal self-rule, and put the Colony on the road to being a Republic. The significant bodies (see Gilbert and Ellice Islands Order 1974) were based entirely on Tarawa, with representatives from Outer Islands travelling there to participate, and eventually finding it more convenient and otherwise better and possible to live on Tarawa for most of the time. The Colony Government’s administration was subdivided into several departments, for which offices were built, as was a building for the political bodies to meet. This was used by Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu, the Republic’s legislature, for the two decades after the Republic was inaugurated, before being superseded by the present Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu complex.

3.5.2.2 Metamorphosis and Migration

The connection between the metamorphosis of Tarawa and the migration of Kain Nikunau to Tarawa, so that it comprises most substantial component of the diaspora, is mainly to do with how Kain Nikunau accessed the amenities referred to in analysing the metamorphosis and, concurrently, provided some of the labour needed for the amenities to function. This is exemplified in the following rich and illuminating migration story. The essence of the story is that in the space of 40 or so years, the four generations of ana utu Ekineti ni kaan on the
maternal side, as shown on Figure 2, either moved outside Nikunau, initially to Tarawa or were born outside the island, mainly on Tarawa, and most of the survivors still live on Tarawa among a complex mix of *Kain Tarawa* and *I-Kiribati* from the other Kiribati Islands. This is in contrast with the fourth and earlier generations having spent most of their lives on Nikunau among virtually all *Kain Nikunau*, mostly by consanguinity but some by affinity. The story is not unusual among *Kain Nikunau*. Critical events are as follows.
Ana utu Ekineti’s Migration Story

In the 1930s, Neete, the youngest son of Anare (see Figure 2), and so a great uncle of Ekineti, gained a place at KGVS and left Tabomatang on Nikunau to study on Tarawa. Subsequently, his studies took him to the Central Medical School in Fiji (see “About Fiji School of Medicine”, 2009; “Fiji Medicine Men”, 1944; GEIC, 1957). Afterwards, he practised medicine on Tarawa for nearly 50 years, mostly at the central hospital built by the Colony Government in the 1950s and then at its successor built with Japanese aid in the 1990s. He died in about 2000, survived by a score of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, who mostly live on Tarawa or, in the case of two daughters who followed him into medicine and their families, in New Zealand; but not on Nikunau.

About 1960, Eria, a younger brother of Kenati (see Figure 2), and so an uncle of Ekineti, moved from Nikunau to Tarawa to live with his uncle Neete. Neete had obtained a job for him in the hospital pharmacy and over the next four decades, Eria rose to become a senior administrator in the pharmacy, on the way marrying, becoming entitled to a government house for rent; and having three children, one of whom is now settled in New Zealand with her family. In the late 1960s, he was joined on Tarawa by his parents, Tiare and Beiarung (see Figure 2), and his five younger siblings. Tiare had recently returned to Nikunau after completing a labouring contract on Nauru—Beiarung had remained on Nikunau and he had remitted most of his earnings to her. They moved to Tarawa to live with Eria, to live in a cash economy, as Tiare had become used to on Nauru, and enable Eria’s siblings better access to formal education than they would have on Nikunau. Indeed, their move to Tarawa a younger brother, Iotebatu, to train at the Marine Training Centre (established in 1967 by Hamburg Sud in conjunction with the British and German Governments and the United Nations – Couper, 2009) and thence became a seafarer with a German shipping line. He used his earnings to purchase te aba on Tarawa[78] and erect a non-traditional dwelling, on which Tiare and his family settled. This te utu still live on te aba, including the retired Eria and several children and grandchildren; and his sister and several children and grandchildren, although one of her children now lives in Australia with her family; but none live on Nikunau. However, wheras once this te aba was spacious, and there was much vacant land around it, it is now quite crowded, and hemmed in by aba occupied by households with no connection to te utu or to Nikunau.

In the early 1970s, two of Tiare’s grandchildren, namely the Ekineti of ana utu Ekineti ni kaan and her brother Botibara were sent by their parents on Nikunau to live with Tiare’s
family on Tarawa. This was in order that they could complete primary school on Tarawa and be better placed than if they had remained on Nikunau to go on to EBS and KGVS, which they did. Thence, Ekineti went to Tarawa Teachers College, did a year of teaching practice on Nikunau and spent three years in Papua New Guinea to undertake further study, before returning to Tarawa. Subsequently, she has lived variously in New Zealand, England and on Tarawa. Her brother studied accounting variously and worked thereafter in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, before retiring recently. He rose to a middle level accounting position and was based on Tarawa mainly but also on Kirimiti (Christmas) Island.

Ekineti and Botibara were eventually joined on Tarawa by their three younger siblings. One came in the company of her pastor husband, who is of Tuvaluan origin and had been posted to Nikunau; and the others came so that they could attend secondary schools run by two of the several Christian religious bodies that were becoming established on Tarawa. One sibling now works in government administration; another runs a home bakery business, supplying bread to trade stores nearby; and the third worked for the Republic’s sole commercial bank before retiring recently and joining her husband and business partner in operating a small trade store, whose customers are mainly his Kain Tarawa utu. Incidentally, this couple met while both were in New Zealand on work permit schemes that were precursors of the present RSE schemes; and their first child, having been born in New Zealand (and so obtaining citizenship) but then brought up on Tarawa, now resides in New Zealand.

In 1990, Ekineti’s parents, Kenati and Beretekira, left Tabomatang on Nikunau to join their son and daughters. They brought with them the widowed, Rawatiu, Beretekira’s mother. The main reason for their move to Tarawa was to obtain the economic and social support they could expect in their old age under te katei from their children and grandchildren. The now widowed Beretekira lives with her daughter with the trade store.

All five of Kenati and Beretekira’s children married non-Kain Nikunau and among them they have 15 children, and several grandchildren, so far. The following statistics show the overwhelming extent of ana utu Ekineti ni kaan’s migration. Among Ekineti’s four children and their 11 first cousins, only Kuritiita was born on Nikunau, and she left there when only two weeks old, to live in New Zealand and now England. However, of the 15 and their children, most are resident on Tarawa still and none are resident on Nikunau. Going back one generation, of the nine siblings that Kenati and Beretekira have or had between them, and the descendants of these siblings, which total about 70, only a bare handful are alive and
remaining on Nikunau. Indeed, going back a further generation, and so taking in a further 250 or so ana utu Ekineti ni kaan, at least 80% migrated from Nikunau to Tarawa, or have been born on Tarawa. Very few, if any, that have left Nikunau seemingly permanently, or their descendants born on Tarawa or elsewhere, have returned to live on Nikunau or seem to have any intention to do so. Indeed, very few of those who migrated ever visited Nikunau afterwards; and probably less than 10% of those not born on Nikunau have ever set foot there. This is despite having extensive individual and collective land rights there and, when living on Tarawa and asked where they come from, usually stating Nikunau, not Tarawa. It is in complete contrast to the circumstances that for at least several centuries all their bakatibu had resided for most, if not all, their lives on Nikunau. Having said that, of the 1,907 residents of Nikunau enumerated in the 2010 Census, 350 were born on Tarawa, which even allowing for the 321 non-Kain Nikunau among this total (only 33 of whom were Kain Tarawa), points to a not insignificant number of Kain Nikunau returning from Tarawa to Nikunau.

Further Comments

The above migratory story brings out that the policy of centralisation, including a desire for economies of scale, to contain costs and effect economic, social and political control had the effect of taking most of the young Kain Nikunau, particularly those who enjoyed academic success at primary school, away from Nikunau to reside on Tarawa. Although their living away from Nikunau might have at one point been considered as being for a few years only, the reality has been that their academic achievements at secondary school, which in many cases were followed by similar achievements at tertiary level, led to longer term or, as it often transpired, permanent migration. Through success at school, they obtained employment with the Colony and, later, Republic Governments, which both had ever increasing needs for educated and skilled labour to run the amenities, services and functions that they were establishing on Tarawa. Contiguously, the immigrants to Tarawa, with their increasing aspirations, knowledge and ability to spend and donate the cash they earn, fuelled demand for infrastructure, facilities for public services, trading outlets dealing in imported goods, religious amenities, etc..

In any case, their education made these Kain Nikunau far more suited to living on a semi-metropolitan, cash-oriented Tarawa than for subsisting on Nikunau and coping with the social institutions there (e.g., gender discrimination, governance based on gerontocratic principles). For accumulating socio-economic, cultural and similar reasons, not only were they followed
eventually by significant numbers of elderly dependents—who had no one to go fishing, cut copra, do domestic chores or work *aba* for them—and other *utu*, particularly nephews, nieces and other young persons but also their offspring were born and brought up on Tarawa. This broader migration escalated when Colony Government regulations about who could live on Tarawa, implemented initially after it became the Colony headquarters, were lifted in the late 1960s (Macdonald, 1982a), contrary to recommendations made at the time (see Bedford & Bedford, 2010). This lifting of restrictions also allowed *Kain Nikunau* who finished their contracts on Banaba and Nauru to settle on Tarawa, which they often did, including when mining ceased on each island (see Bedford & Bedford, 2010). They did this in the hope of continuing cash employment and because of greater scope to spend their savings, to purchase land, and acquire durable household items and assets from which to make a living (e.g., trucks). A related matter is that after the phosphate mine on Nauru closed in the 1990s (Banaba had closed in 1980), Tarawa became where most *I-Kiribati* on Outer Islands went in search of cash employment.

This connection between metamorphosis and migration can be extrapolated to other Outer Islanders (and *Kain Tarawa*), and so exemplify, both in extent and in reasons, the general migration to Tarawa. The migrations from the many Outer Islands, coupled with subsequent rearing of families on Tarawa, precipitated the five-fold increase in the population of the atoll since before the evacuation and the 1970s; and a further trebling of its population since (see Figure 6). They have transformed Tarawa into the closest Kiribati has to an urban metropolis, in complete contrast to Nikunau and the other Outer Kiribati Islands to which the ancestors of *I-Kiribati* were indigenous.

### 3.5.3 Beyond Tarawa

Settling beyond Tarawa, that is in other countries, was also a case diaspora arising from individuals and families moving in dribs and drabs, and settling within existing communities, but, in the cases of Britain and New Zealand dealt with here, of non-*I-Kiribati*. Indeed, the *Kain Nikunau* in question are part of an *I-Kiribati* diaspora more so than a diaspora of only *Kain Nikunau*.

Some of the forerunners of this diaspora were part of the early trickle, of *Kain Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* being sent elsewhere to study, of which Neete was part (see Section 3.5.2.2), although typical of most even now, he returned to Tarawa after his studies were complete. That trickle away for study has now turned into a substantial stream, supported by aid donor
scholarships for school leavers and in-service employees of the Republic Government. Those who have stayed overseas for one reason or another, and through one means or another; or returned to Tarawa and then gone back overseas, have precipitated an as yet small emigration to other countries of some the more academically successful Kain Nikunau and other I-Kiribati. They have joined those I-Kiribati who emigrated for other reasons, as exemplified next.

3.5.3.1 Diaspora in Great Britain

As related in Section 3.1.2.2, only a handful of I-Kiribati living Britain would identify as Kain Nikunau in particular, rather than I-Kiribati or, if pushed, another of the Kiribati Islands. Most of the older members of the community met their partners (usually husbands but in at least one case, wife) while the latter were residing temporarily on Tarawa or another island as colonial administrators, other colonial professional or technical staff, or aid workers; and went to Britain with them. I am unsure of when the first case of this occurred, but the first case I know of was in the late 1960s.

Situations of marriage (and concubinage) between I-Matang or Chinese traders and I-Kiribati dated from the 19th Century (e.g., Richard and Ngangota Randell of Butaritari (see Maude & Leeson, 1965), and Andrew and Rakera Turner on Nikunau (see Maude, 1977b)). However, the idea of “fraternising with the natives” had been discouraged officially in directives issued to Colonial Service personnel (see Hyam, 1986, re the Crewe Circular of 1909) and, subtly and relatively recently, in local handbooks covering all manner of living on the islands (e.g., see GEIC, 1962; Ministry of Overseas Development, 1977); and frowned upon by officials and European wives in post (see Horwood, 1994, re the social treatment handed out to George Murdoch in the 1910s, even though he was acting resident commissioner; and more recently, personal communication from confidential source based in the Colony in 1970s).

Of these early examples, the couples mainly stayed in the islands, although Randell returned to Sydney after his I-Kiribati wife died. However, it is probable that some did leave, but this could have been to other colonies and islands where inter-racial marriage was more acceptable. Among the later examples I know of, dating from the 1960s through to the 1990s or even more recent, some went to live in Britain, and others went to New Zealand (see below) (or even Australia), even though the one partner was of British origin. Of those who went to Britain (perhaps 20 or 30 couples), their children and grandchildren now make up the greater proportion of the present community. As indicated in Section 3.1.2.2, by and large,
the children and grandchildren are very conscious of their links to Kiribati, and know something of its culture and language, but at the same time are part of their host communities in various parts of Britain, thus exhibiting what Berry (1997, 2005) labels integration.

3.5.3.2 Diaspora in New Zealand

As related in Section 3.1.2.2, of the I-Kiribati living in New Zealand at any one time perhaps 100 or so may identify as Kain Nikunau, although they will have been resident on Tarawa before coming to New Zealand and may never have set foot on Nikunau. Again, there are insufficient for them to identify separately from the I-Kiribati diaspora of perhaps 2,000, although home island is a keener topic than it is in Britain.

Some of these I-Kiribati living in New Zealand have a similar history to their British counterparts (c.f., Bedford & Bedford, 2010). This includes six women of ana utu Ekineti ni kaan, Ekineti herself, two of her father, Kenati’s younger sisters, and three grandchildren of Anare, her greatgrandfather (see Figure 2). In one case, she has come to New Zealand in their own professional right, but the other four, apart from Ekineti, married men who were resident in Kiribati in the 1990s through work, including a teacher-missionary, two pilots and a construction worker. Three of the husbands are New Zealanders anyway, and the other was originally British. The number of children from these relationships is 14, resident in New Zealand or Britain, but not Kiribati, although they visit there.

However, most of the diaspora now present in New Zealand migrated there since 2000 as I-Kiribati families, or as single I-Kiribati, who have married there since, sometimes within the community; or are the descendants of these migrants (Bedford & Bedford, 2010; Gillard & Dyson, n.d.; Taberannang, 2011). For most of these, their intention has been to settle and work there, as outlined in Section 3.1.2.2. Many have entered New Zealand under the Pacific Access Category of migration, which allows about 75 I-Kiribati to enter and stay as residents of New Zealand each year, provided they can meet certain employment-related and income conditions within a specified period. The 75 are ascertained by annual lotteries, or ballots, which anyone between specified ages can enter, or re-enter, by purchasing a ticket through submitting an application, and so the process is random. The 75 are made up of individuals and close families, the ballot papers being drawn until they include 75 persons (for 2014, this was 32 papers – see New Zealand Government, 2014).

Among the winners in the 2012 ballot was a daughter of Eria, Ekineti’s uncle, and in 2013 she and her husband and three children moved to New Zealand. Typically, the family’s
transition into New Zealand was facilitated by extended family and other members of the  
*Kiribati* community, particularly in matters of accommodation, material culture in New  
Zealand, job search and school enrolment (c.f., Gillard & Dyson, n.d.), not unlike how *Kain  
Nikunau* have transitioned from Nikunau to Tarawa. She joined the workforce, assisted by a  
residential care employment agency, which partially recognised her nursing qualifications:  
formerly, she had worked in midwifery on Tarawa and Kiritimati. The husband obtained a  
labouring job, using contacts in the *I-Kiribati* community; this compared with his previous  
self-employment of repairing electrical goods, for which he had no qualifications that are  
recognised in New Zealand and so was ineligible for such work (re qualification recognition  
barriers for migrants, see Gillard & Dyson). This and other families can be said to exhibit  
some of what Berry (1997, 2005) labels integration but they also exhibit separation, largely  
because they are still newcomers and they do not have the same social expressways into the  
host community as the first wave of mixed marriage migrants did. A further feature is the  
different way parents and youth see acculturation of the family (Berry, 2005), the youth  
experiencing a great deal more of host country language and culture than parents do, either at  
work or in the home (c.f., Gillard & Dyson).  

The rest of the *I-Kiribati* present in New Zealand are either there temporarily as workers,  
mostly under a Recognised Seasonal Employers (RSE) scheme, and most of them return to  
Kiribati after nine months, although increasingly they are returning to New Zealand annually  
(see Maclellan, 2008). Their cultural circumstances are what Berry (1997, 2005) labels  
separation, working and living together in often remote rural townships and similar settings.  
Or they are there to study, and they return to Kiribati after their courses are completed,  
although sometimes they return to New Zealand, perhaps having formed a local relationship  
or because their qualifications are recognised there and are in areas in which skills are short  
(e.g. medicine).  

The issue of climate change, rising sea levels and the compromise of water resources (White  
et al., 2007), and their likely devastating consequences for *Kain Nikunau* resident on Nikunau  
and Tarawa, or any other atoll or low-lying reef island (Mimura et al., 2007), is prompting  
speculation about all manner of things connected with migration, refugee status and  
resettlement, including to/in New Zealand (e.g., see Bedford & Bedford, 2010; Fedor, 2012;  
Williams, 2008).
3.6 Kain Nikunau since the 1980s

Throughout Section 3.5, concerning the coming about of the Kain Nikunau diaspora, much is said that relates to the period since the Republic was instituted in 1979. I now pick up the story on Nikunau, Tarawa and other places of diaspora from the point reached at the end of Section 3.4. It is again appropriate to start the section with a contextual outline of goings on on Nikunau’s periphery that were to affect the island and its inhabitants, and to affect the diaspora, particularly that on Tarawa. The rest of the section deals with events and consequences for Nikunau and Kain Nikunau to do with economics, politics and social matters.

3.6.1 Events on Nikunau’s Periphery

Since 1980, among world events that are of some relevance here, probably most important are the latter years of the Cold War and its aftermath; the postcolonial growth of aid, and of organisations making up an aid industry, comprised of supranational, multilateral, transnational, international, national and non-governmental organisations, and consulting firms and consultants (S. Brown, 2012; Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation, 2013; Stubbs, 2003); the demise of Keynesian macroeconomic policies in favour of neo-liberalism, structural adjustment of whole economies, and reforms within said economies to governments, public bodies and public services; and advances in transport of people, goods and information, including aeroplanes, container shipping, telecommunications and the Internet; and the downward trend in world market prices for copra (see Razzaque et al., 2007). Meanwhile, issues that have grown in importance include climate change, sustainability and environmental concerns of that ilk; human rights, feminism and culturalism; and government failure, market failure and aid failure (Burall, Maxwell & Menocal, 2006; Doucouliagos & Paldam, 2011).

At the level of the Republic, internal self-rule in the 1970s led to the inauguration of Kiribati as a sovereign state. This coincided with the end of phosphate mining on Banaba, raising financial difficulties for the newly established government under Ieremia Tabai (Ieremia, 1993). Part of its response was the initiation of the aforementioned fishing licences for foreign fleets to catch and process tuna from Kiribati’s EEZ (see Section 3.1.2.1 and Note 19), the potential of which seemed to have escaped British commercial and governmental interests. Although there were problems at first, including a reluctance of some countries’ fleets to pay licence fees, this has given rise since to considerable flows of revenue. One of the first agreements brought the new Republic Government under scrutiny from the former
colonial power and its minions and allies because it involved the Soviet Union. The Republic Government came out of the crisis quite well, putting Kiribati on the international map and getting the reluctant nations to agree to pay as part of resolving the matter to their satisfaction (see “Cold War: Fishing”, 1986).

The additional flows of revenue have led to more advantage being taken by various agencies of the Republic Government of the aid capital on offer from an ever-increasing number and wider range of aid industry donors and middle-persons. The significance of the revenue flows was to enable the Republic Government to afford the recurrent or operational costs that were the consequences of the concomitant capital formation (i.e., infrastructure, amenities, facilities and systems, ranging among schools, hospitals, clinics, roads, agricultural developments, transport, coastal protection, public administration and much else). This is demonstrated in accounting numbers published by the Republic Government. Presently, the Republic Government’s recurrent expenditure (including debt servicing and grants and subsidies) is running at about AU$90m annually, up from just over AU$6m in the mid-1970s[79]. For two decades, some of the revenue was surplus to the Republic Government’s recurrent expenditure requirements, and so it was used to build up the RERF, together with RERF investment income and capital gains—the RERF has been invested in New York, London and other stock market securities, not in Kiribati. However, by the third decade, the Republic Government’s recurrent expenditure had been so fuelled by project spending consequences as to have risen to the point where, rather than contributing more to the RERF, the Republic Government has had to draw down from it in order to meet some of its expenditure, and so jeopardising the life of the RERF, at least according to some thinkers (see Purfield, 2005[80])). Meanwhile, the aid capital itself has arrived, and continues to arrive, mostly in kind (e.g., construction materials, skilled labour, hardware, vehicles, plant and equipment; and consultants, advisors and trainers, including a significant proportion with accounting backgrounds), rather than cash, and been accounted for locally and at a distance as grants for Kiribati and soft loans to the Government of Kiribati, despite most of the money going everywhere but Kiribati[81].

The many projects carried out in the past few decades have in themselves had varying degrees of success and failure; and many more were proposed in reports by expert consultants but not implemented or not actioned (see United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). Over and above their individual success and failure, the projects in aggregate have had, and are having, various deleterious macro effects, and it is these effects that are relevant here. The
first thing to appreciate is that the vast majority of activity, including the research into “problems”, has been confined to Tarawa[82], thus reinforcing it as the centre of the Republic in every modern sense.

Politically, the consequence of many projects being carried out with much imported expertise, technology and materials has resulted in strong neo-colonial external influence being exercised over an emergent I-Kiribati élite of politicians, officials of the Republic Government and persons prominent in institutions inherited from formal colonial times, as is mentioned in discussing Tarawa’s financial and physical metamorphosis (see Section 3.5.2.1). The asymmetric nature of this influence is despite these arrangements being billed as “partnerships” (cf. Webster, 2008). The arrangements are tantamount to I-Matang and other foreign representatives of organisations involved in social and economic development through the aid industry having filled the shoes of the I-Matang senior Colony Government officials who went home after 1979, except they are present in the Republic for only short periods and are apt to treat it as just another developing country on which they can inflict an off-the-shelf solution to an inadequately specified problem, tick the box and move onto the next assignment.

Just as significant and questionable as these macro-political consequences have been their macro-economic and broad social effects. They have fuelled, in line with Keynesian economics, unbridled economic growth (as measured by increases in buildings, motor vehicles and refuse, if not in external statistical measures) and population growth on Tarawa. The consequent environmental strain put on the atoll has been described as “a worrisome trend” even by the free market leaning ADB (2006, p. 1). Meanwhile, a backwash has affected Nikunau and other islands (see Section 3.6.2).

Probably taking account of the many people idle on Tarawa, including Kain Nikunau, the ADB also observes “increased economic frustration” (2006, p. 1). Many young adults in particular are stuck between possibilities they are unfit for in terms of knowledge, skills and affective-volition. That is, they are unfit to take up a subsistence life on Nikunau or similar, on their aba. Concomitantly, they are unfit to extend their modern life in a market economy by shaking off dependency and deriving income from skilled or professional employment, or running their own private business; and there are too few jobs available, even casual, unskilled ones, for which they are fit (see Duncan, 2014). The lack of means for people to live, and the crowded and environmentally degrading circumstances in which people are
living, is giving rise, according to some experts, to problems of illness and economic, if not
cultural, poverty (c.f. Bryant-Tokalau, 1995; Locke, 2009).

On the matter of knowledge, skills and affective-volition, education is one area in which
projects and consultants’ reports have been profuse. Primary education has come under the
Republic Government more, separate from religious bodies, and gained resources. Secondary
education, divided between junior secondary and senior secondary, has continued to expand
greatly within the Republic Government and through religious body involvement.

Government junior secondary education (up to Year 10) became universal early in the 2000s,
and most Outer Islands has junior secondary school, including the Junior Secondary School at
the NIC headquarters at Rungata on Nikunau.

At senior secondary school level (Years 11 to 13), there are more places available than ever
before but this level is still not universal. Three schools are operated by the Re[ublic
Government and about a dozen by religious bodies. All government senior secondary school
entry is still by selection; and places at KGVEBS are still among the most sought after and
pass rates in the entrance exam are even more skewed than ever in favour of children
educated on Tarawa. The other two government senior secondary schools are much smaller
and situated to serve clusters of Outer Islands, including the one on Tabiteuea supposedly
serving Nikunau. Religious body involvement and funding have also increased, including
involvement of recently arrived denominations, notably the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
day Saints. Most places are on Tarawa but several other islands do have these schools,
including in the southern Kiribati Islands, Beru and Nonouti. Secondary education in these
religious body schools seems more secular now than in the past, and many students go on to
tertiary study overseas or, indeed, on Tarawa, where there is a University of the South Pacific
campus and the aforementioned specialist institutions for teachers, seafarers and nurses, and a
technical institute with a range of trades, clerical and technical courses. The author was
involved in the latter in the late 1990s (see Dixon, 2004) in the area of accounting and
finance.

Regarding copra, despite the downward price trend, it is still virtually the only export
commodity produced on land and by I-Kiribati labour—few I-Kiribati, if any, are employed
by the foreign fleets of fishing boats. Copra cutting has been kept afloat by the Colony
Government and then the Republic Government having subsidised prices paid to producers.
For part of this period, comprising several years up to about 2000, the subsidies were funded
with assistance from the European Union’s Stabilisation des recettes d'Exportation
To appear consistent with the overriding policy pressed on the Republic Government by the ADB and others to abolish so-called agricultural subsidies, this was portrayed as stabilisation of prices in the face of fluctuating ones, and a mechanism to stabilise the export earnings of Kiribati. Estimates supplied in a personal communication to the researcher in 2009 by the Kiribati National Statistics Office showed that a spike in the world copra price reduced the subsidy greatly in 2008 but this was only temporary. In 2011, the subsidy across the whole Republic between purchases and sales was estimated as AU$8m (Kiribati Government, 2012). The subsidies have helped to maintain the political support of inhabitants of Nikunau and similar islands for governance from Tarawa. However, in respect of another objective, the subsidies have been ineffective in encouraging people to stay on these islands and not migrate to Tarawa.

Accounting usages have increasingly figured in life on Tarawa, as its economy has become more monetised, and its many Kain Nikunau and other I-Kiribati residents have been increasingly drawn into this economy, as workers, consumers, householders, taxpayers and members of commercial and other organisations (ADB, 2002). This monetisation is most obvious in the bureaucracies and markets that have emerged. Its influence is implied in I-Matang ideas that have been applied, at least in name. Examples include financial administration and internal control, national economic planning, development planning, taxation being dependent on consent of the people’s representatives sitting in Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu, collective Te Kabinet (i.e., the Executive) responsibility and accountability, performance budgeting, appropriation accounting, government auditing, business (sole trader, partnership, company and cooperative) accounting and auditing, private and state-owned company financial reporting, religious body and other local NGO organisation fundraising and accounting, and project planning, evaluation and accounting.

Accounting usages of governmental bodies and, both locally and from a distance, aid organisations are by far the biggest by money value. These usages can be said to derive from the creative ability of I-Matang colonial officials and their aid organisation successors, who have exerted considerable influence over renewal and preservation of these usages. The accounting usages of government bodies in particular emanated from the now defunct position of colonial Resident Commissioner (later, Governor) and are grounded in hierarchical control. The accounting usages for aid resemble those associated with administering the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, as prescribed from London. Nowadays, however, they are prescribed by a wide variety of organisations and apply from
distances in various directions (e.g., Manila, Washington, Canberra, Brussels, Tokyo, Taipei). They have figured in life in the Republic in several constitutive ways and continue to do so. They have figured in aid project planning, appraisal, implementation and evaluation. They have figured in economic management and public sector reform, “good governance”, eliminating poverty, and environmental concerns and sustainability. Technical renovations, improvements and enhancements of accounting systems and processes (e.g., computerisation, strengthening of taxation and auditing functions) have comprised aid projects in their own right. Deploying accounting systems has been part of projects to create or strengthen institutions and organisations (see ADB, 2006, 2008; Dixon, 2004a, 2004b; Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014). Accounting usages on Tarawa and about Tarawa and the rest of the Republic have had and are continuing to have significant consequences for Kain Nikunau on Nikunau as well as on Tarawa.

3.6.2 On Nikunau 1980s to 2000s

The population of Nikunau in 1980 was around 2,000 and on the increase (see Figure 1); this was despite migration and the Kain Nikunau diaspora dealt with in Section 3.5 growing in significance, with that on Tarawa surpassing the Solomon Islands in terms of numbers, and the rate of growth still accelerating. The population distribution among the island’s six kawa was more even than today, and all were reasonably vibrant, especially socio-politically and culturally, although economically too.

Everyone was part of their te kawa, and expected to contribute and participate in the frequent political, social and cultural activities going on in it. Church-related activities were ubiquitous, including observance of te Tabati. There were plenty of able-bodied men to work aba, both belonging to them and that they were looking after for those owners working away or otherwise absent, most temporarily, supposedly. The absentees working on Nauru and Tarawa were remitting cash and goods to utu on Nikunau. The cash in question and copra cutting were the main means through which Kain Nikunau obtained the trade goods available in the various branches of TBN and to a minor extent church mronron[83]. The senior women ran households, including organising the younger ones in domestic choring and such like; and all were involved in kawa and church activities, such as weaving mats. Children attended the Republic Government primary schools regularly; only a few children had gone onto secondary school, and they travelled by ship to Tarawa each year to do so, usually returning for the December-January break, shipping schedules permitting.
The communal activities, mostly in or near mwaneaba, included botaki involving the whole te kawa or portions of it, daily gatherings of unimane, weekly movie-showing, meetings of uminane, and passing the time, including with card and board games. My experiences of these in the 1980s included several botaki to welcome, be hospitable to and farewell visitors, a birth and a funeral. More generally, my recollections of activities in mwaneaba in Tabomatang, Tabutoa and other kawa resemble those analysed on Tabiteuea South by Kazama (2001). Uminane were responsible for deciding on the timing and format of botaki and other special events, including the distribution of work and contributions among households. They were also the arbiters and enforcers of the ever evolving but very traditionally oriented te katei, in which communal obligations and expectations of individuals by age and gender were stringent, crowding out potential individual freedoms. Adherence with this was much stronger on Nikunau than on Tarawa even then.

Under what remained of the administrative structure inherited by the Republic Government from the Colony Government, the island in 1980 was still part of the Southern District, although once the resident I-Matang district officer was withdrawn, the position was soon disestablished, the attempt to replace them in all districts with I-Kiribati proving unpopular and failing. However, the NIC continued as a local government offshoot of the Republic Government, seemingly closer to Kain Nikunau and yet more incidental than before to their unimane-governed kawa. The Republic Government, meanwhile, was seemingly further away and less colonial and paternal, much of which can be explained by its emerging national leaders and newly-promoted senior officials being preoccupied with setting up the new state (Ieremia, 1993; Macdonald, 1982a, 1996a).

Kain Nikunau paid taxes to NIC and bought licences from it, if applicable, but the obligation to perform communal workdays (see Section 3.4.2.3) had been abolished. As for infrastructure, amenities and services brought about by development projects and other Colony or Republic Government activities, these did not amount to a great deal compared with Tarawa, despite changes supposedly made in the 1960s because of torpor on Nikunau and the other Outer Islands (see Section 3.4.2.5). Although the various facilities (e.g., schools, clinics, road(s), wharf, airport, administrative buildings) had been renewed to limited extents, physical maintenance, and expertise to effect it, did seem problematic, including that foreign materials had been used in some of their construction, and funds, skills, tools and materials were not readily available.
I visited Nikunau three times between 1985 and 1989, staying mostly in Tabomatang and Tabutoa; and again in 1997 and 2009, staying at the house available for visitors at the NIC complex. There were evident differences in the island’s circumstances as time passed but especially between the first three visits and each of the other two. Indeed, one difference was the reason for being unable to stay in Tabomatang and Tabutoa on the last two visits. That is, there was no one of utu with whom it was possible to stay. Indeed, the population and occupancy rate of mwenga of both kawa were somewhat depleted; and the frequent activities around mwaneaba of the 1980s were subdued. This can be interpreted as loss of population being accompanied by loss of affinity between Kain Nikunau on Tarawa and Kain Nikunau on Nikunau. Said loss was reflected economically in less produce being sent to utu on Tarawa and a decline in incoming remittances, with workers on Tarawa having fewer utu they were obligated to support on Nikunau (and probably less cash to spare for any utu remaining there)—an earlier reason was the cessation of mining on Nauru. Indeed, by 2009, with the notable exceptions of households in the NIC residential area or otherwise employed by the Republic Government (e.g., teachers, nurses), selling copra had gradually regained its position as the main source of cash among Nikunau’s population, not because prices and production had increased but because alternative incomes had subsided. Other differences too by 2009 were indicative of an island and remaining population that had gone from vibrant to torpor.

Several inter-related factors seem to be the main sources of the differences I observed from visit to visit over the past quarter of a century. The lack of flow of capital into Kiribati beyond Tarawa, which was evident in the post-restoration period of Colony Government (see Sections 3.4.2.5 and 3.5.2.1) continued under the Republic Government. Initially preoccupied with setting up the new state, its politicians and officials, virtually all based on Tarawa, became preoccupied with the issues, problems and foreign-expert-inspired agenda mentioned in Section 3.6.1, which focused heavily on Tarawa.[84] The migration of Kain Nikunau to Tarawa continued unabated. Growth and development on Tarawa have precipitated trends on Nikunau and other Outer Islands that, drawing on cumulative causation theory, may be labelled backwash (Brookfield, 1972; Couper, 1967; De Haas, 2010; Myrdal, 1957). These trends included the draining from Nikunau to Tarawa of political, social, cultural and economic resources, particularly in the form of people who performed better at school[85]; decline of the nationwide network of boboti, and with it TBN; air and sea transport becoming increasingly dependent on Tarawa-oriented (Republic Government) policy, finance and
operating practices; money received by copra cutters for their produce being greatly dependent on price subsidies from the Republic Government (see Section 3.6.1), and a buying process administered through its representatives on Nikunau (see below); and the NIC being dependent on the Republic Government for cash flow, as well as continuing to follow its accounting rules, report to it and be subject to its audit.

Possible counters to backwash effects (known as spread effects – see De Haas, 2010; Myrdal, 1957) are the sale of produce by people on the periphery to the centre and remittances from people at the centre to the periphery. Although these are of longstanding in the Nikunau-Tarawa context, they have always been at the informal, intra-utu level. As time has passed, the export to Tarawa of agricultural and fishing products has become of increasingly marginal significance economically, though less so culturally; and remittances from utu on Tarawa have declined. The latter’s decline is attributable to Kain Nikunau living on Tarawa gradually turning to other ways of fulfilling their obligations to utu who were on Nikunau. In particular, parents previously resident on Nikunau have joined their grown-up children’s households on Tarawa (see Section 3.5.2.2 re Ekineti’s grandparents and parents, and see Lawrence (1992) regarding same on Tamana). Furthermore, a recent development that could have countered the decline is the aforementioned $40 per month non-contributory pension that Kain Nikunau over 70 years of age now receive from the Republic Government. This itself has been countered to some extent by giving grown-up children an additional incentive for having their parents move to Tarawa and join their household.

Vis-à-vis Tarawa, and the Kain Nikunau and other I-Kiribati population there, it is arguable that the population remaining on Nikunau is continuing to be marginalised in economic, political, social and other ways, along with the island itself. I observed such physical signs of this as church, school and NIC buildings being in need of maintenance work. The same applied to the several motor vehicles the NIC now possessed as a result of aid donations (previously they had had one or two small ones only); most were out of action, awaiting parts from Tarawa and beyond. Indeed, some rusting wrecks had accumulated, but these were nothing compared with same on Tarawa. The frequency or importance of unimane gatherings were not obvious compared with two decades earlier, probably for lack of unimane: although many unimane heads of households were residing on Tarawa with their grown up children, the latters’ siblings still on Nikunau could not assume to be the heads of households while they were absent but still alive (see Lundsgaarde, 1978, for a similar situation arising on Tabiteuea from the 1970s compared with the 1960s). Concomitantly, social life in kawa...
seemed subdued for want of their leadership, as well as for want enthusiasm and even participants. This is notwithstanding a remarkable point about Nikunau’s population. Despite the migration related above, it has not fallen, only fluctuated: the 2010 population virtually the same as the 1963 population (see Figure 1). However, as alluded to earlier, a greater proportion of the population, while I-Kiribati, is non-Kain Nikunau. Although this is partly because of increased incidence of inter-marriage, stimulated by interaction while temporarily absent from Nikunau, the number of people from other islands working for the NIC and/or Republic Government is significant.

An effect of the latter is to have skewed the distribution of settlement on Nikunau towards the vicinity of Rungata. Indeed, the pay and conditions of those working for the Republic Government now reflect same on Tarawa, and are a more prominent part of the island’s economy than hitherto. For that and other reasons related to the NIC and Republic Government, there is more cash and casual employment available around Rungatu. The private family store situated adjacent to the NIC complex seems the most prosperous on Nikunau. These circumstances have had a multiplier effect and attracted people from other kawa to Rungatu.

In contrast to the private family store just mentioned, it seems curious that the TBN’s previously thriving main store in Rungata had little stock and few customers. My inquiries revealed that the organisation had been struggling for some time and its stores had become just other trade stores in among several, including ones run as kawa and religious body mronron and the private family store just mentioned. TBN’s importance (and indeed, those of its pre-war predecessors) between the 1930s and 1980s is conveyed in Section 3.4.2.3 and above. Its ascendancy had been due in part to its cooperative principles being in line with te katei and so its governance having been dominated by unimane across the island. Through these circumstances and the arrangements on Tarawa, involving the Kiribati Cooperative Wholesale Society and Kiribati Copra Board, which were legitimised by the Colony and Republic Governments, TBN had enjoyed monopolies in the importing of goods into, and the exporting of copra from, Nikunau. While by 2009 its turnover had undoubtedly been affected by decline in remittances and other income among Kain Nikunau, it had also suffered other problems.

These problems included a lack of administrative expertise, partly through lack of support in developing this from either the Republic Government agencies responsible for cooperative organisation, oversight and development, or the virtually defunct nationwide network of
boboti; and partly because Nikunau’s most talented persons had gone to Tarawa for secondary education and similar, and not returned. Again because of migration, there were also fewer unimane available, let alone able, to fulfil whole-of-island governance roles. In any case, unimane and Kain Nikunau generally seemed to have switched support away from an island-wide body, that is TBN, to kawa and religious body mronron. This loss of community support had led to TBN losing its monopolies in importing and exporting, although another reason for this was that the organisations at the Tarawa end of the importing and exporting channels had been “liberalised” as a matter of Republic Government-supranational organisation policy during the 1990s (see Section 3.4.1.2). Under this policy, various businesses on Tarawa had become involved in distributing goods there and to Outer Islands. The other stores on Nikunau had been permitted to import direct from these various businesses. In addition, new arrangements had been implemented in the 2000s by the Republic Government for copra purchasing, shipping and use. The latter followed the cash flow circumstances of TBN (and its equivalent on other islands) having declined to such an extent that the only way for the Republic Government to guarantee copra cutters their cash was for it to become involved in the copra purchasing process. This was done not only for economic and social reasons but also politically, members of Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu (usually referred to as members of parliament or MPs) had realised that the continuing support of copra cutters on Outer Islands was vital to their re-election.

By 2009, the circumstances were that TBN was just another of several trading entities with stores spread among the six kawa that were authorised to act as agents for handling copra. The Republic Government was the actual purchaser of the copra, through its representatives in the NIC administration building, as follows. During any weekday morning, a copra cutter could weigh in his (still all male) copra at an agent’s store. The storekeeper recorded each weighing in and compiled a list of copra received that morning. Around noon, the storekeeper took the list to the NIC office, where it was processed by a clerk, who as part of the paperwork preparation calculated the total amount that should be paid to cutters on the list. The calculation was based on a guaranteed price per kilogram set by the Republic Government. The clerk handed the processed list to the NIC treasurer, who then gave the storekeeper the amount of money needed to pay the cutters. The storekeeper returned to the store and, in the course of the afternoon, the cutters collected the money they were owed for their copra. This meant that the copra was much less the medium of exchange and form of money than was the researcher’s experience in the 1980s (see Note 39). The copra cutters
could use the cash received either there and then, to purchase goods from the stores that handled their copra; or at the perhaps one or two other stores in the vicinity. Alternatively, they could hold onto the cash for later use in this and other ways, including cash donations to church-centred activities, and payments of licences, fees and taxes to the NIC.

Despite the subsidies that were sustaining the return to cutters for their copra, only the store adjacent to the NIC complex showed signs of buoyancy, but some of that was attributable to them all being being reliant on copra and it was being affected by drought when I was there. However, the store adjacent to the NIC complex was being affected another interesting occurrence. That is, the NIC workers were experiencing a temporary lack of cash. Not for the first time, they were owed a few weeks’ pay. This pay depended on the revenues the NIC was supposed to collect locally, as distinct from revenues received in the form of grants from the Republic Government[86]. It was overdue because these local revenues had not been collected because local taxpayers lacked means to pay, partly because of the drought but also because of their general lack of income from remittances, etc. compared with the past.

Another change affecting the population around Rungata by 2009 was the presence of the junior secondary school. It was constructed in about 2001 to cater for the whole island. This has meant all Kain Nikunau now have some formal secondary education and that no one need leave the island to receive it. However, this has not resulted in many more Kain Nikunau being admitted into senior secondary schools, either on Tarawa, which still has most of the provision, or Tabiteuea. Indeed, it has perhaps made it even more difficult because students who have studied on Nikunau for three years beyond primary are competing for places with students who have done likewise on Tarawa, including any sent there to live with relatives in order to go to primary or junior secondary school. As entrance examinations pass rates have shown for many years, studying on Tarawa is advantageous for various reasons (Burnett, 2005). These include the greater exposure students have to the English language, including through a few I-Matang teachers; the wider experiences of general life on Tarawa; the information about life outside the country available there, including though the Internet, movies and broadcast television; and the better basic resources available in schools there. Regarding such resources, I visited one of the many junior secondary schools on Tarawa. While neither it or the one at Rungata was resourced particularly extravagantly, the one on Nikunau seemed in greater need of repair, and lacked for things that on Tarawa were possibly taken for granted (e.g., teaching supplies, learning materials, mains electricity and lighting).
As to the importance of goods on Nikunau that cash was used to purchase, many food items and similar consumables seemed to the researcher in 2009 as incidental as in the 1980s. Kain Nikunau seemed to subsist as much on their aba and marine areas within and just beyond the reef as they had in earlier decades. Their material culture was not appreciably removed from Koch’s (1986) description of Nonouti, Tabiteuea and Onotoa in the 1960s, and was appreciably and increasingly different from that of Kain Nikunau on Tarawa. Even so, there appeared to be a decline in knowledge of, skills in making, and use of locally producible tools and implements (c.f., United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). Correspondingly, there was a rise in incidence of imported ones, made from metal alloys, plastics and similar. Another noticeable change in material goods between the 1980s and 2009 was the rise in incidence of entertainment equipment for screening DVDs, and recording and playing music, in addition to the types of musical instruments I had seen in the 1980s (e.g., guitars, drums). However, computers and related devices were barely in evidence, although the NIC treasurer, who also carried out some agency duties for the Republic Government, had obtained a laptop for the first time in 2009, courtesy of the Republic Government.

It was usual for the more expensive equipment items to be purchased and possessed on a communal basis (e.g., by church and kawa groups). This applied to entertainment equipment whose use was frequent and widespread. In particular, watching DVDs had superseded the showing only weekly of reel-to-reel films by TBN. These circumstances were despite a total lack of mains electricity, which was made up for by the abovementioned groups and the NIC generating their own, often from solar panels but sometimes from small petrol or diesel generators. This form of electricity generation was in contrast to the 1980s and 1990s when only sparing use of one or two petrol-driven generators were all that was available. It had resulted in wider availability of electric lighting than in 1980s and 1990s, when only pressure lamps were available; and even some availability of refrigeration (see Mala, Schläpfer and Pryor, 2009, about similar matters on Abemama).

Regarding telecommunications and transport beyond Nikunau, radio broadcasts have reached Nikunau from Tarawa since the 1960s, and in the 1980s my experience was that Radio Kiribati (a Republic-Government-owned organisation) broadcast for a few hours each day. However, since then the reliability of the broadcasts has been impaired by deterioration of the transmission equipment on Tarawa. Neither broadcast television or the Internet were available in 2009, in contrast to Tarawa. Indeed, until 2010, Nikunau’s telephone service was limited to a radiotelephone for only a few hours each week; but then satellite telephones were
introduced at the NIC complex, making it is possible to dial direct to and from the rest of the world. Shipping and air services have been provided separately by successive Colony/Republic-Government-owned organisations. While in living memory these have never been extensive or, from an I-Matang perspective, reliable in terms of time or availability, there seemed to have been some deterioration in these in 2009 compared with earlier, both in terms of frequency and continuity. The air service had been reduced from twice weekly to weekly. Furthermore, financial and engineering maintenance problems, to which the service had always been prone, had increased, including that the operating fleet of aircraft was severely depleted for want of parts. This meant that schedules around the Kiribati Islands were uncertain from day to day. Although in 2009 a private airline had just got a competing service off the ground, it had had an extended legal and bureaucratic struggle with the Republic Government and its airline to do so, and was still subjects to the petulant antics of these opponents—I am unsure if this service is still operating.

3.6.3  *Kain Nikunau* diaspora on Tarawa 1980s to 2000s

A description of present-day Tarawa and of *Kain Nikunau* living there is provided in Section 3.1.2.1. To bring that out more, I use reasons alluded to in Section 3.5.2 (and Section 3.5.3), for few of the *Kain Nikunau* involved in the making of diaspora on Tarawa (and beyond). ever returning to Nikunau, except for short visits. That is, many of the reasons in question, which I induced mostly from among members of *ana utu Ekineti ni kaan*, are useful in illuminating life for *Kain Nikunau* on Tarawa in recent decades.

Those reasons are that Nikunau continues to lack virtually all the material, economic and social amenities they might enjoy on Tarawa. Besides, their education has not equipped them with knowledge and skills to survive on Nikunau. Especially the women, but the men too, have become accustomed to greater individual freedom on Tarawa, including in their private lives and personal conduct, and in holding positions of authority on knowledge obtained through formal learning, wisdom based on intellectual ability and merit; rather than based on age, gender and birth, which prevails on Nikunau along with various other traditional-oriented provisions of *te katei*. The older generation that was brought up on Nikunau and were used to subsistence life there between the 1940s and 1980s but who are now on Tarawa cannot return to Nikunau as they depend on the younger generation on Tarawa, and so must stay there with them. These reasons apply generally to *Kain Nikunau* who migrated and their subsequent offspring.
Tarawa was the centre of everything most “modern” about the Colony. This was in the aftermath of the Battle of Tarawa and as the Colony Government was restored. Indeed, certainly once mining on Banaba ceased, Tarawa emerged as the only portal to and from an outside world that has also been changing dramatically. However, at the same time, resources for its population to subsist (including habitable and cultivatable space and fresh water) on the land, lagoon and reef of the atoll and in the surrounding ocean have become scarcer, leading to significant volumes of imports. Now it is the centre of everything most “developed” and “affluent” about the Republic, desirable and undesirable. Indeed, Tarawa itself has become far from attractive in certain matters compared with places of recent migration/diaspora, including New Zealand. Despite offering cash employment for some, Tarawa is regarded by members of this diaspora and others keen to emigrate to New Zealand as short on such opportunities, not to mention being overcrowded, lacking in prospects and, for those with an eye on longer-term issues, having an uncertain future because of rising sea levels (see Fedor, 2012).

[The paper beyond this point is still only in rough draft form]

3.6.4  Kain Nikunau diaspora beyond Tarawa 1980s to 2000s

To be completed.

4 Conclusion

To be completed.

References


Cold War: Fishing for a foothold. (1986). *Time* [Online]. Available:

Colonial Development Act of the United Kingdom of 1929.


Constitution of Kiribati. Cap 1 of 1979 [Online]. Available:


Davis, S. W., Menon, K., & Morgan, G. (1982). The images that have shaped accounting theory. *Accounting, Organizations and Society, 7*, 307-318.


Gilbert and Ellice Islands (Native Laws) Regulation. No. 6 of 1912 [Online]. Available at:


Gilbert and Ellice Islands Order (1974) [Online]. Available at:

Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (consolidation) regulation. No. 3 of 1908. Made by His Majesty’s High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, in accordance with the provisions of the Pacific Order in Council, 1893 [Online] Available at:

Gilbert Islands, island regulations 1939. Made under section 15 (1) of Part 1 of the schedule to the Native Laws Ordinance 1917.


Uering, T. (documented by Eren O’Connor-Palmer) (1979). An oral account of the ancestry, the place names of *kainga* where they resided and whence partners originated, and medical and agriculture knowledge and skills. Unpublished document.


Notes

1 Tarawa’s population is over 56,000 compared with the entire population of the Republic of over 103,000 (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2013).

2 The term “Outer Islands” refers to all the other islands apart from Tarawa.

3 The first official census was not until 1931, when the island’s population is recorded as 1,674 (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2013). The most reliable numbers before that appear to be those calculated by Bedford, Macdonald and Munro (1980).

4 Significantly, Kain Nikunau and other I-Kiribati seem to have made little distinction between protectorate and colony statuses, referring to both as Te Tautaeka; and, for simplicity, hereafter I refer to the entities whether Protectorate or Colony as just the “Colony”, except if using official names. For detailed discussion of events and concerns of the British authorities regarding protectorates and colonies, see Munro and Firth (1986). They argue that the status of Protectorate was short-lived in practice, and that the formalisation of Colony status in 1916 was as much as 20 years after this status had arisen de facto, at least in the northern and central Kiribati Islands. Morrell (1960, p. 274) describes the actual process of Davis consulting natives and declaring the protectorate island by island.

5 Singular words in I-Kiribati are distinguished from plural ones by being preceded by te.

6 Many other I-Kiribati are in similar situations and the term “Home Island” is used to elicit their identity. It is used to refer to the island whence their ancestors traditionally resided. It seems to derives from colonial times when the GEIC Government used the information about a person’s roots in order to maintain some form of
quota or equality in the distribution of paid work positions among persons originating from the various islands that constituted the Colony.

7 Obviously, lack of maintenance was the ostensible cause (and there was much some loss of skills through not building or maintaining mwaneaba using traditional materials and methods) but the root causes were social changes. The religious function of district mwaneaba was superseded by the use of churches for religious rituals following the conversion to Christianity. Mwaneaba-like structures associated with religious bodies took over their function as a place for social gatherings, which also moved to other venues, including ones associated with the NIC and schools. Their function as a place whence governance was exercised was similarly displaced, and it with this function that the following deals – this section needs revising re Autio’s view of mwaneaba being alive and well.

8 I am grateful to the late Tiarum O’Connor/Tiare for letting me accompany him to this shrine.

9 These clinics have sleeping areas for in-patients, and so are sometimes referred to as island hospitals, although they have no doctors or clinical support staff other than a nurse or two, and only the most basic equipment.

10 I have not been to the I-Kiribati settlements in the Solomon Islands but understand that having been established by the now long gone British authorities the settlers face issues associated with getting along with their indigenous neighbours and the Solomon Islands authorities governing in Honiara (Cochrane, 1969; Fraenkel, 2003).

11 In addition to the Protestant and RC denominations present since the late 19th Century (see Section 3.3.4), the most prominent denominations are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Seventh-Day Adventists. The Bahá’í Faith is also present.

12 These include mwaneaba, churches, primary and secondary schools, retail outlets that range from hawkers stalls and roadside kiosks to a single supermarket (with six aisles and three checkouts), a few garages, several bars and eating places, various construction and similar business depots, storage facilities and workshops, two power generating plants, the main hotel and a few guesthouses, further education and training institutions, the national library and a modern museum, the large central hospital and two or three small medical facilities, numerous business, NGO, urban council and government ministry office buildings, and the new Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu complex, embassies and high commissions, the container terminal, wharves and harbour buildings and the international airport (for an inventory, see Castalia Strategic Advisors, 2005).

13 With so few utu still on Nikunau, the once significant practice of them sending foodstuffs (e.g., dried fish, pulverised and pressed pandanus, kamwaimwai (coconut molasses)) intermittently to relatives on Tarawa has virtually ceased. Cash and imported goods used to be sent the other way but not as an explicit exchange, and this too has declined.

14 The stipulation in laws, etc. regarding entitlements and prohibitions on grounds of age are confounded still by the infrequency, until quite recently, with which births were registered, notwithstanding legal requirements
dating from Native Laws Ordinance 1917 and facilities to do so at island council offices and, previously, native
government stations.

15 Kiribati National Statistics Office (2006) reported average fortnightly household incomes on Tarawa were
about AU$450 in 2006.

16 In the past two decades, the number of motor vehicles has increased significantly (say 100 fold). From the
1950s onwards, there has been a steady increase in construction and delivery lorries, and minibuses to provide a
public bus service and official transport for officials of various government bodies and aid agencies. However,
the most startling increase in the past two decades has been of saloon cars, owned by single households and
among utu and other social groups. This has brought about significant traffic congestion, many more traffic
injuries and deaths, much air pollution and countless scrap vehicles. The road running through the middle of
residential settlements has become difficult to cross at certain times of the day, causing some partitioning of
these settlements.

17 Tiwau Awira worked as a government accountant but also served the Nikunau mronron on Tarawa before
taking up political office (Macdonald, 1982a). Benjamina Tiinga followed a similar path.

18 These tax provisions apply on Nikunau too, although in practice probably only salaries and wages received
from the NIC and Republic Government are actually taxed.

19 The first fleet to pay such fees was from Japan in a deal negotiated about 1980 with the first independent
Republic Government led by Jeremia Tabai (Macdonald, 1982a). Fees received now depend on the size of the
catch, which varies with weather patterns (see Williams & Terawasi, 2012). The fleets have no onshore facilities
of note on Tarawa, but they visit the lagoon occasionally and crew spend time ashore, including for present-day
equivalents of kaokioki and nikiranroro (see Section 3.3.2) (see Cheong-won, 2005). A significant issue is that
the EEZ is some 3.55 million km² and prone to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (Fedor, 2012). The
Royal New Zealand Air Force assists Kiribati with maritime surveillance flights (New Zealand Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015).

20 Regarding the significances of land, similar traditions apply elsewhere in the Pacific, including among
Aboriginal Australians, as analysed by Gibson (2000) and Greer and Patel (2000); and NZ Maori, as analysed
by Kearins and Hooper (2002). These three analyses include the native people being dispossessed of land,
among other things, by European settlement or European commercial interests (e.g., miners), which in respect of
I-Kiribati land is raised in Section 3.3.3.

21 Their names were of Tebaire, Beiningan, Aonuuka, Boteatine, Tutuabine, Taboriteaba, Aantenao,
Kanounikika, Tabonteora, Taubukinimatang, Tebakota and Teinato.

22 The powers/functions just enumerated were not distinguished by Kain Nikunau.

23 Boti can be translated as roughly equivalent to clans (see first usage above). However, the term refers
literally to the portions of the mwaneaba in which people sat according to their ancestry—boti names came from
the first human bakatibu of the boti. The people entitled to sit in particular te boti can be classed as belonging to a particular te baronga (which is closer to the idea of a clan) (Hegnes Dixon, personal communication).

24 As may be inferred from this and the earlier mention of boti membership being “transferable”, the names of most boti were replicated from one mwaneaba to another, providing te boti members were present in a district. This can be seen from floor plans for various mwaneaba of Nikunau, Beru and Tabiteuea Atoll available in Latouche (1983), Maude (1963) and Geddes (1977).

25 This claim is based on stories known to my Kain Nikunau informant, Hegnes Dixon. They contrast with oral evidence collated by Maude (1963) that this spread emanated from Beru, although he stresses that his data are partisan to Beru. The two are neighbouring islands whose peoples over the centuries have socialised, intermarried and had their disputes and rivalries, not least in this important matter.

26 Following the exploits of the adventurers and settlers from Nikunau and/or Beru, mwaneaba arrangements arose on all the Kiribati Islands and in nearby Banaba at various times from the 17th to the 19th century, except on the two most northerly, namely Butaritari and Makin, where a uea system survived until well into colonial times. However, uea systems also displaced the mwaneaba system periodically elsewhere, especially from the time of organised trading, as referred to in Section 3.3.2. For example, Abemama, Kuria and Aranuka were ruled by the patriarchal Baiteke and then his son, the infamous despot Binoka, during the entire second half of the 19th century. Thus, when the Colony was established, the nine islands from Aranuka northwards were recognised as having uea; and the seven islands southwards from Nonouti were recognised as having mwaneaba councils (Lambert, 1966; King and Sigrah, 2004, and subsequent personal correspondence; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Native Laws of 1894; Sabatier, 1977).

27 This was remarked on by Grimble and Clarke, who advised district officers that “[S]imple magic rituals and charms are the concomitants of every conceivable form of native activity” (1929, p. 6). I would caution that long-established knowledge, skills and technology should not be underrated because of the attendant magic and rituals. These things often go together in other societies, as analysed by Abrahamson and Fairchild (1999).

28 Uering (1979) was recited by its author and transcribed by his niece, Aeren Tiare (Eren O’Connor-Palmer). Uering resided on Nikunau and was visiting his sister Beiarung, Aeren’s mother and Ekineti’s maternal grandmother. He recited their lineage back 17 generations (c. 1500) with numerous elaborations such as the place names of kainga where they resided and whence partners came. He also recited medical and agriculture knowledge and skills. The transcript was created in a school exercise book and is 24 pp. He could also have recited details of aba (e.g. location and history of ownership) but that was not written up.

29 The GEIC Government tried to eliminate bubuti (e.g., Regulations for the Good Order and Cleanliness 1933) but failed.

30 This varies from the northern Gilberts, such as on Butaritari. In its uea system of government, Kain Butaritari gave food, etc. to their uea, usually on occasions to mark critical life passages. However, these were more to symbolise recognition of te uea than economic. How much each subject or group of subjects would give
was determined by consultation beforehand and the plan then implemented. Having received this homage, te uea
duly re-distributed surplus food, etc. to symbolise his generosity (Lambert, 1966).

31 The Line probably referred to the Equator, but for clarification in terms of whaling ground areas, see Best
(1983).

32 This was an early form of rights trading. It entailed a trader advancing credit to a landowner against the right
to harvest (or “clip”) coconuts from a parcel of land for the duration of the debt, which was ad infinitum
potentially.

33 These women were generally unwanted by Kain Nikunau men as permanent partners, their preference being
for virgins.

34 The very idea would probably never have occurred to anyone involved, in contrast to the present situation of
 fleets paying the Republic Government AUS10s of millions annually in licence fees to fish the EEZ for tuna
(see Section 3.1.2.1).

35 Kain Nikunau may well have thought the sailors they encountered during Byron’s visit and later were from
the land of Matang, whence Te I-Matang, the first bakatibu, is believed to have originated, and where the souls
of the dead are believed to return (Sabatier, 1977). This thought arose because the sailors had white skins. This
mistake gave rise to continuing use of the term “I-Matang” to refer to aboriginal Europeans.

36 Noteworthy though is that in the author’s experience the tendency for unimane or similarly politically-
minded Kain Nikunau to consider an I-Matang as a sort of status symbol, and source of cash, lives on.

37 Bad behaviour of some I-Matang was not uncommon. It ranged from a few drunken ruffians among the
beachcombers (mostly ex-sailors and time-expired and escaped convicts from NSW of English working class or
anarchical Irish origins), to blackbirders (see Section 3.3.3), whose organised kidnapping raids naturally spurred
reprisals by Pacific islanders against any I-Matang who might happen along, according to the acceptance in both
their customs of loosely aimed revenge.

38 Frying (and boiling) food did not arise until after 1820, and frying pans, etc. became available; before that,
food was cooked in earth ovens or on open fires wrapped in leaves (Lewis, 1988; Di Piazza, 1999).

39 I recall at Tabomatang on Nikunau in 1987 being entrusted by te unimane with a large sack of copra,
representing a few days collecting, splitting and drying. He sent me on a bicycle to the next kawa, Nikumanu,
where the nearest TBN store was located. On arriving at the modest premises, at the back of which was a copra
store, I handed over the bag and was given a few coins. I immediately handed these back and rode away
clutching a small bottle of tomato ketchup manufactured in Australia.

40 I-Matang coins were used to make jewellery, as I discovered in the 1980s, my initial wedding ring being
fashioned from an Australian dollar coin.

41 According to Macdonald (1982a), pregnancies arising from casual relationships with foreigners, commercial
ones on board whaling ships for example, were invariably aborted, and so mixed race children were not as common on Nikunau as they might have been.

42 Remitting earnings home was often problematic until the turn of the 20th century, when the Colony Government established banking arrangements and postal services on Nikunau as part of the native government system (see Section 3.4.1).

43 This desire to afford protection to natives should not be confused with extending jurisdiction over British citizens through the creation of protectorates, as distinct from colonies (see Munro and Firth, 1986).

44 The principals of the Pacific Islands Company had wide commercial and political interests in the Pacific and had successfully pressed the British Government to include Banaba as part of the Colony in 1900, soon after having discovered in 1899 that it and neighbouring Nauru were rich in phosphate. It acquired rights on Nauru from the German authorities by an arrangement of cash and shares, whereby the Pacific Phosphate Company was formed. Said authorities seemed largely concerned with the copra trade taking place on the Marshall Islands, whence Nauru was administered and probably did not get the best of the deal over Nauru. As the extent and importance of the phosphate deposits emerged, the company was able to exert even more pressure on the British authorities over the administration of the Colony. Indeed, the Colony headquarters were relocated to Banaba in 1908, having been on Tarawa since 1896.

45 The rival RC mission in the Kiribati Islands was *Les Missionnaires du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*. Its representatives first arrived on Nikunau in 1888 but were immediately driven off by Kain Nikunau, who by then had largely joined the LMS. However, there were some Kain Nikunau and two traders (i.e. François “Frank” Even and Tom Day) who, being unhappy with the LMS, had encouraged or assisted the RC mission to come to Nikunau in the first place and did so again later (Sabatier, 1977), although they were effectively excluded until the 1920s.

46 Bingham worked for the Boston-based American mission in the northern Kiribati Islands.

47 This was notwithstanding that shortly after the Colony was annexed in 1892, the resident commissioner designated this federal body of *unimane* as the Nikunau Native Government, as part of establishing, at least in name, a structure of indirect rule (see Section 3.4.1).

48 I am unaware of their having been any clip system debts on Nikunau, unlike Butaritari and elsewhere (see Section 3.3.1).

49 The Treaty provided for the Imperial German Pacific Protectorates and other German territories in the Pacific to be shared out between Japan (e.g., the Marshall Islands) and Britain and her Dominions of Australia and New Zealand (e.g., Nauru, Samoa, New Guinea).

50 The Colony Government was evacuated to Fiji in 1941 and returned to Tarawa in 1943 (Resture, 1998).

51 Banaba was re-occupied in 1945 and taken over by the BPC. The Banabans, whom the Japanese had used as labourers on various of its North Pacific territories, were assembled on Tarawa and then shipped to begin their
continuing exile on Rabi—none were allowed back on Banaba until the late 1970s (Kempf, 2003; King & Sigrah, 2004; Tabucanon, 2012; Teaiwa, 2005).

52 For this period, not only was the Colony Government preoccupied by the mining but also under the influence of mining organisation staff. How Banaba, Nauru and their inhabitants were exploited by foreign interests (see Weeramantry, 1992) is outside the scope of this article. However, it is relevant that little of the obvious but unaccounted for surplus of phosphate value over costs of mining ended up in the treasury of the Colony Government until at least the late 1960s, if ever. This coincided with the BPC perpetuating the idea initiated by its precursors that only the most meagre phosphate revenues should be applied on the Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands for economic and social development.

53 The Union Group of islands referred to in the title of this item is now Tokelau, which ceded from the Colony in 1926 to become under the administration of Western Samoa and is now part of the Realm of New Zealand.

54 As the Colony period proceeded, shipping to Nikunau and most other islands became increasingly infrequent as, on the one hand, ships got more efficient and so could carry more, thus not needing to be so frequent; and, on the other, the quantity of goods and copra and regular fare-paying passengers became insufficient for commercial shipping companies (e.g., Burns-Philp) to make it pay. After the restoration, the Colony Government adopted it as a governmental function, which the Republic-Government then inherited. Today, it is under the banner of the government-owned and heavily subsidised Kiribati Shipping Services Limited. It became easier and quicker for centrally-based officials to reach Nikunau when scheduled air services were inaugurated in the 1970s covering the 600 kilometre from Tarawa to Tabiteuea and then Nikunau and Beru in four hours, and returning to Tarawa on the same day.

55 The Western Pacific High Commission moved from Fiji to the Solomon Islands in 1952.

56 The Burns-Philp and Carpenter companies chose not to resume operations in the GEIC after the war, probably for lack of profitability, but in any case Resident Commissioner Maude made it difficult to do so because he did not want to see resurrected the pre-war “commercial system of virtual monopoly” (Maude, 1949, p. 7) (see also Couper, 1967, 1968).

57 To fulfil the Nauru Island Agreement 1919, the British Government sequestrated the mining rights and mining, shipping, depot and other assets of the existing company in Nauru, Banaba, Australia and New Zealand, and vested these rights and assets in the BPC; and paid the shareholders £3.5m (= AU$250m at 2014 prices) in compensation. In effect, the phosphate was part of the spoils of war given by the British Government to Australia and New Zealand for their contributions to the war against Germany and its allies (Macdonald, 1982b; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985).

58 The agreement also provided for incidental selling of ore commercially, and small quantities were indeed sold from time to time to fertiliser producers in Malaya and Japan, the profits being used to reduce costs. One reason for Japan invading the Colony in 1941 was to try to secure phosphate supplies, unsuccessfully as it turned out. These had been curtailed a year or two earlier as the war took shape.

143
Up to about 1914, native governments were accounting for themselves as separate entities and authorised to retain surpluses, which on each island were designated as the “Island Fund”. These amounted to £17,000 (≈ AU$1.4m at 2014 prices) and were in the supposed safekeeping of the Colony Government. The Colony Government sequestrated them on the pretext that the taxes raised from the Kiribati Islands and Tuvalu (as distinct from Banaba) had yielded insufficient revenues for the Colony Government to meet expenditures it incurred on these islands. This followed representations that principals of the phosphateers made in London in furtherance of their considerable interests on Banaba.

To be exact, Grimble was the second holder of this position, after one Henry Newton, who lasted only a few months in 1917, having come into conflict with the LMS among others and barely escaped with his life (see Macdonald, 1982a).

Land matters are the most common subject of dispute among I-Kiribati that end up in courts. Disputes arise for various reasons, including disagreements over boundaries, encroachment on seldom used aba being challenged, and contested ownership arising from inheritance and other transfers (see Lundsgaarde, 1968).

Although averse culturally to sea, Nikunau’s unimane did not begrudge te tia-motiki-tueka the power he exerted in other matters because “it could be unpopular power that could bring loss of respect in traditional terms” (Macdonald, 1982a, p. 190).

Revised, that is, from Native Laws 1894 and Island Regulations 1908, which although applicable to the entire Colony as far as the colonial administration was concerned were, in Nikunau and the other Southern Kiribati Islands, largely incidental to the laws promulgated through the LMS.

The war mostly passed Nikunau by at a distance, except for rare visits by Japanese patrols looking for Allied coast watchers, and after 1943 a visit(s) by allied troops searching out any remaining Japanese troops. The GEIC Government was evacuated to Fiji in 1941 and returned to Tarawa in 1943 (Resture, 1998).

Ekineti would probably have belonged to te boti of Kaokoroa. This is by virtue of her grandfather Tiare, who sat in that boti position in the now derelict Te Atu ni Uea mwaneaba (personal communication from Kenati Tiare).

A scheme as early as 1950 for the Colony Government to expand into primary education was cut because of financial restrictions lingering from the restoration of the Colony Government and a new fear of the British authorities: that increasing government services would precipitate a future financial burden on London, when phosphate revenues ceased, which in 1950 was expected to occur in the 1970s (Macdonald, 1982a).

Having started with an annual intake of just over 20 boys per annum, and so a total roll of less than 100, the roll of KGVS in the 1950s was still restricted to about 120 boys. One consequence of this was that primary schooling up to age 16 was the end of formal education for the vast majority of people, including all the women. The involvement of religious bodies in secondary education did not arise until the 1970s, by when KGVS had been joined on the same site by the Elaine Bernacchi School (EBS) for girls; and within a decade they were
generally known as KGV[5]EBS and their annual intake and combined roll was increased significantly.

68 Scheduled air services were inaugurated in the early 1970s. Invariably, they have been beyond the means of most Kain Nikunau resident on Nikunau, if they were travelling privately. If they have travelled at all to Tarawa, it has been by ship, whose services have worked, at best, to a moveable schedule and proved unreliable, if one needed to get from A to B within specified time limits.

69 This applied equally to performing manual labour and committee work, if it was attached to an “official” body, without payment of a sitting allowance.

70 These pre-war boboti were usually governed by an elected committee, on which unimane predominated; and they frequently held general meetings of members (e.g., a whole kawa). Their administration and accounting was performed for little or no formal payment by Kain Nikunau with requisite skills, probably derived from being involved in private and religious body trading and NNG administration (Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1949; Roniti, 1985).

71 Accounting facilitated the recruitment and recording of members, the raising and maintenance of capital, and store administration and control, including costing and pricing. In particular, prices at which goods were sold were calculated by making a 12.5% mark up on wholesale import prices, including freight in; and copra was bought at export prices minus a similar discount (Couper, 1968).

72 The BPC’s accounts were kept in commercial secrecy at its head office in Melbourne, and only annual abstracts were available to the Colony Government and partner governments to the Nauru Island Agreement 1919 or found their way into parliamentary papers in Canberra, Wellington and London (e.g., House of Commons, 1940b). In any case, the abstracts were not easy for the public to access and told little about the economic and ethnic exploitation that was ensuing. Kain Nikunau were unlikely to know of their existence, let alone what they revealed.

73 Macdonald (1982a, p. 175) remarks on the ratio of remittances to copra in the southern Kiribati Islands being 4:1 in the 1960s.

74 The report to the British Parliament refers to not only Hull and Canton in the Phoenix Group (Sydney and Gardner are omitted) but also to Christmas (now spelt Kiritimati) Island in the Line Islands – see House of Commons (1940a).

75 If it had ever been contemplated that Nikunau should revert to its 1892 position of being an independent sovereign state after British decolonisation, this is when that possibility was extinguished.

76 The number of I-Matang staff reached 50 during the 1950s, 80 in the 1960s and over 140 by the 1970s. Junior administrative jobs held by Tuvaluans and I-Kiribati rose to 350 permanent civil servants by the mid-1950s and then to 1,000 in the mid-1970s (GEIC, 1957, 1969, 1976).

77 In addition, the British replicated approaches in other parts of the world where it had small colonies by establishing the University of the South Pacific, whose several government partners and campuses include
Kiribati (Morgan, 1980; University of the South Pacific, 2009).

78 Tarawa has become the only island where, in effect, I-Kiribati can buy and sell land. This started out with the Colony Government and official organisations, including churches, needing sites to develop, including to house their expatriate employees. Thus, colonial legislation still in force allows land transactions there, mainly involving long leases, with nowadays significant financial benefits for Kain Tarawa. Fuelled by increases in cash incomes and permanent migration, this legislation has been used increasingly among I-Kiribati. With the advent of land trading on Tarawa, disputes arise increasingly within Kain Tarawa utu about the right that some members have to sell te aba, including sales completed without other utu members having known about them, and various other complications.

79 The figure for annual expenditures include government business organisations (including joint ventures) in net profit and net loss terms only, but their gross revenues are probably in excess of AU$20m annually, and again arise predominantly on Tarawa.

80 This International Monetary Fund working paper contains a somewhat suspect analysis purporting to show that if recent trends persist, the RERF will be exhausted by 2029. The rhetoric of the paper is that to avert this impending disaster Kiribati needs (even more) consultants to help manage its finances. The paper does not speculate about whether the level of the sea will have risen enough by 2029 to make this financial disaster somewhat academic for the various atoll and reef island communities of I-Kiribati.

81 The annual value of development projects for 2011 was estimated as in excess of AU$65m. Mainly, this comprises the value put on aid-in-kind by external donors, and it is up from just over AU$2m of Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and similar grants in the mid-1970s (GEIC, 1976; Kiribati Government, 2012).

82 While the amounts stated in note 80 relate to the entire country, the proportion expended on Tarawa probably exceeds 85%, with the rest spread thinly across Outer Islands, including Nikunau.

83 Items in stores on Nikunau in the 1980s included rice, tea, flour, sugar, dried and tinned milk, corned beef, soap, lamps, matches, fishing lines, hooks and nets, bicycle parts, pots and pans, knives and spoons, other metal goods, tools, cloth, radio batteries, kerosene, petrol, chewing gum, a few other basics and one or two luxuries (e.g., tomato ketchup). That list had changed little by 2009.

84 Apart from anything else, Nikunau and most other Outer Islands seem to suffer because of experts and donor representatives being unfamiliar with the country’s geography. While numerous reports and other documents over decades include that Kiribati comprises 33 islands or similar, others speak of Kiribati being an island or refer to the island (singular), implying that Tarawa and Kiribati are synonymous.

85 This included potential unimane, equivalent to a few I met on Nikunau in the 1980s. They had worked on Tarawa and elsewhere as administrators and clerks, and had returned to Nikunau in retirement. Even then, however, this pattern of retirement to Nikunau, rather than remaining on Tarawa was beginning to cease, so depriving Nikunau of their knowledge and experience.
86 These operating grants from the Republic Government are an extension of the arrangements introduced by the Colony Government in the late 1960s (see Section 3.4.2.5). In essence, the grants cover five out of every six months of the NIC’s operating expenditures; and the NIC is supposed to raise enough to cover the sixth month from local revenues, which incidentally by virtue of local choice no longer include a land tax.