

1959 – 1972

The Cession of Fiji to Great Britain on 10 October 1874 meant that Fiji now came under the protection of the Queen of Britain. Thus a proper government was established along with the necessary measures taken to abolish the callous practices which had arisen due to the breakdown of Cakobau's government.

By the 1900s the Department of Inland Revenue had been established along with the Customs, Excise, Port and Marine Department whose main function was to collect revenue from taxes and Customs duties and other charges. The following information is obtained from various Journals of the House of Representatives and the Senate Meetings from 1959 to 1972. The Journals contained Parliamentary papers which were Annual Reports of various Departments. These were compiled and published, some as Council papers of the Legislative Council of Fiji.

Department of Inland Revenue

The Department's Reports covered the scope of the Department, analysis of the income tax, schedules, statistics and legislations; death and gift duties, mining royalties and human resources. In 1965 PAYE, Provisional, Basic and Dividend Tax were introduced. The 1965 Annual Report highlighted that the first year of administration was efficient and smooth. Total receipts from 1960 to 1965 from the three sources of revenue Death and Gift Duty, Income and Mining Royalties are tabulated below.

Figure 1: Total receipts from revenue collected from 1960 – 1965

No.	Years	Death & Gift Duty (£)	Income Tax (£)	Mining Royalties (£)	Total Revenue (£)
1	1960	42,420	1,832,984	5,308	1,880,712
2	1961	77,832	1,472,209	1,623	1,551,664
3	1962	42,230	1,672,847	7,421	1,722,498
4	1963	93,957	2,011,841	9,567	2,115,365
5	1964	166,993	2,834,646	3,879	3,005,518
6	1965	113,133	3,264,778	8,974	3,386,885
TOTAL		536,565	13,089,305	36,772	13,662,642

Direct cost of collection was £51,428 or 1.5% of the revenue collected. The gross yield or total revenue earned from Basic Tax was approximately £750,000 whilst Dividend Tax was £63,761 (Barnes, 1966, page 1-2). Appreciation was also accorded to the New Zealand and United Kingdom Inland Revenue Department for their assistance in accepting staff from the Fiji Inland Revenue Department for training and practical experience. The Commissioner of Inland Revenue during this period was D. J. Barnes.

It is interesting to note that the Department's Annual Reports for 1967 and 1968 (which were consolidated due to technical issues of obtaining statistical data) highlighted that the department did not know how many people were paying Basic Tax or the total amount of Basic Tax collected the year before. The reason was "...wherever conveniently possible, collection of Basic Tax is made by source deduction. Where a person's only liability is to Basic Tax and this is collected at sources then a return of income is not required to be lodged" (Barnes, 1969, page 2). Apart from the usual content, the same Annual Report also covered Tax Free Concessions and Tax Evasion.

Customs, Excise, Port and Marine Department

The Customs Department's main function was to collect and protect the nation's revenue from customs and excise duties, port and customs service tax and other sources like port dues and various license fees. The Department was also responsible for the administration and operation of the various ports, the control of shipping and the maintenance of navigational aids.

As with current Annual Reports, the Department highlights the work done by the individual sections, analyses the revenue collected and gives a Trade Report. The Report also covers shipping information which includes sailing licenses, registration and certificates of competency issued by the Department. By 1966 the Marine function of the Department was separated and a new Marine Department was established. Thus the Customs Department only concentrated on its Customs functions.

Even during the colonial era, the Department was being represented at overseas workshops. The Annual Report of 1969, highlights that Fiji was represented by a senior officer of the Department at the Working Party on Customs Administration, organized by the United Nations, Committee on Trade, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) at Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was attended by participants from 19 countries mostly from South East Asia and the Far East. The purpose of the workshop was to deliberate on the Brussels Definition of Value for Customs duty purposes, published and recommended by the Customs Co-operation Council (now known as the World Customs Organisation).

In the same year, a review of the Nadi Airport passenger clearance system was conducted and "...experiments were made with the view to deciding which of several passenger clearance systems is the most expeditious commensurate with reasonable revenue control" (Mabbs, 1970, page 4).

The gross amount of revenue collected in 1969 was \$16,750,499. The Report states that this was "...the highest amount ever collected in a year." This was \$2,166,691 more than the 1968 gross revenue amount of \$14,583,808. Below are some statistics on cargo, vessels, aircraft and passengers entering Fiji.

Figure 2: Cargo traffic

	Import (tons)	Export (tons)	Cargo (airports/ sea ports) tons
1969	970,700	988,500	1,074,700
1968	40,600	22,800	1,011,300

Figure 3: Vessels entering Suva and Lautoka

	Ships entering Suva (from o'seas, excluding yachts)	Ships entering Suva (excluding yachts & fishing vessels)	Ships entering Ltka (from o'seas)
1969	700	490	230
1968	667	462	227

Figure 4: Aircraft arrivals and passenger movement

	Aircraft arrived in Nadi (from o'seas)	Landing and embarking passengers in Nadi	Aircraft arrived in Nausori (from o'seas)	Landing and embarking passengers in Nausori
1969	3,041	182,000	312	10,800
1968	3,029	142,000	217	7,800

It is interesting to note that lack of staff at the Nadi International Airport was also an issue in 1970. The Annual Report of that year states that a small number of officers were employed in two 12hour on call shifts seven days a week, Sundays and public holidays included. "The rapidly increasing volume of traffic using Nadi Airport is such that on shifts the officers get very little time for relaxation and morale is therefore difficult to maintain" (Mabbs, 1971, page 4). The Department planned to increase the number of staff however issues arose as the rate of staff leaving was more than the numbers being recruited. The Comptroller of Customs during this period was E. T. J. Mabbs.