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Notes on the Central Part of the Southern Coast of Papua (British New Guinea)

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passing entirely to the north of Mount Albert Edward, by way of the Waria river. This stream, which enters Hercules bay a little north of the eighth parallel, had, until two years ago, been almost unknown, but was traced by Mr. Monckton to its source. The results of the expedition are embodied in our map, but no account of it is available, Mr. Monckton having left this country, while no reference to it appears in the Annual Report for 1906-1907, unless, possibly, in the statement that it had lately been ascertained that the tribes on the upper Waria were resident in British territory. It is also stated (p. 60) that three expeditions have lately been made to the tract occupied by the Red Creek natives—a very small tribe dwelling between the Gira and Waria rivers, and that in the latter part of 1906 a party of miners, with a white officer, had prospected the Waria for gold, but without success. As will be seen from the map, Mr. Monckton's latest journey has added considerably to our knowledge of the country along the Anglo-German boundary north of Mount Yule, as well as of the headwaters of the Lakekamu river.

Other recent work has been concerned with the country on the south-western side of the island, in the part of the Central Division north-west of Port Moresby. The routes of Dr. W. M. Strong (who, it will be remembered, took part, a few years ago, in the Daniels Ethnological Expedition to New Guinea) have supplied some useful information respecting the inland country north of Redscar bay and Hall sound, where the Roman Catholic missionaries had previously done some good work. The chief results of these journeys, with special reference to the native tribes of this region, are given below. On his journey towards Mount Yule Dr. Strong was accompanied by Father Fillodeau, of the Catholic Mission, who, according to the Annual Report for 1906-07 (p. 12 and map), has since made a more extended journey, accompanied by Father Chabot. The geographical results are embodied in our map. These travellers ascended the valley of the St. Joseph and its northern branch, the Arabure, to S. lat. $8^{\circ} 10'$, and their map shows the distribution of the native tribes of the region. Some photographic panoramas of the mountains to the north are also included in the report.

II. NOTES ON THE CENTRAL PART OF THE SOUTHERN COAST OF PAPUA (BRITISH NEW GUINEA).*

By W. M. STRONG, M.A., M.D., Magistrate for the Possession.

THE observations embodied in the accompanying map were made during a three years' residence in the area it represents. I first visited this portion of Papua as a member of the Daniels' Ethnographic Expedition, and on the return of the expedition an account of a portion of this area

* Map, p. 328.

was given in a joint paper by Dr. Seligmann and myself.* Since then I have spent over two years in the district as Resident Magistrate, and as far as time and other work allowed I have continued to make geographical observations.

The area mapped extends along the coast from the Purari delta on the west to Galley reach on the east, and is bounded inland by the Owen Stanley range, which forms the backbone of New Guinea. It is only at one or two points that the hills have been penetrated for any distance; while east of Cape Possession practically nothing is known of the inland country, although a number of the rivers have been partially traversed. For the most part the coast-line is flat; but in the Pokau district and at the Cupola the hills of the interior are continued to the coast. At Cape Possession and around Hall sound there is more high ground, but this consists of island-like masses rising from the surrounding plain. Yule island is one of these masses which is actually an island. Between Yule island and the mainland is Hall sound, the only harbour on the coast.

Numerous rivers empty themselves on the coast. The largest of these is the Purari, which flows into the sea by several mouths. The delta of this river is intersected by so many branch creeks that travelling is quite impossible except by canoe. The Lakekamu and Tauri rivers flow into the sea near Motumotu (Toaripi), and very close to each other. Here for some distance the coast-line consists of a series of shifting sandbanks and channels, which are difficult to traverse. Another large river, the St. Joseph, enters the sea at Hall sound, and the adjoining mainland is cut up by numerous creeks, which seem to be old mouths of this river. Other streams enter the sea at Vailala, at Kerema, and at Galley reach. Near the sea at both Kerema and Galley reach the rivers broaden out into extensive areas of water; but the entrances to both these and all the other rivers on the coast are shallow. During the south-east wind, which blows every afternoon for about eight months in the year, the sea is very rough, and it is difficult to land anywhere along the coast except in the neighbourhood of Hall sound.

Geologically, the area considered consists of the main range of the Owen Stanley mountains, formed of deep-seated or perhaps intensely metamorphosed rocks, of some smaller hills of stratified rocks, and of an alluvial plain formed by washings from the hills. On the flanks of the main range, volcanic rocks are often found, and a small isolated area of volcanic rock occurs at "the devil's castle" near the south end of Yule island. At the foot of the main range, large areas are formed by *débris* which has been washed down from the hills during floods. Away from the hills the low country consists of an alluvial plain deposited by the rivers. During the rainy season this plain is mostly flooded, and even in the dry season much of it is nothing but a swamp.

* See *Geographical Journal*, 1906, p. 225.

Good sections are seen on the coast at Pokama, Yule island, Cape Possession, and on the Cupola. Organic remains are found at the first three of these localities, while on the Cupola I have seen a narrow seam of carbonaceous matter. Geologically speaking, the area has been very recently elevated. At Cape Possession the strata are highly inclined, and at places vertical, yet the shells contained in them are identical with those now found on the seashore. In the interior the valleys are often deep, and the sides very steep, while the high ground between the valleys takes the form of narrow ridges.

East of Cape Possession there is little or no rain from about April to January, but during January, February, and March rain commonly occurs each afternoon. In the hills rain is more frequent, and is not uncommon throughout the year. The dry season corresponds with the south-east monsoon, and the wet with the north-west. West of Cape Possession the seasons are not so regular, and the rain is more equally divided between each month of the year.

At the mouths of the rivers there are large swampy areas covered with yellow mangrove. The red mangrove also occurs, and in places the rivers are lined with nipa palm. Near the coast there is some grass-land, but the greater part of the country is covered with very dense bush. Excepting the coastal grassland, there is no open country until the higher parts of the hills in the interior are reached. Around Mount Yule and at the source of the St. Joseph river there are considerable areas of open grass country, with a large native population. In the hilly Pokau district the bush is less dense, and it is here that sandalwood has been found. Wild rubber grows in the forest, but is mostly of an inferior quality. Coconuts grow readily on the flat land, and some trading is done in copra, the dried kernel of the coconut. On the coast the natives cultivate the sweet potato, the banana, yams, and taro; and in the hills the sweet potato, yams, sugar-cane, and tobacco. Maize has been recently introduced, and is grown by some villages. In the swamps the sago tree is plentiful, and sago is an important article of diet and of trade among the natives.

It is quite impossible to give even an approximate estimate of the native population of the district. In the Purari delta there are several large villages containing populations estimated at two or three thousand each. Between Orokolo and Cape Possession the population is very largely confined to the actual coast-line. Here we get a narrow sand-bank formed by the sea, while a very little way inland there is only swampy land. The natives build their villages on the sandbank, and live largely on the sago, which grows everywhere in the swamps. East of Cape Possession there are several villages on and near the coast. These villages are for the most part small; but Waima has a population of about eleven hundred. From Inawauni to Inawabui-kipo the St. Joseph flows through a plain which contains numerous villages.

The Aroa river also runs through a similar plain, and on its bank are several villages. All these natives may be classed together as coast people, and are at home only in their canoes or on the plains; they are generally very unwilling to enter the hills. Natives of the Nara, Kuni, Kovio, Fuyuge, and Afoa districts live in hilly or mountainous country, and are generally unwilling to come down to the coast; but they make good carriers for the hills. Between the coast people and the hillmen living in the high mountains of the interior there is usually a belt of country with little or no population.

In the area covered by the map there are numerous groups of people often differing very considerably from each other. In order to illustrate this, the map has been divided according to the tribal groups which inhabit the country. While this division was primarily made for ethnographic and linguistic purposes, still it is very convenient for geographical purposes also. It is very noticeable that there is a distinct tendency for a tribal group to be restricted to an area showing definite physical characteristics, so that geographical and ethnographical divisions often coincide.

The Namau people live in the delta of the Iurari river, and all speak the same language. They live largely on sago and coconuts, and at times they eat human flesh. They build large houses, but their canoes are very frail and without outrigger. Still, in these canoes they balance themselves easily, and can move quickly about the creeks of the delta. Their houses, pipes, etc., are plentifully decorated with designs derived from a human face.

The Elema people, so far as they are at all well known, live on the sandy shore of the Gulf of Papua. They also live largely on sago, which grows plentifully in the swampy country immediately behind the shore. They build large canoes with outriggers, and during the north-west season they go long distances in them along the coast. They appear to have borrowed much of their decorative art from the Namau people; but they do not seem to have ever been cannibals. Over this district several distinct dialects are spoken, but they are clearly only different forms of a common language. Very similar people are also found living up some of the creeks and rivers which flow into the Gulf of Papua; but the interior is practically unknown. It is interesting to notice that the only considerable area of high ground near the coast, viz. the promontory of the Cupola, is inhabited by a people apparently distinct and speaking a language with a very different vocabulary.

Yule island and the shore and creeks of the neighbouring mainland are occupied by the Roro people. These, in common with the Kabadi, Mekeo, Pokau, Kuni, Doura, and Motu tribal groups, appear to be immigrants. Linguistically, they are closely allied to the inhabitants of the Solomon and other Melanesian islands to the east of Papua.

Although the language of these groups has much in common, yet they each speak a distinct language. The Roro people cultivate their gardens, and do a certain amount of hunting. Their canoes are not so big as those of the Elema tribe, but during the north-west season they go out to sea in them, and trade with the Elema natives for sago. The Mekeo and Kabadi people subsist largely on the produce of their gardens, but they also hunt the wallaby and the wild pig. They use canoes but little, and then only for crossing the rivers and creeks in their own district. The Mekeo people occupy the flat country on the lower part of the St. Joseph river and the swampy country to the north. The Kabadi people live on a plain near the mouth of the Aroa river. Both these districts are very fertile, but are unhealthy. The Pokau or Nara tribe occupies hilly and comparatively barren country. Their gardens are not very productive, and in consequence much of their time is given up to hunting. They are a more energetic people than their neighbours on the coast. Closely allied to the Pokau people are the Kuni natives. These occupy the precipitous country behind Pokau and Mekeo. The population in the Kuni district is not dense, and only small villages perched on the tops of narrow ridges are found. Doura is represented by only a single village with a dozen or so houses, while there is only one Motu village in the area dealt with in these notes. The Motuans are great traders, and occupy many villages on the coast to the east of Galley reach.

The Fuyuge people occupy the upper waters of the St. Joseph river, where they have many large villages. Other villages exist between the source of the St. Joseph and Galley reach. Korona village belongs to this group, and is situated very close to Galley reach. Like the other mountain races of Papua, the Fuyuge people are darker and shorter than the coast people. Some of the Fuyuge villages are situated at an altitude of over 5000 feet, and here the temperature at night-time is sometimes very low.

The Afoa people are very little known; they live in mountainous country north of the upper part of the St. Joseph river.

The Kovio people live in the mountainous country near Mount Yule. Like the Fuyuge people, many of their villages are at a high elevation, and in one village I saw a hole scraped in the ground and apparently used for living in. The Kovio people are undoubted cannibals, and in part of the district much fighting used to be indulged in. They construct very peculiar houses. Each house consists of a long narrow building divided into separate rooms by cross-partitions. Each room has a separate entrance, and accommodates a family. In the Kovio villages on the upper Lakekamu river much tobacco is grown, and is smoked in a small bamboo pipe of a type quite different to any known elsewhere in British New Guinea.