

circumstance, rather than capricious. New Zealand rule in Western Samoa assumes benign proportions (pp.238–42).

So we have three recent general histories of the Pacific Islands — one flawed, one good and one very good indeed. That perhaps typifies the current state of the historiography. It's not a bad strike rate.

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*Journeys in a Small Canoe: The Life and Times of a Solomon Islander.* By Lloyd Maepeza Gina. Edited by Judith A. Bennett and Khyla J. Russell. Pandanus Books in association with the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Canberra, 2003. 301 pp. Australian price: \$34.95. ISBN 1-74076-032-8.

ASSISTING 'THE INDIGENOUS VOICE' to be heard in matters pertaining to Pacific Islanders' experience of life, the stuff of what for any people is conventionally called history, is a worthy objective. It is especially so, if not obligatory, for the professional corps of scholars, preponderantly non-indigenous, who study that experience and who presume to comment on it. This is not to say that they cannot do so very well, or should even have the slightest inhibition about doing so. Rather, it simply means that it is a courtesy to provide an opportunity for some of those people whose stories have commonly been told by outsiders such as foreign academics to tell, for a change, their own stories to a public audience. Besides, this may also advance knowledge. The goodwill so earned may ease the way for further research, while extending the range of contributors may yield information that would not have been accessible to a socially detached enquirer. Accordingly, Judith Bennett, a respected authority on the history of the Solomon Islands, is to be commended for undertaking to get the story of an eminent citizen of that country into print.

Maepeza Gina was a public servant during the last 22 years of the British colonial regime in the Solomon Islands, and then the first Speaker of the national parliament. He held this position from Independence in 1978 until 1998. Born in 1935, as a child he experienced the Japanese occupation of the Solomons. He later attended school in Fiji, before embarking on a career that was woven into a crucial period of Solomon Islands history. His story as told in this book was mostly spoken in a mixture of *pijin* and English (his native language is Roviana). This was tape-recorded by Bennett and then laboriously transcribed and rendered into publishable English.

The 'indigenous voice' does not have authority just on account of its indigeneity. It also needs to relate matters of substance if it is to be useful and respected as a source of information about anything other than itself. Like its evidential cousin, the too often unduly cosseted 'oral tradition', it needs to be stringently tested and examined before 'it was' or 'it is' can be distilled from 'I think' or 'they said'. And therein lies a weakness of this book. A personal but generalized narrative, it tends to lack precision and to be light on detail, as well as on analysis and explanation. The pages on family history do little to illuminate local kinship and descent systems; no source is given for the reported conversation between Chief Roni and the pioneer missionary J.F. Goldie (p.9); it is misleading to say that Lloyd's father spent most of the war years scouting for the coastwatcher Donald Kennedy (p.11); the account of investigating the Remnant Church on Malaita in 1964 is largely anecdotal and only marginally augments the anthropologist Ben Burt's article on the movement in *Oceania*, 53, 4 (1983). Even slighter is the account of a visit to the famous cultist Moro of Makaruka. And in relation to government, there are no 'revelations' such as might be hoped for in the memoirs of an 'insider'.

Instead what is offered is a straightforward factual testimony of the life and career trajectory of an honourable, conscientious Christian gentleman with a strong sense of family pride partnered with social responsibility. Given the underdeveloped state of biographical writing on Solomon Islanders this alone would justify publication. But that is not all; since of recent years the Solomons have been known for little more than corruption, inefficiency and violent lawlessness it is salutary to be reminded that there are still reserves of honesty, decency and rationality there that might one day be drawn on to underwrite the work of reconstruction.

Regarding content, the book is useful for tracing the career path of one of the first generation of indigenous officials in Solomon Islands and also for Gina's sad and thoughtful reflections on the wretched state of his country after a quarter century of independence: 'I do not blame the colonial regime for all today's ills' (p.280).

Also sad is the truth of the words of a colleague who told Judith Bennett that she 'would not get much credit for such a publication [as this one] in the university promotion stakes' (p.xix). On the authority of a faculty dean of my acquaintance, to invoke just one piece of evidence, this has also been the case at another New Zealand university besides that of Otago, where Dr Bennett works. And her response to that pusillanimous caveat? 'Too bad, that was not why I took on the work'. Certain other Pacific historians will know what she means.

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*The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement.* Edited by Tom Brooking and Jennie Coleman. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2003. 206 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877276-33-2.

THE LAST 15 YEARS have witnessed an intensification of interest in the composition of New Zealand's European population, in the demographic and cultural differences between the various national groups that migrated here and in the contribution of each group to the nation's life and culture. Inspired by recent developments in British historiography as well as the rise of diaspora studies, scholars have sought to disaggregate the nebulous British immigrant and recognize the distinctive English, Scottish, Irish and even Welsh immigrant presence. First cab off the rank in this rediscovery of nineteenth-century newcomers were the Irish. A substantial body of work emerged in the wake of Donald Akenson's *Half the World From Home* (1990). This collection of essays sets out explicitly to match the energy of recent work on New Zealand's Irish, and in doing so sets an excellent platform for future research on the Scots in New Zealand.

*The Heather and the Fern* comprises several papers delivered at the 1998 Bamforth conference on Scottish migration as well as several supplementary essays. It includes contributions from leading international scholars of the study of Scotland and Scottish migration as well as locally-based writers. In the opening chapter, John MacKenzie, a distinguished imperial historian, emphasizes the very close connections between the modern history of Scotland and British imperial history, and shows the ways in which the empire came to constitute a critical part of Scottish identity both at home and abroad. He also illustrates that national groups' standing within the empire was dynamic and shows how the standing of the Scots was transformed between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century as the predominantly Roman Catholic Irish were assigned the role of the empire's bad boys and girls. Eric Richards, displaying his deep knowledge of the Highland clearances, examines New Zealand's Highland emigrants in comparative perspective. Using a series of vignettes, Richards demonstrates how cultural markers