

19 April 2000.

Dear D. King,

Many thanks for sending to me with your letter of 3 April a copy of your journal "Tighar Tracks" - Volume 15, which I found most interesting.

There are very few people alive to-day, who have set foot on Nikomaroro, and I count myself fortunate to have been one of them.

I am glad to note that you have been in contact with Michael Luke, and I wish you well with the examination of Sir Henry's official papers in St. Antony's College, Oxford.

I note in "Tighar Tracks" that Sir Henry has been described as "redoubtable". Yes, he was a valiant man as well as being kind, generous and learned. He ranks in the "Top Ten" of the people with whom I have been associated in the course of my life.

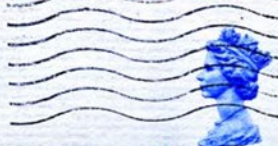
I was with Sir Henry when he stood by Gerald Gallagher's grave to pay his respects and to honour his (G's) memory & work. I think that I mentioned to you in an earlier letter that Gerald had stayed in Government House, Suva, shortly before he died. Unfortunately, I have no recollection of the conversations that I had with him at that time, save that I remember him as a pleasant and conscientious fellow, who was clearly devoting himself to the task of assisting the islanders' resettlement in the Phoenix Group from the over-populated Gilbert Islands.

It may be unfashionable to-day to be praiseworthy about British colonial policies and practices, but for those of us who chose to be involved in such administration, I can say with a clear conscience that it was not imperialism that dictated our actions. It was, in fact, the desire to assist the indigenous peoples in their efforts to improve living standards by developing the country's economy without disturbing their social fabric and customs, and to encourage them to live peacefully by the rule of law, promoting the use of dialogue in place of martial confrontation to solve problems.

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with neighbours. Gerald Gallagher was in that mould.

I send you and your Tighar team my congratulations on your efforts so far, and I wish you all well as you plan for your next visit to Nikomaroro in 15 months time.

Sincerely,

Ian Thomson.