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Papua New Guinea Patrol Reports

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[Volume 14]

PATROL REPORT OF: L/MURRAY - WESTERN ACC. NO.: 496

VOL. NO: 15 1965 - 1966

NUMBERS OF REPORTS: 1

[14]

REPORT NO.	FOLIO	OFFICER CONDUCTING PATROL	AREA PATROLLED	MAPS / PHOTOS	PERIOD OF PATROL
[1] 10P 1165/66	1-14	F.J.L. HAYES	P.O LAKE MURRAY C/D		12/12/65 - 20/12/65



TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

PATROL REPORT

District of WESTERN Report No. 1-65/66

Patrol Conducted by F.J.L. Haynes.

Area Patrolled Lake Murray Census Division

Accompanied by Europeans Nil
2 Interpreters
Agric. Worker
Natives 2 Members R.P. & N.G.C.

Duration—From 12/12/1965 to 20/12/1965

Number of Days 9

Did Medical Assistant Accompany? No

Last Patrol to Area by—District Services 4/1965

Medical ?

Map Reference F.R. 1-62/63

Objects of Patrol General Administration, Investigation Econ. Dev etc.

Director of District Administration,
PORT MORESBY.

Forwarded, please.

22/4/1966

[Signature]
District Commissioner

Amount Paid for War Damage Compensation £.....

Amount Paid from D.N.E. Trust Fund £.....

Amount paid from D.P. Trust Fund £.....



TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

Telegrams.....

Our Reference 67-6-1

If calling ask for

Mr. RAH:PH

Department of District Administration,

Western District,

DARU.

22nd April, 1966.

The Director,
Department of District Administration,
KONEDOBU.

LAKE MURRAY PATROL No. 1/65-66.

I attach original and one copy of the above numbered report. I have the following comments:

Page 3: para 3. The assistance given to the Administration and L.M.B. Society by the Lake Murray people by way of transporting cargo, up to distances of one hundred miles, is very pleasing.

Para 7: This complaint about the poor village reception of Radio Daru is not new but at the same time gives rise to some concern. It has been reported from other areas within the District, that villagers who are having the same trouble with their local station tune into Radio Peking as an alternative. It is expected that Radio Daru will be transmitting on a stronger frequency in the near future.

Pages 5 & 6: are mainly concerned with the current and future economic situation at Lake Murray. The matter of how the Lake Murray Buyers Society's surplus should be shared is of first concern.

Distribution of Surplus: Discussions with the Co-operative Officer reveals plans to distribute the \$59,686 surplus in the following way. At a recent meeting of the L.M.B.S. a motion was passed whereby all accumulated profits will be distributed by way of bonus share issue. In future years rebates will be of importance to members as it is not expected their cash income will be the equivalent of this year's. For example, Council taxes will have to be paid. With the capitalization of present profits there should be no further calls in the foreseeable future, and with tighter financial control good rebates and dividends should be paid each year.

Future Economic Development:

Rubber: The L.M.B.S. is to buy rubber seed, establish plots and sell seedlings to villagers at cost price. This project is already under way.

Timber: It is anticipated that approval will be given for members to withdraw part of capital for other Co-operative ventures such as the possible joint sawmill at Pangoa. Capital to be supplied by the interested Society members with possibility of a loan from the L.M.B.S. Technical know-how to be supplied by the U.F. Mission.

Fishing: Should be left in obedience until the native fishing industry at Daru is established to see if marketing and storage problems can be overcome.

Crocodile Farming: Much has been written about this and the

results are dubious. Nevertheless it is agreed that the possibility of crocodile farming at Lake Murray could be investigated.

Conclusion: The main purpose of the patrol was to make an investigation into economic development. This has well been covered and over the past two years, the Lake Murray people have achieved economic success in no small measure. It is agreed that the bias on crocodile skins should be avoided and the other fields of economic development thoroughly investigated. Mr Hayne's driving enthusiasm has helped create a very successful native buyers society and groundwork laid for the growth of other branch co-operatives concentrating on industries other than the crocodile industry which has a limited future. These could be of equal success.

The need to establish a local Government Council in the area is a real one and this recent economic development and promising future should support such a council. A local government survey will be completed on Mr. Hayne's return to the district.

.....
(I. A. Holmes),

a/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

67-3-22

3rd June, 1966.

The District Commissioner,
Western District,
DARU.

Lake Murray Patrol Report No. 1/1965-66:

Thank you for your memorandum 67-6-1 of
22nd April, 1966 together with Mr. Haynes' patrol report.

2. Mr. Haynes has written an interesting and
informative report after a nine day patrol in this area.
3. It is pleasing to note the way the locals
have assisted the Administration.

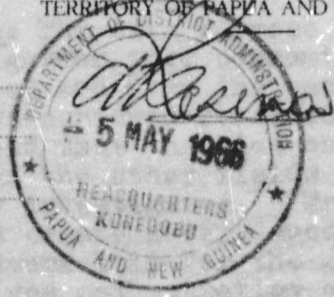
(J. K. McCarthy)
DIRECTOR

67. 3. 22¹⁰



TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

Telegram :
Cable Reference : 67-6-1
If calling ask for : RAH:PH
Mr. :



Department of District Administration,
Western District,
DARU.

22nd April, 1966.

The Director,
Department of District Administration,
KONEBOBU.

LAKE MURRAY PATROL No. 1/65-66.

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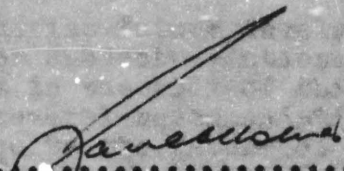
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.....
(I. K. Holmes),

a/DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

LAKE MURRAY PATROL REPORT

No.1/65-66.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Every village in the Lake Murray Census Division was visited during the course of this patrol. A total of approximately fifteen hundred villagers were present within the region to receive the patrol in eleven different villages.
2. The last patrol to the region was conducted by me in April, 1965 (Patrol Report I¹ No.4/64-65). It was intended that I should complete this present patrol in October, 1965 however in June the lake region began to suffer from a shocking drought which continued until early December. During the drought villagers were scattered throughout the region and efficient patrolling was impossible.
3. Throughout the patrol discussions in each village revolved around Administration Policy, future Buyers' Society Policy, economic development through rubber or timber and the future of the crocodile skin industry, Decimal Currency, attitude towards Local Government and Education and Health matters were also discussed.
4. In order to assist future development at Lake Murray I shall discuss a number subjects mentioned above in detail under various headings in the body of this report. In the "Conclusion" I have made several recommendations which I believe are of basic importance to the future of the people in the Lake Murray region.

DIARY:

12th December, 1965.

Departed patrol post for MIWA village per M.V. MIWA. Enroute called at UFM Pangoa. Arrived Miwa village 1400hrs. Lake still falling and necessary push workboat across Mud at Kain River and near Miwa village. Discussed with villagers various matters also inspected LMBS store and REDURU which has been aground near village since June. People from ASOATUTUMA in village so will speak to peoples of ASOATUTUMA, VENA VENA and MIWA tomorrow.

13th December, 1965.

0800 Discussions with villagers. Many interesting remarks made but a definite note of laziness appears to be developing here. Possibly the drought although there is rain in the air. 1430. Terrific sight as the Herbert River begins to flow into the lake bringing with it very large trees and logs - people have to rush to pull their canoes into thick grass - we have to do the same to the workboat to protect it from logs. The lake is rising again. 1500 to ASOATUTUMA inspect village. New Rest House. All villages require work as houses neglected during drought.

14th December, 1965.

0700 per workboat to TAGUM village. Village inspection and in afternoon general discussions with villagers. Approximately 1500 rain began to fall and heavy rain fell all night. The lake is rising rapidly. Prepare to depart for DIMU tomorrow.

15th December, 1965.

0700 to DIMU by workboat. Unable travel directly to village as lake still too low. 0900 at Village. Housing in poor shape. Many disputes heard and settled during afternoon discussion. As in all villages people questioned on use to which Admin. supplied radios are put - Wewak most popular station little response towards radio DARU. USOKOF tomorrow.

LAKE MURRAY PATROL REPORT

L/M No. 1/65-66.

DIARY:Cont...

16th December, 1965.

0630 Depart Dimu for USOKOF village arriving USOKOF 0900hrs. People building a new village as old one destroyed by fire during drought - still a lot of work to be done. New Rest House etc. quite good. In afternoon held general discussion with villagers. Main thing in this village is to get new houses built. Heavy overnight rain.

17th December, 1965.

0600 departed for patrol post enroute Aewa Village. Arrived station 0730 and waited for radio. All OK at station - departed 1000hrs for Aewa arrived village noon after running aground and pushing very strong flow from June River. Walked from June River to village. Village inspection - generally in good condition - in afternoon general discussion. People here definitely showing more interest in developmental activities.

18th December, 1965.

0600hrs. depart Aewa by workboat for NAGO. Pushed strong current all the way. Arrived village 1000hrs. As usual village in fine shape. General discussions with villagers showed people here have lost none of their enthusiasm. People are clearing nearby land with a view to planting rubber. As with all people visited it was found that there was little understanding of the new Decimal Currency however they do realise that both currencies are still "good". Ultimately villagers will learn the new system.

19th December, 1965.

0700hrs departed Nago per workboat down June river and along lake to patrol post arriving noon. In afternoon visited BOIMBOILAVU and BUSEKI villages. Here we have the two extremes of Lake Murray - the talkers Boimboilavu and the workers Buseki. Discussions held in each village showed that both villages were enthusiastic but, as usual, only the people of Buseki have started to do something. Buseki has one of the best lake villages and Boimboilavu possibly the worst even though they ~~ix~~ began a new village nearly 12 months ago - it remains an area of frames. Each of these villages was hit hard by the drought and at one stage it was thought they may have to be rationed with food. Return to station.

20th December, 1965.

0730 by speedboat to UPOBIA village. Arrived 0845 after fairly difficult trip up fast flowing BOI River. People clearing land for rubber planting. Many new houses under construction. At present these villagers very enthusiastic. 1400hrs down river to other PARE village at MAGIPOPO. Discussions with people. Inspected proposed new village site. People here hit hard by drought but are working hard to overcome their problems. 1700hrs departed village for station.

END OF PATROL

NATIVE AFFAIRS:

1. Since my last report the native affairs situation in the Lake Murray area has been strongly affected by a severe drought which began in June and has continued until this month (December). I am happy to report that recent heavy rains have relieved the situation and things are returning to normal.
2. During the six months of drought the lake dropped to its lowest level in twenty four years. Sago swamps dried up - villagers were forced to dig holes to get water to make sago, vessels could get no closer to the station than Miwa village and then only after a very risky journey up the Strickland River. At one stage all cargo had to be carried from the Fly/Strickland Junction (some one hundred miles). Air drops were made to keep the station supplied with food and salt for skins had to be air dropped to the Society (ultimately costing £28 per 112lb. bag).
3. Personally I shall not forget the assistance rendered to the Administration by local villagers. In 1962 one Officer had difficulty getting paddlers to take him three hours paddling to the station. During this drought people carried Admin. and Society cargo for up to one hundred miles and often for distances of twenty and thirty miles. Villagers volunteered their time even though they were short of food and there was little monetary gain. ~~Later~~ Often the lake became very choppy and therefore dangerous; and during every trip to the station it was necessary to pull canoes and supplies ~~through~~ ^{over} more than a mile of stinking mud (often crawling with water snakes). In their attitude towards the Administration Lake Murray people have come a long way since 1962.
4. During the drought local volunteers worked without pay to build an airstrip at the station and they also assisted with the maintenance of the Health vessel LEDURU which spent nearly seven months on the mud at Miwa village. Because of this work and the work mentioned in para. 3 you can imagine that something had to suffer. Many villages are in a poor state with houses badly in need of repair etc.. They villagers should be given a good ^{three} months free from requests for work etc. to allow them to get their homes back into shape.
5. Fires raged through the region for three months after July. One village was destroyed as were many coconut palms and sago swamps (which had dried up). At the patrol post most of the school was razed as was the Aid Post. At times it was difficult to travel the lake without becoming lost in the smoke haze. On a number of occasions returning from the Pangoa airstrip we became lost and had to sleep on the lake. It will be a good six months before food supplies will return to normal. Some villagers have already begun building a new school and Aid Post.
6. In a number of villages people are requesting Aid Posts and schools. Villagers were told that by comparison with other areas of the Territory they are extremely well off; however their requests do show that they are now interested in Education and improvement of general health.
7. Each village has its own radio and some interest is shown in New s broadcasts, request sessions etc.. Wewak is easily the most popular station. Daru rates fairly low because it is difficult to hear and locals have the idea it is for the Kiwai people. Radio Daru staff will have to spend more time with their proposed listeners if they wish to gain an extensive audience in this region.
8. The drought influenced the economic situation as low water brought crocs from the swamps and they were

NATIVE AFFAIRS: Cont..

8. Killed in scores. People are beginning to realise that after the crocodile slaughter this year the future is not bright. The anti "outside" croc-shooter feeling remains although as few shooters came to this region during the drought they have little to support their complaints. (More on the croc skin industry under Economic Development)

9. In a number of villages older people said that the recent drought was not as bad as the 1941 drought. People said (with a smile on their faces) that when people died in 1941 they were eaten. No complaints of anyone being eaten were heard during this patrol.

VILLAGE OFFICIALS:

1. The majority of Officials continue to give loyal service. It seems certain that many of these men will be replaced by Local Government Officials before the end of 1966. I believe the Administration awards certificates to loyal Officials who are replaced with the coming of L.G. Councils; all present village officials deserve some recognition for their work.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

1. Drought has placed the Lake Murray people and their Buyers' Society in a fairly strong economic position however the basis for this development, the crocodile skin industry, is weakening rapidly as the supply of crocodiles decreases.

2. Since March, 1965 the peoples Society has turned over more than £100,000. Lake Murray villagers were paid more than £30,000 for skins - dividend and bonus moneys totaling more than two thousand pounds have yet to be paid - the L.M.B.S. has liquid assets of more than £40,000. In the nine months since March, 1965 the Society increased its business by almost 300% and since 1963 by 700%. Liquid assets in 1963 were less than five thousand pounds.

3. Villagers have developed along with their Society. Not only are people interested in making more money they also show interest in improving living conditions in their villages. Generally villagers are taking a greater interest in what is going on. This new interest I believe has resulted from their new affluence.

4. I am particularly pleased with the Lake Murray people and their Society because to arrive at their present position they have had to compete with European traders and croc-shooters who in the past have done little more than exploit the people and the croc-industry. The Trader was most definitely at an advantage as he could shoot wherever he liked (L/Murray people respected others rights to swamps) the European could use efficient weapons and almost as many weapons as he liked to shoot crocodiles (villager was restricted 2 S/Guns to 50 people) and also the European had his outboard motors etc. which allowed him to cover greater areas than the local shooter. Against all these advantages the Lake Murray villager, for the first time, caught more crocs and made more money than the trader/shooter. In fact he was so successful that after a few months European shooters did not even bother to enter this region.

5. The anti-outside shooter feeling which was so strong in April has decreased somewhat mainly because few shooters entered the region. Villagers still request Legislation to protect the industry however Legislation to prevent the crocodile from being wiped out may be too late.

LAKE MURRAY PATROL REPORT

L.M. No. 1/65-66.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Cont...

6. Since March, 1965 more than 5,000 crocs have been taken from this region. With the lake rising croc skin purchases have fallen to less than five a week. The crocodiles just are not there to protect. I am afraid that even if the House of Assembly does pass Mr. Tabua's Bill it will be too late to save these peoples only present source of income. In Queensland and the Northern Territory croc Legislation came too late. It seems the House of Assembly will also act too late but it won't be the Members who will suffer - it will be the hundreds of villagers in this region unless a new source of income is found.

7. With the above situation in mind I have given a lot of thought to ways of opening new avenues for villagers to earn money. Throughout my patrol I heard suggestions from villagers and made several suggestions - I now make the following recommendations with the hope that they will be followed up:-

This is being gone into by OIC. Possible partnership with mission

Timber - at present the U.F. Mission are operating a sawmill near their station. ~~Expressed~~ this mill operates solely to provide Mission timber requirements however from discussions with the Missionary (who has been in this area for many years) and from my own estimates I feel ~~am~~ certain that there is a future for Lake Murray people in this industry. All people seeing timber cut at the Mission Mill comment on its quality etc.. The arrangement which would bring a new source of income to the people would be for the U.F.M. to go into full commercial production possibly in partnership with the LMBS - Mission would provide technical knowledge - villagers the logs and labour.

Rubber - a trial plot at the station has done well to date. Villagers at NAGO, BUSEKI and UPOBIA have already cleared land near their villages and have this land pegged ready for planting stumps. Other people on the lake have expressed interest and after their proposed plantation sites have been approved by an Officer of DASF they will begin planting rubber. To keep abreast of the present wave of enthusiasm a nursery will not be established at Lake Murray to provide stumps (this would take twelve months), stumps will be brought from the Kiunga and Oriomo nurseries. The L.M.B.S. has already indicated that it will assist planters with loans for plant etc.

Fishing - there is money to be made however before entering the fishing business a general survey of local potential is essential. The fish are in the lake but to date the local villager has made nothing from this untapped resource because the European fresh food market - which offers the best prices - is very risky for local people because one bad fish could spoil the industry. Lake Barramundi certainly has a "muddy" taste but only if it is unfilleted. If an airstrip were established close to the station the industry could develop by supplying fish to the Highlands. I believe timber and rubber provide better opportunities than fishing.

Cottage Industries - the growing tourist industry could open two further sources of income to the local villager. By making and selling stuffed crocodiles and turtles some people could make a ~~fairly~~ good income. Apart from this industry Lake Murray people could make a little money from the sale of "tank fish" such as the archer fish, extremely small cat fish, the small turtle (which grows no larger than 4" across) and many other varieties which abound in the lake. Such fish could be easily transported to Daru thence Moresby for sale.

Crocodile Farming - a possible future source of income but like fishing a lot of research is required. I personally believe that valuable information could be obtained from Zoos in

LAKE MURRAY BUYERS SOCIETY

L.M. No.1/65-66.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Cont..

7. Australia. Possibly a person with expert knowledge of this industry could be employed to investigate its possibilities as there is no doubt that the croc skin industry is a valuable one. The greatest pity is that the Administration and House of Assembly failed to act to protect it and now this valuable industry is on the way to extinction. Although it could provide a future source of income crocodile farming will not bring the returns that croc shooting did bring.

8. Although most of the profits from the croc skin industry in the Lake Murray ~~people~~ region never reached the people (traders who have since left the region and the Territory made the most money) the Lake Murray Buyers' Society by its efforts over the past two years has managed to save nearly forty thousand pounds. What is now going to happen to this money? Is it to be returned to shareholders or can this money be used (with the shareholders permission) to aid development of the region? In my opinion there are three courses which the shareholders (the majority of ~~people~~ in this region are shareholders) can take :-

(A) The accumulated money could be divided amongst shareholders in the form of dividends. This would give these people enough money to pay future taxes plus small items of trade for the next few years. Each year the amount of money held by the individual would ~~decrease~~ decrease but the people would live reasonably for a few years. If everyone started planting rubber now this may be a good idea as in 5-6 years a new source of income would be available to them.

(B) Accumulated money might be invested in Territory loans or similar gilt edged stock. Each year the dividends from this investment could be distributed amongst shareholders. In this way many Lake Murray people would have a small but guaranteed source of income and at the same time development work in other parts of the Territory would benefit from the money invested.

(C) Money could be loaned to villagers wishing to buy outboard motors or plant for rubber etc. Although somewhat risky these loans may pay excellent dividends in developing this region.

9. Of course a combination of A, B, and C is possible. With advice from the Administration shareholders (most of the adults in the area patrolled) will have to make their own decision. Thirty - Forty thousand pounds is a lot of money - I am certain no other organisation would invest so much in this region. Certain traders have made a lot of talk in the past but not one has re-invested any of the profits he made here; these men often complain about the Society however few if any can claim they have helped this area and its people as the Lake Murray Buyers' Society has done.

10. From what I have heard and seen during this patrol I have little hesitation in claiming that the Lake Murray villager has more money than many other villagers in Papua and New Guinea and that he certainly has the highest income of the rural population in the Western District. The future need not be bleak. One thing stands out, Lake Murray is certainly more than five hundred miles of swamp. Without any direct financial help from the Administration the Lake Murray Villager has improved his standard of living and his standing amongst other people in the Western District.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS: see Page 7

LAKE MURRAY PATROL REPORT

L.M. No.1/65-66.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS:

1. As mentioned earlier the drought hampered transport and communications for up to six months making conditions very difficult for villagers and the Administration.
2. With the drought over normal conditions prevail and in the near future transport facilities are expected to improve. The Society's new vessel "Lake Murray" is expected in a matter of weeks and six new outboard motors are also scheduled to arrive soon. To facilitate easier repairs people have standardised on the make of engine to be purchased.
3. Villagers owned no outboards in 1963 - they now own six engines. Resulting improvements in transport and communications will benefit many in the lake region.
4. The L.M.B.S. vessel, which will mainly be used for trading on the lake and Mid/Fly River, should establish a reliable link between all villages. (The man who takes over from me should get a good start with villagers by receiving the new vessel and outboards and passing them onto the villagers).

HEALTH:

1. It appears that there were surprisingly few deaths resulting from the drought.
2. As a result of poor food and dirty drinking water many cases of stomach complaints were reported however with the lake rising and water again in the sago swamps the health situation is rapidly returning to normal.

AGRICULTURE :

1. All important aspects of this subject have been discussed in the section on Economic Development. Basically what we ~~require~~ require is a survey of the economic potential for rubber and fishing. Dept. of Forests could survey timber potential.

EDUCATION:

1. A shortage of food caused the U.F.M. to abandon lower grade classes for over two months. Fire at the Admin school here destroyed three classrooms and two dormitories however classes were continued in makeshift classrooms.
2. For the first time children from Lake Murray sat for the Standard Six Territory examination - they did extremely well. All fourteen boys who sat for the exam passed and all have qualified to attend highschool in Daru. Lake Murray schoolboys gained second and fourth place in the Western District and several passes were in the top 99% of passes in P.N.G..
3. Parents at Lake Murray are showing an increasing interest in their childrens' education. Over the past two years attendance figures show an excellent improvement.

CONCLUSION :

1. To maintain present development and encourage future development immediate action is required to swing the peoples efforts away from reliance on the crocodile skin industry ^{and} the establishment of a rubber or timber industry.
2. Future of accumulated Society profits must be decided by the shareholders. As shareholders are quite

CONCLUSION Cont..

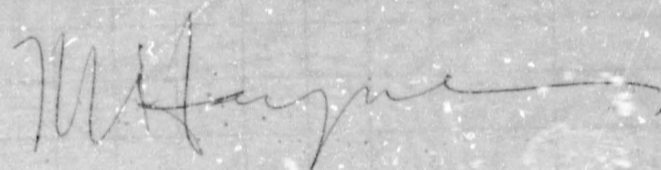
2. prepared to listen to Administration recommendations we must give the matter a lot of thought and possibly conduct a survey of the Economic Potential of the region. We must not miss this opportunity to guide the people in order that they may develop their region without demanding financial assistance etc. from the Administration.

3. Such industries as fishing and crocodile farming require close scrutiny before large amounts of Capital are invested. Investigations into the possibilities of selling "tank fish" and stuffed crocodiles and turtles should be undertaken immediately - I am sure there is money to be made selling these items.

4. Economic and Social development have advanced rapidly over the past few years. To give this region its important third dimension a Local Government Council should be ~~established~~ established to encourage Political Development.

5. In a country crying out for new industry and economic development I believe it is a tragedy to see the way the crocodile skin industry has been handled by the Administration and House of Assembly. I firmly believe we have encouraged (by our disinterest and inactivity) the destruction of an industry which could have been worth millions of pounds to Papua and New Guinea. If the crocodile had not been slaughtered as it has been - if the right to catch crocs had been restricted to the villager or if outside shooters had been licensed and forced to pay certain minimum prices the economic future of the Lake Murray people and many other people in this District would present few problems. Not only does the economic future present certain problems but we have to dispel the anti Admin, European shooter and even House of Assembly feeling which exists in the background. It may be too late but personally I still hope the Croc Protection Bill will be passed by the House of Assembly.

6. It is very important for future Officers to ensure that when the Lake Murray Buyers' Society vessel arrives in this region it makes regular runs to villages in the Mid/Fly region and around Lake Murray. Resulting regular communications and transport will bring all people in the Patrol Post region closer together thereby encouraging Social, Economic and even Political development.



F.J.L. Haynes.
Officer in Charge