

The Palm Island News

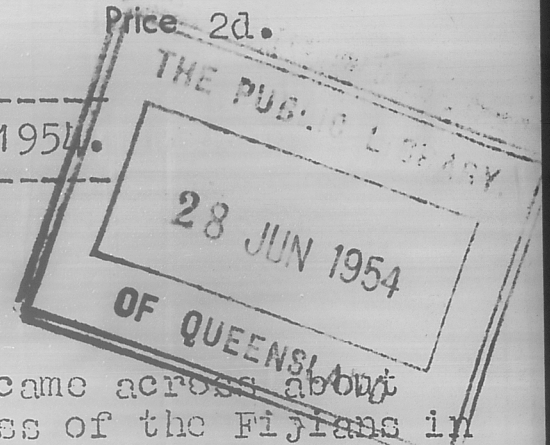
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Editorial

Island Football.

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This is a very interesting story I came across about Island football. The explosive success of the Fijians in Australia. The Australian Rugby League Board of Control Secretary Mr. Keith Sharpe was sent on a Pacific Islands talent tour, just after the war.

He reported that the Islanders played a very bright style of football, but he considered that a tour by them would not be a profitable venture in Australia.

The Fijians have proved how wrong he could be, by their box-office smash hits, and have left no doubt of the novel popularity of the Islanders. The Fijians have a native population of about 135,000, eligible for football. This does not include Europeans and Indians.

There is nothing to stop Rugby Union administrators bringing teams here from Tonga and Samoa also. The Tongans have burst into the world of prominence under the banner of popular Queen Salote; you will remember the grand Welcome Queen Salote received in London at the coronation.

Tonga is 2,000 miles from Sydney and Samoa more northerly, 2,400 miles. The Fijians are mostly Melanesian, but the Samoans and Tongans are the taller light-brown Polynesians.

Tests have been played between Tonga and Fiji, and from seventeen matches, Fiji have won ten, lost six and drawn one, both sides played with out boots because at the time Tongans were barefoot players.

The large Indian population of about 138,000 in Fiji

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