

The Language of the Kire People, Bogia, Madang District, New Guinea

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Introduction

The Kire people inhabit a small area 30-60 kilometres inland from Hansa Bay west of Bogia, northeastern New Guinea. The population numbers about 1600. The Kire tribal territory is bounded on the west by the Ramu River, and extends a few miles eastward over undulating hills up to 300 metres above sea level. Tropical rain forest and grass land cover the crests and slopes of low hills, with swampy areas abounding in sago palms in the valleys and along the river flats.

First direct contact was made by a German patrol in 1912. The powerful Kire village Akukum made attacks on native bird hunters entering their lands from the coast.

"It appears expedient to establish permanent settled conditions if only to ensure security for the plantations and mission establishments. The expedition troop under its leaders was therefore stationed for five months on the plains by the mouth of the Ramu,

The patience and help of Kire speakers, particularly of Tung and Pir villages, has been valued. Rev. R. V. Chamberlain, formerly a missionary at Pir, has shared helpful discussion of points of comparison between the dialects. M. J.-L. Chodkiewicz has kindly criticised the paper. Permission to consult government records was given by His Honour the Administrator of Papua and New Guinea.