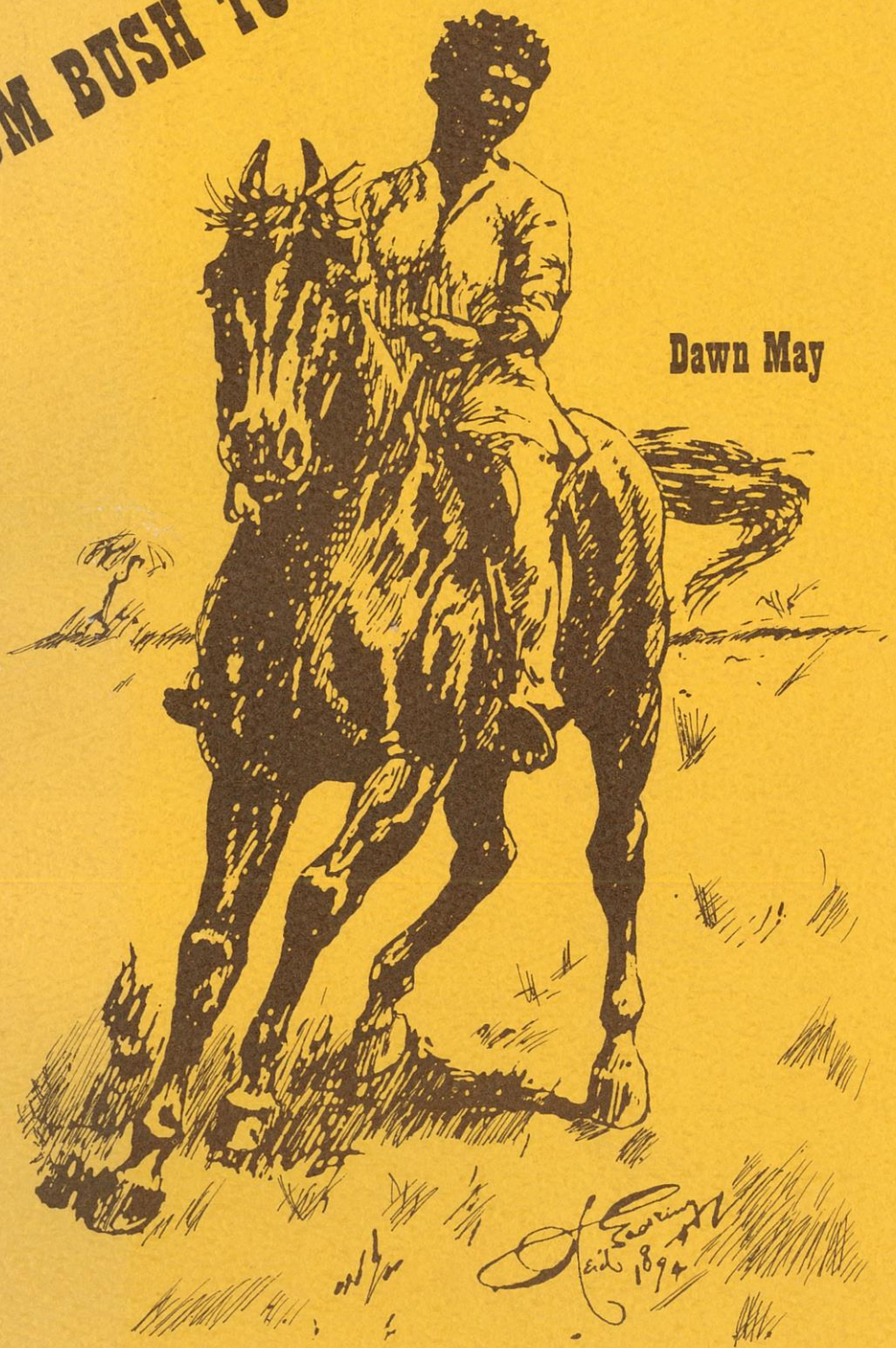
# FROM BUSH TO STATION

Dawn May



Studies in North Queensland History No. 5

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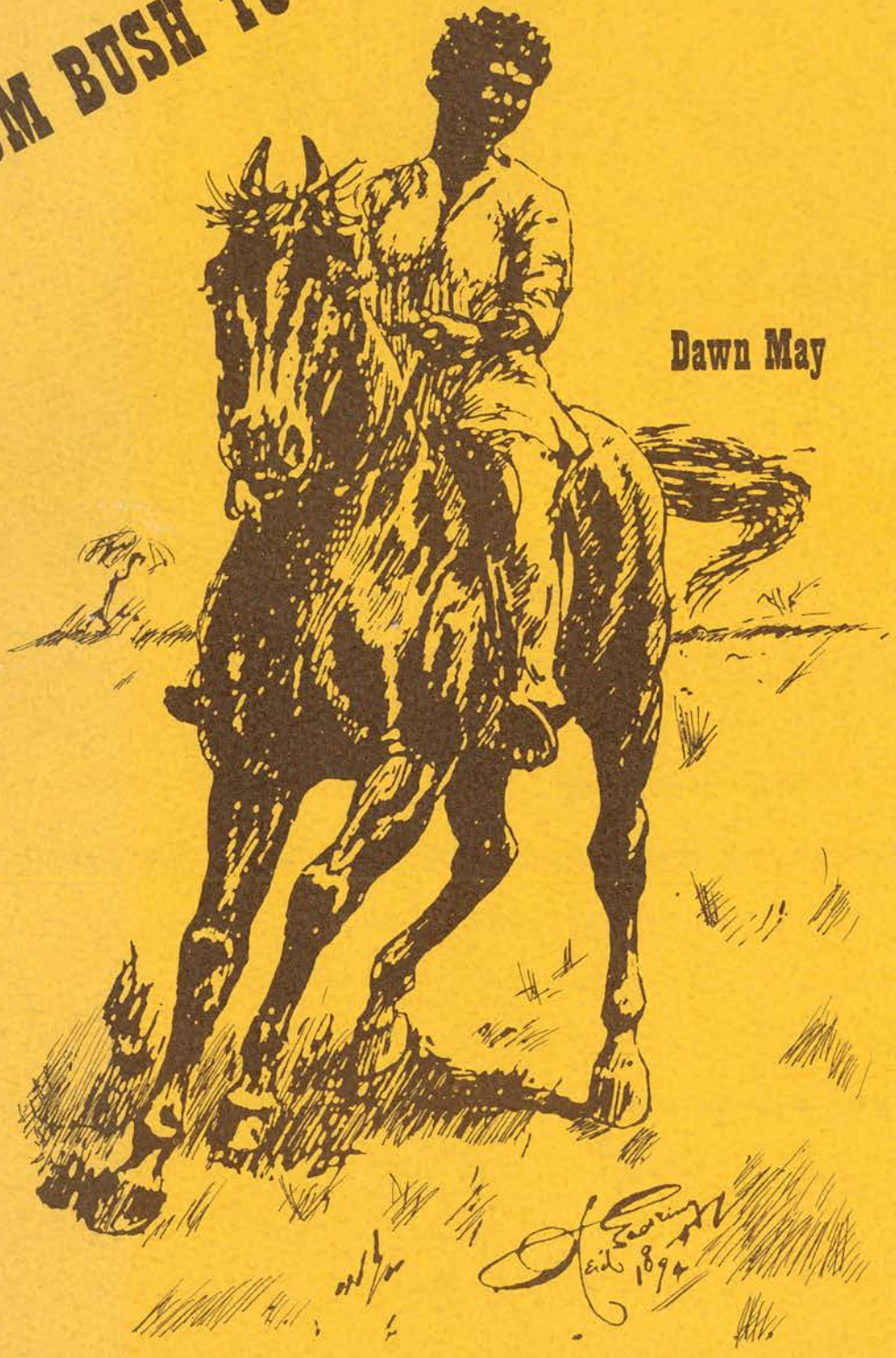

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## STUDIES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND HISTORY

1. Anne Allingham, *'Taming the Wilderness': the first decade of pastoral settlement in the Kennedy District*, 2nd ed., 1978.

2. Peter Bell, *The Mount Mulligan Disaster, 1921*, 1978.

3. Diane Menghetti, *The Red North: the Popular Front in North Queensland*, 1981.

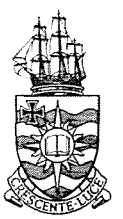
4. Christine Doran, *Separatism in Townsville, 1884 to 1894: "We Should Govern Ourselves"*, 1981.

5. Dawn May, *From Bush to Station: aboriginal labour in the North Queensland Pastoral Industry, 1861-1897*, 1983.

6. Cathie May, *Topsawyers: the Chinese in Cairns, 1870-1920*, In press.

# FROM BUSH TO STATION

*Aboriginal Labour in the North Queensland Pastoral Industry, 1861 - 1897*

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Dawn May

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MAPS



ILLUSTRATIONS



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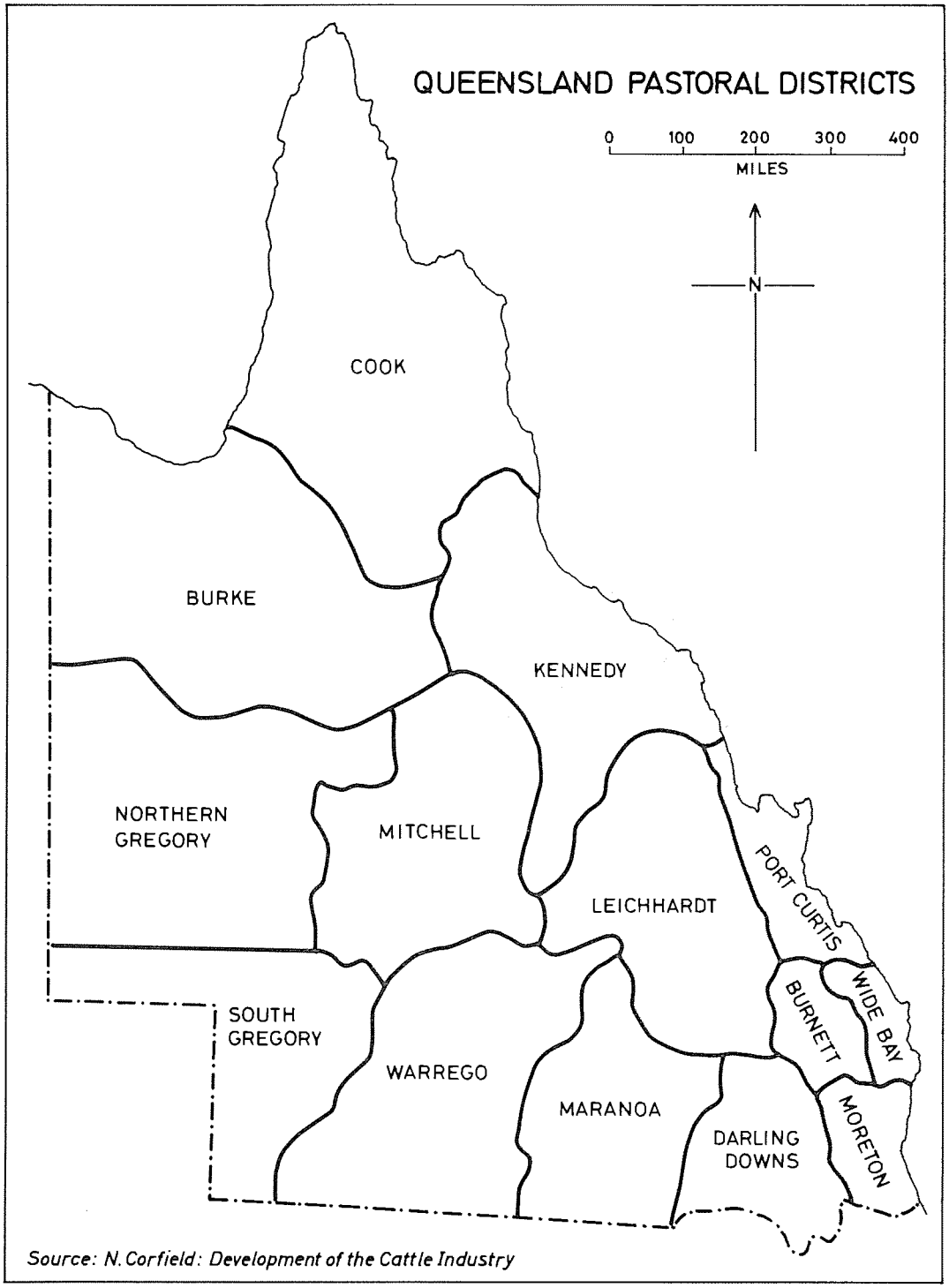
## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| A.E.P. | Australian Economic Papers |
| A.J.P.H. | Australian Journal of Politics and History |
| B.A.H. | Business Archives and History |
| C.A.B. | Current Affairs Bulletin |
| C.B.E. | Cleveland Bay Express |
| Col. Sec. | Colonial Secretary |
| E.R. | Economic Record |
| H.S. | Historical Studies |
| J.C.U. | James Cook University |
| J.E.H. | Journal of Economic History |
| N.L.R. | New Left Review |
| N.M.R. | Northern Mining Register |
| O.M.L. | Oxley Memorial Library |
| P.D.T. | Port Denison Times |
| Q.H. | Queensland Heritage |
| Q.P.D. | Queensland Parliamentary Debates |
| Q.S.A. | Queensland State Archives |
| Q.V.P. | Queensland Votes and Proceedings |
| R.H.S.Q. | Royal Historical Society of Queensland |
| S.A.L.C. | South Australian Legislative Council |
| Uni. of Q'ld. | University of Queensland |




*Source: N. Corfield: Development of the Cattle Industry*

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with Aboriginal labour in the pastoral industry in North Queensland. So that statistical information can be readily used, the definition of North Queensland is that area encompassed by the Cook, Burke and Kennedy pastoral districts. One difficulty with this is that much of South Kennedy which is geographically located in Central Queensland is included in North Queensland and the northern portion of the Mitchell district, especially in the vicinity of Hughenden which would normally be considered in North Queensland, is not included.

To fully evaluate the significance of Aboriginal labour in the pastoral industry it is necessary to understand the conditions prevailing at the time. Consequently the economic aspects including land legislation, the nature of ownership, sources and uses of capital and markets have been covered in some detail in Chapter 1. The second chapter is devoted to an analysis of pastoral labour. Again this is necessary to understand the reasons for Aborigines being incorporated into the industry. The third and fourth chapters deal specifically with Aboriginal workers in the industry while the fifth chapter is an attempt to place this study in a wider perspective and to see it as part of a world wide phenomenon which was taking place on the frontier of capitalism.

While N. G. Butlin has found that Australian economic development between 1861 and 1900 was "mainly a story of urbanisation"[1] this was not the situation in Queensland where economic development was more dependent on the expansion of primary industry. The first wave of pastoral occupation in North Queensland, beginning in 1861, was characterised by unbounded optimism tempered with a sense of urgency. Although the area is now predominantly cattle producing, sheep were preferred initially; by 1868, nine per cent of the colony's total sheep population was located in the Burke, Cook and Kennedy pastoral districts. However the prevalence of footrot, fluke and lung worm and spear grass rendered much of the area unsuitable for sheep. By 1873 only two per cent of the colony's sheep remained in the northern zone. This situation continued until the early 1880s when parts of the Flinders region were restocked with sheep.[2] The situation was different with cattle. In 1871, the three northern pastoral districts contained only 14 per cent of the colony's cattle, but this steadily increased until the turn of the century when the northern district held 37 per cent.

Aboriginal employees have made a significant contribution to the northern cattle industry, but they also worked on sheep stations prior to the fencing of runs in the early 1880s. It is necessary to consider both the sheep and cattle industries to appreciate the unique significance of Aboriginal stockmen. Some historians have noted the Aborigines preference for cattle work[3] and while this is true it only tells part of the tale. In the nineteenth century industry Aboriginal stockmen were needed for their traditional skills. Moreover many station owners plagued with high production costs and low returns were

only able to retain their holdings by using low or unpaid black labour. A deputation of Burke pastoralists who waited on the Minister for Lands to request a reduction in rents in 1896 alleged that no station in the area had "paid even a percentage on the outlay" over the previous 15 years. One squatter reported that:

> he was still in possession [of his station] and still paid his rent in his own name. The country however had to be run by blackfellows.[4]

In 1898 a *Queenslander* correspondent wrote in desperation that:

> many of us are working the stations with blackboys and members of our own family. Very few of us can keep a servant and a governess or tutor for our children is out of the question.[5]

* * * *

One contemporary observer noted in 1884 that the historian of the future:

> will probably consult the archives of the past, possibly the columns of the *Queenslander*, and will arrive at the conclusion that his forefathers in acquiring one of the grandest countries under the sun had a very "soft thing" in hand, but their statesman failed "to rise to the occasion" inasmuch as they did not appreciate the magnitude of "the gift" by providing in any way worth recording for the welfare of the primitive owners of the soil whom they "had dispossessed, but on the contrary stood aloof, and passively permitted the decimation of a race . . .[6]

For a number of reasons this was a particularly perceptive insight: the writer could see the injustice of the way Aborigines were dispossessed in the name of progress; he perceived that historians would attempt to illuminate this facet of our past, though it was to take more than eighty years.

While the archives of the past and the columns of the *Queenslander* along with a multitude of other sources, have been consulted in close detail, it was a source of considerable frustration that so few squatters wrote about the relationship with their Aboriginal employees. The amateur ethnographers of the nineteenth century frequently wrote lengthy accounts of many aspects of Aboriginal society in general. The squatter, by contrast, preoccupied with running a profitable enterprise, seldom felt the need to write about other issues including his black workers. It was only under extreme provocation that pastoralists resorted to expressing their views on this topic. When a correspondent "Piebald" wrote to the *Queenslander* in 1884 alleging that a state of slavery existed on cattle stations in the outside district[7] two Burke squatters replied to the charge. A. S. Haydon of *Vena Park* explained that:

> Outside people are not fond of letter writing, and most of them would sooner let "Piebald's" statement go uncontradicted than take the trouble of writing to contradict it; but as I know lots of Southern people are only too ready to believe any one's statement about how the blacks are treated in North Queensland I thought I would answer him, although cutting out cattle or spurting horses down the straight is more in my line than letter writing.[8]

But in spite of the lack of material dealing specifically with Aboriginal labour it has been possible to reconstruct the situation from references made by northern pastoralists while they were dealing with other topics. For example the deputation which waited on the Minister for Lands in 1896 was primarily interested in having rents reduced. But in the course of the conversation, the importance of Aboriginal labour was illuminated. Thus it was discovered that some stations were being worked almost entirely by Aborigines in 1896.[9]

Prior to 1897, there is only a minimal amount of official material dealing with Aborigines on Queensland pastoral stations. When Aboriginal legislation was introduced in that year, no royal commission or select committee enquiry was conducted on the matter. By contrast, before Aboriginal laws were codified in South Australia, the Legislative Assembly held a Select Committee Enquiry. The evidence is a valuable exposition of European attitudes to Aborigines at the time. However because several squatters were called to report on the workings of the Queensland Act, it does give some insights into the situation in that colony. One potentially valuable source concerning Aboriginal employment were the 100 replies to a questionnaire circulated in all parts of Queensland in 1874. The aim of the survey was to determine the numbers, condition, prospects of Aborigines in each district and views of people on improving their condition. Although the general findings were published in the Commissioner's Report[10] it has not been possible to locate the individual replies in the archives. If these have not been destroyed and are located at some future date, they may shed new light on the topic. Other aspects of Aboriginal employment can be gleaned from letters still in existence. When writing to their English relatives, Aborigines provided novelty for expatriates such as Rachel Henning, Walter Scott and C. W. Bowly.

The subject of Aboriginal labour in the pastoral industry is highly contentious. Inherited cultural values can distort the interpretation of facts by both Aborigines and Europeans. Consequently what a black may see as exploitation, a white may consider a situation of reasonable equity. For example, in a study of Western Australian Aborigines in the nineteenth century pastoral industry Peter Biskup concluded that:

> The savings effected by the pastoralists employing aboriginal instead of white labour (when they could get it) must have been minimal. The old stockman was not an expensive employee. . . It seems therefore that if the charges of "slavery" and "exploitation" are to be taken seriously, they must be based on other grounds than the existence of penal sanctions and the absence of cash wages.[11]

Black activist Bruce McGuiness vehemently rejected this claim, alleging that "Biskup seems to be continually justifying the oppressive pastoralists' stand on the issue of Aboriginal labour".[12] While neither of these writers have probably had first hand experience of the industry, the dichotomy also exists among those who have. Recently a European correspondent to the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* wrote that:

> One often hears that the Aborigines were exploited by the stations when the Aborigines were in the employ of stations. This is entirely incorrect.[13]

He then elaborated on how well treated the blacks were before the intervention of trade unions. A totally different picture was drawn by "an elderly Aboriginal woman pensioner" who replied to the report. She described the exploitation and degradation associated with black employment on North Queensland cattle stations in the early twentieth century claiming that "hard as my life has been, my mother's was worse than mine".[14] In analysing the situation on North Queensland stations in the nineteenth century I have endeavoured to be as detached and objective as possible given my European background.

## CHAPTER ONE

# ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE NORTH QUEENSLAND PASTORAL INDUSTRY

Economic factors favoured the introduction of sheep into North Queensland in 1861. The value of wool was high relative to its weight – an important consideration given the distance to market. Moreover, no satisfactory means had been developed to export large amounts of surplus beef. Unfortunately, climatic and geographic conditions militated against wool production. Grasping their Crown land leases and obsessed with a commitment to growth and progress, pioneer squatters stoically switched to cattle; most fought a losing battle for the rest of the century.

Confronted with limited resources and a vast undeveloped area in the north of the colony, it was expedient in 1860 for the newly formed Queensland government to formulate a land code which favoured pastoral activities. As Kingston noted:

> In 1859 the theory among squatters and legislators alike was that the squatter should be content with the right to run sheep on Crown Lands, paying an annual rental in accordance with the estimated carrying capacity of the run.[1]

This initial allocation of large tracts of land into the hands of relatively few squatters was only intended as a short term solution; closer settlement was viewed as the ultimate objective. An 1875 editorial bearing the marks of agrarianism reflected popular opinion at the time. A great

> but not excessive desire to see cultivation flourish has always been apparent in this colony. . . All classes look to the cultivation of the soil as a means of increasing the production of the country, and of enabling it to support a larger population.[2]

The tender system which was in use at the time of separation drew strong criticism from intending squatters as it encouraged speculation in land due to the lack of stocking regulations.[3] In drawing up the first Queensland land legislation in 1860, one of the aims was to eliminate speculation which retarded genuine settlement. Consequently the stocking of runs was viewed as an imperative forerunner to any extensive settlement. The main features of the 1860 Act were:

- The size of runs was set at between 25 and 100 square miles.
- Within 90 days of obtaining a licence to occupy a run for one year, a fee of 10s. per square mile had to be paid into the Treasury in Brisbane.
- A 14 year lease was granted, if within 9 months of taking out a licence, the run was stocked to one fourth of the carrying capacity.
- The carrying capacity for every run was deemed to be 100 sheep or 20 head of cattle per square mile.

- Rent was to be paid yearly in advance with the rent for the first 4 years of any lease being 10s. per square mile per annum. The rent payable in respect to leases for the succeeding two periods of 5 years each was to be appraised at the commencement of each period when due account would be taken of the advantages and disadvantages encountered in developing the run.
- Resumption by the government was permitted at 12 months notice.[4]

Initially the Act appealed to all parties[5] but by late 1861 and throughout 1862 discontent began to increase. The main target for dissension was the stocking clause. Pastoralists argued that this clause would have a detrimental effect on the pastoral industry generally as there were insufficient sheep of a suitable standard to fulfil the requirements. In addition, Kennedy squatters complained that nine months was often not enough time to bring stock from southern markets given the difficult travelling conditions on the northern overland route.[6] Moreover, the opportunity for speculation still existed. Under the provisional licence system, land could be secured for nine months without the need to stock and, as a result, run jobbers would often secure large tracts of favourable land for the cost of the provisional licence. Unable to find suitable land, squatters who entered the district without having staked runs, were forced to secure land from jobbers.[7] Minor modifications were made to the Act in 1862 and the Pastoral Leases Act of 1863 moved a step nearer to the closer settlement objective when land was divided into settled and unsettled districts.

In 1866, with the colony reeling from the effects of a financial crisis, Kennedy, Burke and Cook squatters petitioned the government asking that there be no increase in rents during the second period of the lease.[8] A large proportion of people signing a second petition from the Kennedy district were former Victorian residents. They claimed that if rents were raised, there would be less capital available for improvements. It was argued that if rent remained the same until the last 5 year period, a fair return for capital would be possible and that other capitalists, especially Victorians, would be induced to invest in North Queensland.[9] As the price of wool and stock fell throughout the late 1860s, runholders continued to petition the government for relief.[10] There was an air of solidarity among the many North Queensland squatters who attended a special meeting held at Springsure in 1869. Popular consensus was that:

> in consequence of the impossibility of working stations profitably in North Queensland, especially in the districts of Leichhardt, Warrego, Mitchell, Kennedy and Burke, without a large amount of capital to be sunk in improvements it is absolutely necessary that pastoral tenants should be able to offer a more tangible security to capitalists than they at present possess.

In the squatters' view, the most advantageous relief was more secure and extended tenure with no increase in rent. It was suggested that:

> the runs [should] be held for the remainder of the term of the present leases, with an additional period of not less than ten years added thereto, at the same rent paid during the second term such lease to be inviolable in spirit, as well as in letter, thereby giving the lessee some prospect of profitably

> employing and recovering the capital he must necessarily invest. Should no such relief be afforded, the only alternative will be for pastoral tenants in this part of Queensland to abandon the country.

The editor of the *Queenslander* felt that the squatters were not justified in asking for relief from the Crown simply on the grounds of the depreciation in wool, and fall in the value of stock:

> The unlucky miners who sink their money and spend their time in working a reef which will not pay, the merchant who imports goods which he is compelled to sell at a loss; the farmer whose wheat is destroyed by rust, or whose cotton or corn will not fetch a paying price – all have as good grounds for seeking help from the state.

However, it was thought that compensation to the squatters should be considered on the grounds that the pioneer pastoralists opened up the country and without their efforts in this direction, it would still be worthless.[11] Indeed, the severity of the pastoralists' plight can be gauged from Table 1 where it can be seen that four times as many runs had to be abandoned in 1869 as in the previous year.

**TABLE 1[12]**

**RUNS ABANDONED IN INDIVIDUAL PASTORAL DISTRICTS 1866-70**

| *Pastoral District* | *1866* | *1867* | *1868* | *1869* | *1870* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Kennedy | 3 | 19 | 8 | 34 | 14 | 78 |
| South Kennedy | 8 | 8 | 12 | 42 | 27 | 97 |
| Burke | 6 | 19 | 24 | 72 | 38 | 159 |
| Cook | 6 | 2 | | 23 | 5 | 36 |
| Total | 23 | 48 | 44 | 171 | 84 | 370 |

New land legislation, the *Pastoral Leases Act*, authorising leases for 21 years in the unsettled districts was introduced in 1869. Rent for the first period of new leases was reduced from 10s. to 5s. per square mile per annum; for the second and third periods of new leases rent was set at 10s. and 15s. per square mile. Rents on existing leases were fixed at the rates payable on 30 September 1869 with successive increases of one-tenth for the second and third periods of seven years. In other words, if rent was fixed at £500 for the first period, it increased to £550 for the second period and £605 per annum for the third period.[13] To further appease those squatters who called for security of tenure, lessees were given the option to buy one block of 2560 acres at 10s. per acre per run.[14] This was done ostensibly to secure improvements made by squatters to the runs. However, one North Queensland pastoralist Robert Gray of *Hughenden* was somewhat sceptical of this clause and wrote that:

> as the method of fencing runs for sheep had not been adopted [in North Queensland], and in making application for the purchase of land it was

> necessary to state that certain improvements, generally fencing, had been carried out, it was not practicable to take advantage of this clause to any great extent.[15]

Indeed, by July 1874 not one Kennedy, Burke, or Cook squatter in the unsettled districts had applied for pre-emptives under the *Pastoral Leases Act of 1869*.[16] Even among stations in the settled districts, pre-emption was the exception rather than the rule: only the owners of long-established runs including *Salisbury Plains, Strathdon* and *Proserpine* had applied for pre-emptives.[17] In spite of the more favourable land legislation, few new runs were applied for in the early 1870s.[18] However, there was renewed interest in the occupation of Crown land from 1874 when the northern gold rushes created markets for meat. This trend rapidly escalated between 1877 and 1883. For instance in 1876 a total area of only 8 776 square miles was held under Crown land lease in the Burke district. This had increased to 79 486¼ square miles in 1884.

**TABLE 2**[19]

**TOTAL AREA OF RUNS IN UNSETTLED DISTRICTS (in square miles)**

| *Pastoral District* | *1876* | *1880* | *1881* | *1882* | *1883* | *1884* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Kenndy | 8054 | 9948 | 12617 | 14191 | 14860 | 15704 |
| South Kennedy | 8352 | 11143 | 14625 | 17331 | 18355 | 19828 |
| Cook | 2033 | 4171 | 9663 | 27386 | 30329 | 34808 |
| Burke | 8776 | 41498¼ | 59096½ | 78747¼ | 78521¼ | 79486¼ |

This second wave of expansion was accompanied by glaring violations of land laws. A prerequisite for the issue of a licence under the *Pastoral Leases Act of 1869* was the furnishing of a declaration that the run was stocked to one quarter of its capacity. To circumvent this, dummying was widely practised. The editor of the *Queenslander* claimed that one perpetrator of the practice was:

> a gentleman who holds her Majesty's commission as a magistrate of the territory, and owns a small mob of cattle. He travels with them through unoccupied Crown lands, going up one river and down another, and every evening when he comes into camp his stockman comes before him and makes a declaration that he has stocked all the country he passed over during the day . . . in good travelling weather, when his cattle can move ten miles he can stock four blocks of 25 square miles daily, two on each side of the river along which he is travelling. Sometimes he is paid by Victorian speculators, or by men who intend at some future time, to occupy country . . . sometimes he may himself take out the lease and sell it to some stockowner in search of country.[20]

Dummying was not confined solely to the outside districts. The Bowen correspondent to the *Queenslander* expressed surprise in 1883 that "the government did not take steps to prevent wholesale dummying of runs which exist[ed] to an alarming extent".[21]

The *Crown Land Act of 1884* effected considerable change in the law with regard to pastoral leasehold. Pastoral tenants who held contiguous runs could elect to surrender their leases and have all the blocks treated as a consolidation. A portion, varying from one quarter to one half, depending on the period which had elapsed since the date of the first licence to occupy the country, was to be resumed. P. W. Shannon, Chief Clerk of Lands Department, claimed that one of the objects of the framers was to give the pastoral lessee a superior tenure of the portion of his run left to him, to that which he had enjoyed under the *Pastoral Leases Act of 1869*. Adopting a more cynical approach, the editor of the *Queenslander* claimed that the objectives of the Act were twofold: to assist in settling people on the lands more satisfactorily than former acts, but above all to bring revenue into the Treasury to pay the interest on the public debt. The Land Act of 1884 was believed to be the foster mother of the £10 000 000 Loan Act.[22] Squatters in unsettled districts were granted a lease of 15 years on the unresumed portion of their runs with rent being determined by the Land Board: for the first period of 5 years rents were to be not less than 10s. per square mile per annum and not more than 90s. Until the resumed portion was actually required for purposes of settlement, the lessee was able to occupy it on payment of a rent not exceeding the rate he had previously paid.[23]

From the resumed portions of runs, grazing farms, not more than 20 000 acres nor less than 2 560 acres in extent, could be selected on 30 year leases at a yearly rental of not less than ¾d. per acre subject to conditions of *bona fide* residence, and to the selection being fenced within three years. The Chief Inspector of Stock, P. R. Gordon believed that these grazing farms would afford opportunities for men of limited capital to embark in the business of grazing, denied them under alternative systems.[24] In actual fact, as much of the resumed portions were not suitable for settlement, the desired results were not always achieved. The *Crown Lands Act of 1884* did not apply to runs in the west and north of the colony; these remained under the *Pastoral Leases Act of 1869*. The majority of runs in the Burke and Cook pastoral districts were not included in the first schedule of the *Crown Lands Act of 1884* but lessees could apply to come under the Act if they so wished. *Glendower* was the first consolidation in the unsettled district of Burke to be divided under the new Act.[25] In 1887 the consolidated runs of *Redcliffe* and *Hughenden* in the Burke district were divided with *Tamworth, Wongalee, Telemon* and *Afton Downs* following in 1888.

TABLE 3[26]

TOTAL NUMBER OF CONSOLIDATED RUNS IN UNSETTLED DISTRICTS DIVIDED UNDER CLA 1884

| *Pastoral District* | *1886* | *1887* | *1888* | *1889* | *1890* | *1891* | *1892* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Kennedy | 16 | 12 | 9 | 4 | 19 | 12 | 1 |
| South Kennedy | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 9 | 40 | |
| Burke | 1 | 2 | 4 | | | 7 | 2 |

The *Crown Lands Act of 1884* evoked strong criticism from pastoralists with a total of 14 petitions from all parts of the colony being forwarded to the government in 1885.[27] Protest meetings were also held at various locations in North Queensland. The recession experienced in the colony at the time was blamed, in part, on the 1884 Act. It was claimed that the curtailment of tenure and the prospect of having rents raised every five years because of improvements to runs compelled lessees to cease pastoral development. One Queenslander writing under the name "Veritas" published a booklet entitled *Queensland our Home* in 1886. The object of the work was to:

> show how unsuitable the Land Act of 1884 was for grazing in tropical Queensland, to suggest to existing leaseholders the probable results of such legislation upon their interests and to warn inexperienced intending settlers to investigate matters further before risking their capital in an occupation which if not successful on a large scale, cannot be so on a small one.[28]

The suspension of pre-emptions was put into effect by the Griffith ministry in March 1884 in anticipation of the Bill being passed.[29] This appears to have drawn little response from squatters. One North Queensland squatter, Edward Mytton of *Wando Vale* however charged the government with not keeping its side of the bargain as pioneer squatters considered the pre-emptive right a privilege bestowed for "civilizing" the country. "Why should we alone be denied the right of acquiring the land on which our homes are built?" he asked.[30]

The *Crown Lands Act Amendment Act of 1886* extended leases from 15 to 21 years for those tenants in unsettled districts who elected to take advantage of the *Crown Lands Act of 1884.* In return however, two further restrictions were imposed and all but a very small number of the lessees who took advantage of the CLA of 1884 also elected to avail themselves of the Amendment of 1886.[31]

The *Land Act of 1897* was introduced to cover those tenants in the outside districts such as the more remote parts of the Burke and Cook districts who were still under the *Pastoral Leases Act of 1869* and had not availed themselves of the provisions of CLA of 1884 and 1886. Basically the 1897 Act secured for those lessees a 21 year lease on conditions differing but little from those obtained under the Act of 1884.[32]

Because of the failure of legislators to encourage improvements as a condition of holding a lease, squatters adopted land-intensive rather than capital-intensive practices. In retrospect the low-cost concept of the open range system now seems to have been false. One agricultural economist believes that most of the difficulties of present beef production in remote northern Australia can be traced to this practice instituted by the earliest pastoralists.[33]

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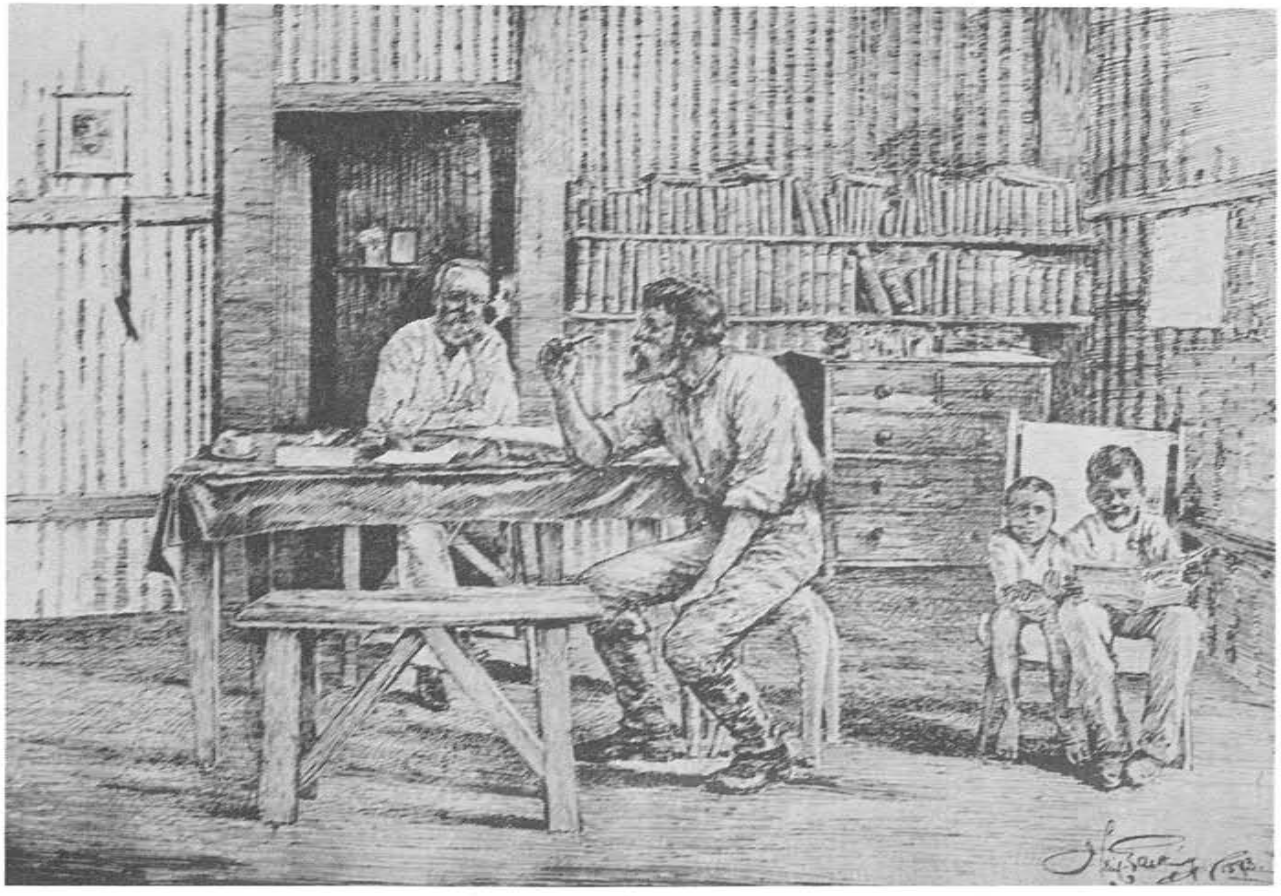


*Lawn Hill* Station – a typical North Queensland squatter's home in the 1890s. (*Queenslander* 28 January 1893, p. 168)

The typical northern squatter in the 1860s was an owner-manager who frequently had the backing of a sleeping partner, business house or family member. In the Kennedy district, these included James Cassady,[34] Joseph Hann and sons, the Cunninghams, Allinghams, William Stenhouse, Michael Miles, Daniel Cudmore and E. Antill all in the Burdekin district; the Earle brothers at *Hidden Valley* and later *Yacamunda,* William Marks at *Gainsford,* Marmaduke and Montague Curr at *Merri-Merrwah,* Biddulph Henning at *Exmoor,* F. R. Bode at *Strathdon,* Charles Powell at *Salisbury Plains* and Walter Scott at *Valley of Lagoons.* The situation was much the same in the Cook district. Frank and Alex Jardine were owner managers of *Point Vallack* on the tip of Cape York Peninsula, while in the southern portion of the district, Charles and Tom Collins and Firth and Atkinson were resident owners at *Spring Creek* and *Mt Surprise* respectively. Writing of the area around the Gulf, Edward Palmer noted that between 1864 and 1869, most of the owners of suitable country bordering the Gulf were in fact resident owners.[35] These included J. Sutherland of *Rockland,* D. McIntyre of *Dalgonally,* G. McGillvray of *Eddington* and Martin Hetzer of *Urilla.* Others in the Burke district who were resident owners included Frank Anning and his sons, initially at *Reedy Springs,* Robert and Charles Gray at *Hughenden* and *Glendower,* Kirk and Sutherland at *Marathon* and John Ranken at *Afton Downs.*

There was however some company ownership of properties in the 1860s. Most noticeable in this respect were the numerous runs taken up on behalf of various Towns partnerships. J. G. Macdonald took up a string of runs to the Gulf including *Harvest Home, Carpentaria Downs, Inkerman* and *Gregory Downs* while J. M. Black, a partner with, and northern agent for Robert Towns, applied for a series of runs including *Woodstock* and *Jarvisfield.*[36] These were operated by managers.[37] Another pastoral company operating in North Queensland in the 1860s was the Landsborough River Co. which in 1864 used cattle from its Bowen Downs station to stock *Beames Brook,* 16 miles above the site where Burketown now stands.[38]

Research on the ownership of the Australian pastoral industry based on lists of registered holders of Crown leases indicate that from 1870 the individual independent squatter was displaced by the corporate body with company ownership and operation becoming the typical organisation. Butlin agreed that a clear trend in the changing importance of different groups of lessees was apparent between 1865 and 1900. He wrote that in New South Wales as a whole:

> company holdings proper accounted for a mere one in a hundred runs in 1866 at the beginning of the great pastoral expansion after gold. By the end of that expansion in 1889-90 four in every ten leases were held by companies. By contrast, individual holdings proper fell over the same period from three in every four to four in ten runs.[39]

Using lists of stations in the settled and unsettled districts of Burke, Cook and Kennedy published annually in *Pugh's Almanac* and the same economic organisation

groupings as Butlin, a similar trend is discernible in North Queensland.[40] In the Cook district, 50 per cent of holdings in 1873 were held by single individuals but this had declined to 40.9 per cent by 1889. In Kennedy the figures were 54.25 per cent in 1873 and 48.37 per cent in 1889. However, it was the Burke district where the trend was most pronounced. Where 64.86 per cent of holdings were held by single individuals in 1873, this figure had plummeted dramatically to 29.45 per cent in 1889. By contrast the holdings of companies (banks and non-banks) in the Cook district had risen from nil in 1873 to just over 30 per cent in 1889 while in the Burke district company ownership had risen from 2.7 per cent in 1873 to almost 45 per cent in 1889.

TABLE 4[41]

REGISTERED PASTORAL LESSEES, 1873, 1883, 1889

| *Year* | *Banks (% of Total)* | *Non-Bank Co.* | *Groups of Individuals* | *Single Individuals* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Burke** | | | | | |
| 1873 | 1 (2.7) | – | 12 (32.4) | 24 (64.86) | 37 |
| 1883 | 4 (4.4) | 5 (5.5) | 44 (48.88) | 37 (41.11) | 90 |
| 1889 | 25 (19.3) | 33 (25.5) | 33 (25.5) | 38 (20.45) | 129 |
| Kennedy | | | | | |
| 1873 | 9 (4.7) | 10 (5.3) | 67 (35.6) | 102 (54.25) | 188 |
| 1883 | 18 (9.3) | 10 (5.2) | 56 (29.16) | 108 (56.25) | 192 |
| 1889 | 44 (17.8) | 24 (9.7) | 59 (23.9) | 119 (48.37) | 246 |
| Cook | | | | | |
| 1873 | | | 10 (50) | 10 (50) | 20 |
| 1883 | 4 (17.3) | – | 10 (43.47) | 9 (39) | 23 |
| 1889 | 15 (24.5) | 3 (4.9) | 18 (29.5) | 25 (40.9) | 61 |

However Butlin has pointed out the registration of either a company or an individual "did not necessarily mean that the property was owned and operated by the registered lessee".[42] The study of a small sample of transfer documents by Butlin revealed conclusively that the title to Crown leases was transferred to companies on the grant of a mortgage loan.[43] This was in conformity with British mortgage law. Using this rationale it becomes evident that the 131 North Queensland properties held in the name of banks and mortage companies in 1889 had not necessarily been acquired by foreclosure but simply that companies held mortgages on these properties. This would also account for the seeming conflict between contemporary and official accounts of the ownership of properties at the time. For example, contemporary reports all indicate that *Kamilaroi* station was owned and operated by W. Marks and sons.[44] Yet throughout this period,

according to *Pugh's Almanac* which had been compiled from the registers in the Pastoral Occupation Branch of the Lands Office, the South Australian Land Mortgage and Agency Co. Ltd was the listed owner of the lease. Obviously Marks and sons had obtained a loan from that company and the title to the lease was surrendered as collateral security. This example could be repeated for dozens of other stations.

Probably a more accurate perspective of ownership in 1889 can be gauged from the Brands Assessment Returns which called for the name of the owner; these were completed by the operator of the property. Whereas 45 per cent of Burke properties were listed in *Pugh's Almanac* as being owned by companies, this figure was reduced to nine per cent using the Brands Assessment Returns.[45]

**TABLE 5**[46]

**PERCENTAGE HOLDING IN EACH GROUP USING BRANDS RETURNS FOR BURKE DISTRICT, 1889**

| *Banks* | *Non-Bank Co.* | *Groups of Individuals* | *Single Individuals* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.7 | 6.3 | 48.6 | 42.3 | 100 |

This brief analysis tends to support Butlin's New South Wales findings that the growth of company leases between 1865-1900 did not mean the disappearance of the individual squatter or the emergence of company ownership as typical of the pastoral industry. If anything, it indicated an increasing mortgage indebtedness. In North Queensland most properties, even in 1890 were still operated by the owners. The North Queensland sheep properties were an exception as from contemporary accounts, most appear to have had absentee owners after 1880.

* * * * *

Colonial capital appears to have been predominant in the North Queensland squatting rush of the 1860s. Where an individual lacked sufficient finance on his own account, the usual method of obtaining it was to take in a partner – often a sleeping one. This was in total contrast with the second wave of expansion where British capital played a significant role through banks and land mortgage companies.[47] Butlin has drawn attention to the importance of British capital in the Australian pastoral industry in the 1860s. The greater part of the funds entering Australia, according to Butlin:

> was attracted by direct borrowing by individual Australian pastoralists from relatives and friends, by the offer of safe Australian government securities, and through the sustaining influence of gold.[48]

But available records suggest that his observations were more applicable to the longer-established properties in New South Wales, Victoria and, in some cases, south Queensland.[49] There is little evidence of British investment in North Queensland during the 1860s. One exception was *Valley of Lagoons,* originally taken up by Dalrymple. Lack of capital forced him to take partners including the Queensland Premier Robert Herbert and Arthur and Walter Scott, sons of a rich Hampshire squire.[50] As the venture proved to need more capital than had been anticipated, additional funds were attracted from Scott family members in England. A "new chum" scheme was also implemented whereby young British aristocrats contributed £2 000 cash in return for colonial pastoral experience.[51] However, a fairly substantial amount of colonial capital must have been invested in the venture as by the end of 1867 the firm had a £30 000 overdraft with the Union Bank of Australia and it had climbed to £51 000 by 1870.[52]

Although few North Queensland pastoralists were able to finance their ventures directly from prospecting success,[53] the southern gold rushes of the 1850s assisted financially in at least two ways. They provided funds for investment and the massive escalation in the population greatly increased the demand for meat. This stimulated the southern pastoral industry to switch for a time from wool to meat production and some surplus profits would have thus been available for reinvestment in the northern industry.

Many of the pioneer squatters in North Queensland were Victorians escaping the "prejudicial effects of [land] legislation on pastoral pursuits in Victoria".[54] Consequently the proceeds from the sale of Victorian properties were used to finance the establishment of North Queensland stations. The Hann family sold their property *Coolort* to take up and stock *Bluff Downs* and *Maryvale* in the Kennedy district. To meet the shortfall in funds, three partners were admitted to the venture. Richard Daintree invested £2 000 for a one-seventh share in the company. The nominal capital was brought to £14 000 by the addition of two Melbourne financiers, Bland and Klingender.[55] William Stenhouse who took up land on the Clark River in 1862 had been on the land in Victoria and presumably had capital from that source. Robert Christison however had only his Victorian wages as a source of capital. After taking up *Lammermoor,* he formed a partnership with a man called Adam who had a flock of sheep but no land.[56] F. R. Bode took up and managed *Strathdon* in partnership with William Dangar who found the required capital at ten per cent.[57] Biddulph Henning was able to finance the establishment of *Exmoor* through the sale of his Marlborough sheep station.[58]

Some settlers moved stock from runs already held in other parts of the colony to take up new country. This would greatly reduce the need for finance in setting up a new property as the purchase of stock often constituted the major expense. In 1864 Henning stocked a station on the Flinders with 7 000 sheep from his South Kennedy station and Charles and Tom Collins probably used cattle from their station near *Hornet Bank* to stock *Spring Creek.* However, if the original property was only lightly stocked, the effect was to increase the fixed cost per head and may account for some of the lack of viability

in the industry at the time. In fact Walter Scott of *Valley of Lagoons* complained of the impossibility of balancing income and expenditure while operating two stations with barely enough stock for one property.[59]

Those squatters who did not abandon their runs in the late 1860s had little success in raising additional funds from banks. While at *Oxford Downs* Dalrymple for instance found it impossible to get any advances whatsoever on his future clip.[60] The removal of sheep from the eastern watershed and the gulf country had given the area a bad reputation. As M. M. Bennett explained:

> One of the difficulties of pioneering in western Queensland was to persuade southern bankers that that part of the country consisted of something better than spear grass six feet high in which if man did not die of fever he would probably be speared by natives.[61]

Recounting the experiences of squatters who turned to banks for financial assistance, R. Gray wrote that:

> Banks and financial companies refused to lend money on northern stations and for some years for the want of capital to aid in developing this portion of the country things were almost at a standstill.[62]

By 1876 the situation had changed due to improved markets for beef, rising wool prices and favourable season, as a result the northern pastoral industry was viewed as a desirable field for investment. The initial financing of this second wave of expansion appears to have come in part from the retained earnings of existing North Queensland squatters. By 1877 the net profit from sales to the Palmer from one cattle station was between £7 000 and £8 000.[63] Presumably the North Queensland goldfields would also have provided direct finance for the development of properties. Frank Stubley for instance, one of Charters Towers "mundic kings"[64] bought and improved the northern properties of *St. Annes, St. Ronans* and *Evelyn* in the 1870s.[65] But according to one Queensland squatter, it was the Victorians who rediscovered North West Queensland and their capital which put the northern industry on its feet.[66] The earliest Victorian settlers in the second wave of expansion invested in cattle properties. For instance the Watson family reformed *Gregory Downs* in 1876[67] and they were followed by the Shadforths. The Gregory River correspondent to the *Queenslander* wrote that:

> Shadforth [had] settled on Lilydale run with his family and . . . erected a substantial house and offices. Mrs Shadforth and her daughters are the first ladies to grace the district with their presence since the exodus from Burketown many years ago. These ladies travelled overland from Beechworth – an 18 month trip – and made light of the undertaking.[68]

By the end of the decade, Victorian investors turned their attention to sheep and several cattle properties in the Flinders were purchased for restocking. Brodie Bros. sold *Moselle Downs* to Robertson and Hopkins, who wasted little time in placing 8 000 sheep on the run.[69] *Taldora* and *Millungera* were bought by a Melbourne firm, Meredith Menzies and Co.[70] These stations appear to have been stocked with sheep from the

Murrumbidgee,[71] but they reverted to cattle and the sheep were presumably moved to the firm's adjoining property *Manfred Downs*. *Donor's Hill* was purchased by the Melbourne firm of Chirnside Johnstone and Co.[72] for conversion to sheep. *Cambridge Downs*, listed for sale in 1878 with 18 000 sheep was looked at by several Victorian parties; it was sold to A. H. Palmer in 1880 with 23 000 sheep at £1 each with horses, cattle etc. at valuation.[73] *Telemon* was purchased in 1881 by the Victorian sheep breeder J. L. Currie for conversion to sheep.[74] It was not only Victorians however who were interested in the conversion of cattle to sheep stations; *Yambora* and *Bunda Bunda* for instance were purchased by Ashe from the Mudgee district.[75]

By the end of 1882, the influx of Victorian capital into the Queensland pastoral industry began to abate. One stock and station agent claimed that this was due to the high rates of carriage, the scarcity of labour and a renewed interest in Victorian freehold.[76] However, by this stage British capital had become an important source of finance for pastoral development. Due to a series of defaults, British foreign lending to United States collapsed in the late 1870s and at the same time there was a lack of outlets for investment within Britain. The relative absence of heavy demand from these two areas favoured Australia where existing Anglo-Australian land mortgage companies were making large profits. In addition, colonial brokers had discovered that money could be borrowed far more cheaply in Britain than in the colonies. The Australasian Mercantile Land and Finance Co. for instance was able to borrow money in Britain for 5 years more cheaply than from New South Wales colonial banks by overdraft for one year.[77] Vigorous competition developed between banks and various types of pastoral finance and agency houses after the mid 1870s and into the 1880s.[78] After 1880 colonial banks came increasingly to depend on British capital. The Queensland National Bank obtained 51.8 per cent of its total deposits in Britain in 1890 but debenture borrowing for pastoral finance companies was done entirely in Britain.[79]

Some indication of the increased mortgage indebtedness has already been noted in the section dealing with ownership. If the list of registered pastoral lessees did not accurately reflect ownership and operation, it did at least give an indication of the sources of finance. In the Burke district, whereas banks and non-bank financial institutions played a very insignificant part in 1873, it can be seen from Table 6 that this was beginning to change in 1883; by 1889, 19.3 per cent of holdings had mortgages with banks and 25.5 per cent with pastoral finance companies. The banks were a relatively more important source of finance than the pastoral finance companies in both the Cook and Kennedy districts in terms of actual *numbers* of properties mortgaged. However, taking into account the fact that properties were generally smaller in those two districts because of closer settlement, it cannot be concluded that for North Queensland generally the banks supplied more finance than the land mortgage companies. A study of the size of mortgages would be necessary to make such a claim, and this is beyond the scope of this thesis. Of banks, the Bank of New South Wales was registered owner of five properties in Burke (out of a total of 25 registered to the banks generally), 10 of 15

properties registered to banks in Cook and 19 out of 44 in Kennedy making it the single largest provider of finance for pastoral development in terms of *numbers of mortgages* granted.

In the early 1890s capital inflow into Australia was severely affected by a downturn in the British trade cycle along with a general disenchantment with foreign investment; simultaneously colonial banks were grappling with liquidity problems culminating in a general banking collapse in April and May 1893.[80] In the first half of the decade many properties passed into the hands of banks. In the Gulf, wrote Testator:

> most of the old-time pioneer squatters [had] "gone down" and . . . the bulk of the station properties are now in the hands of the banks.[81]

The easy availability of money in the 1880s may well have encouraged pastoralists to be over-optimistic. Butlin has suggested that from the mid 1880s, due to the expansion into marginal lands and the increasing indebtedness of pastoralists, the industry was in serious difficulties well before the advent of reduced export prices or the financial crisis in the early 1890s.[83]

* * * * *

Although North Queensland was not to be a "big man's frontier",[84] even in the earliest stages the capital requirements to form a station were quite considerable. Hann and Co. for instance starting with a nominal capital of £14 000 in 1862 after establishing the Burdekin stations and purchasing 1 800 mixed cattle that year, 7 000 sheep in 1863 and 3 700 ewes in 1864, found it necessary, by April 1866 to borrow £3 000 from a finance company. One thousand head of cattle had already been mortgaged[85] and prior to that, in April 1865, Small had taken a lien on the company's ensuing clip to the extent of £1 000.[86] Yet relative to the second wave of pastoral expansion, capital requirements were modest in the 1860s. One reason for this was that shepherding which was the normal method of sheep farming in North Queensland in the 1860s tended to be labour rather than capital intensive.

Under the shepherding system in the north, one man was required to take charge of each flock of 2 000 sheep. The only capital equipment required apart from the squatter's home and a rudimentary shearing shed and washpool, was a series of huts located at strategic points on the leased land. *Mt. McConnell* for instance had 11 such stations but these were not necessarily all occupied at the one time as flocks were moved around as grass became scarce. This method of sheep management contrasted markedly with that adopted in the vicinity of the Victorian goldfields at the time. There, due to a large pool of casual labour, fencing of sheep runs was taking place.[87] Lacking a similar source, it was not possible to initially adopt fencing in North Queensland. In addition, given the experimental nature of the industry and the level of depredation from Abori-

## TABLE 6

## HOLDINGS OF BANKS AND LAND MORTGAGE COMPANIES IN 1889[82]

| *Pastoral District* | *Bank of NSW* | *QNB* | *AJS* | *LCB* | *SALMC* | *SAC* | *RBQ* | *CB* | *BA* | *QILMC* | *TACA* | *ANZMC* | *QMAC* | *UMAC* | *AMAC* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cook | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burke | 5 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Kennedy | 19 | 3 | 8 | | 7 | | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | | 2 | | | |
| Total | 34 | 14 | 15 | 2 | 14 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 1 |

*BANKS*

Bank of New South Wales
Queensland National Bank
Australian Joint Stock Bank Ltd
London Charter Bank
Royal Bank of Queensland
Commercial Bank
Bank of Australasia

*LAND MORTGAGE COMPANIES*

South Australian Land Mortgage and Agency Company Limited
Queensland Investment Land Mortgage Company Ltd
Australian and New Zealand Mortgage Co. Ltd
Queensland Mercantile Agency Co.
Union Mortgage and Agency Co. Ltd
Scottish Australian Investment Co.
Australian Land Mortgage and Agency Company
Trust Agency Company of Australasia Limited

gines and dingoes[88] fencing was not a practical alternative.[89]

Less fixed capital was required to form a cattle station. In place of a multitude of shepherds' huts and yards, one large stockyard was the basic requirement. However, taking into account the cost of stock and sundry other items, one pioneer squatter estimated that capital formation alone amounted to over £11 000. (See Appendix A). Apart from this, other substantial cash outlays were necessary; the cost of obtaining the lease for the land and rent for instance. It was also necessary to have sufficient capital to pay for wages and rations until the station produced income – often two or three years. Many pioneers failed to accurately gauge the amount of capital required to form a new station. Rachel Henning wrote to her sister that "there [was] very little prospect for anyone out here now who had not a large amount of capital to begin with – £8 000 or £10 000 at least".[90] Similar sentiments were echoed by Herbert when writing to his sister in 1865. He added that:

> My banker told me last week, that a young gentleman lately presented himself to him, from England, bearing a letter of credit for £6! stating that he proposed to go into sheep farming. About the lowest sum at which a station can be purchased is £6 000 and you can go as high as £160 000.[91]

One Queensland observer believed that one of the factors which unquestionably contributed to the poor state of the industry in 1867 was:

> a want of proper calculations at the commencement as to the various contingencies connected with stocking new country, and the amount of capital required before a return can reasonably be expected. A man is too apt to consider that if he finds tolerably good country, and can manage to stock it, his chief difficulty is over, which is very far from being the case. There is not only his yards and buildings to put up and rations to find for himself and servants for a couple of years until his stock becomes accustomed to its new quarters but there is the possibility that the first or second year may prove unfavourable in which case it will be at least three years before he can look for any return whatever for his outlay.[92]

Presumably when profits were made, part of these were reinvested in improving stations. *Dotswood* which was fortunate enough to be located close to the Star diggings and readily accessible to Townsville butchers and boiling down works[93] had quite extensive improvements by 1875:

> At Dotswood headstation a fine 6-roomed house, with good garden, kitchen, store, huts, blacksmith's shop, stables and other outbuildings, large drafting, branding, killing and milking yards, with 6 paddocks of about 1100, 500, 400, 300, 200 and 10 acres respectively, the whole new and in first-rate working order, with all the latest improvements; also cultivation paddock, now under crop. At the Star Head Station 25 miles from Dotswood good hut, kitchen, store, garden, new stockyard just being completed and capable of working 2 000 head with milking and killing yards, and with paddock of about 400 acres and small horse paddock and here are also 2 new and large tailing yards about 15 miles from this station in different directions, suitable for mustering and herding purposes. At Quilps Lagoon: A first class new

> stock yard for working 2 000 head and also huts etc. At Speed's Creek: A large new stockyard to work 3 000 head with good hut, horse-yard, etc., besides other improvements, all of the above are in good order.[94]

It is likely that the evaluation was somewhat exaggerated as the station was being advertised for auction in Sydney. The huts may well have been made from bark, the yards constructed from bush timber and the six large paddocks at *Dotswood* head station probably incorporated existing natural features as some of the boundaries. Nevertheless, it does give some idea of the improvements on some stations which had been operating for 12 or so years.

A considerable amount of station improvements at the time could be classified as non-market capital formation. The use of underemployed station labour and building materials freely available on properties meant that little additional money had to be outlaid to construct rudimentary buildings and yards. Lacking a fixed daily routine cattle stations particularly lent themselves to this type of capital formation. With mustering completed, hands could be readily diverted to the construction of an additional yard or building.[95] The alternative to non-market capital formation was the use of contract labour which probably became more important towards the end of the 1870s in North Queensland when dam-making and fencing required some specialised equipment and more surplus labour than was available on stations. However it was used for the construction of improvements even in the 1860s: William Hann arranged to have half a mile of fencing put up at 5s. 6d. per rod on *Bluff Downs* in 1864.[96]

It was however the improvement of herds which often commanded the largest part of the northern squatter's retained earnings. Holt of *Salisbury Plains,* de Salis of *Strathmore* and Anning of *Reedy Springs* were all introducing well-bred southern bulls in the early stages of 1875, indicating that "the northern squatters mean[t] to spare no expense in improving their herds".[97]

Apart from investing in flock and herd improvement and fixed capital, many northern squatters were increasing their holdings of Crown land leases. In part this was due to the fact that the carrying capacity on many of the coastal runs had been reduced by drought, marsupials and diseases[98] and consequently additional land was needed for existing stock. Many established squatters took up runs in the Burke and Cook districts while still retaining their original stations. These included White and Sons of *Bluff Downs* who took up *Beaudesert*[99] and F. S. Holt of *Salisbury Plains* who bought *Chatsworth* from Sheaffe and Hungerford.[100] In the early 1880s W. Marks of *Gainsford* purchased *Kamilaroi* from Curr and Carr but he had established a new station at *Saxby Downs* in 1877.[101] Walsh and Brown of *Iffley* formed *Elvira,*[102] the Brodie brothers moved breeding cattle from their property near Bowen to form *Lorraine,*[103] W. H. Barker of *Carpentaria Downs* stocked *Nelia Ponds* with cattle in the 1870s[104] and the Annings of *Reedy Springs* purchased *Compton Downs* at auction.[105] Henderson and Skene of *Havilah* are said to have stocked *Wrotham Park* in 1873 with 300 cattle[106] and Massey

Bros. of *Sonoma* took cattle to *Rokeby* in 1882 after finding the Lynd secured by E. Bostock.[107] Meanwhile, de Salis Bros. had already reached *Strathleven* in September 1881 with cattle from their South Kennedy property *Strathmore.*[108] But while additional land may have been needed for existing herds, the speculative motive was also important in many instances.

In marked contrast with the first wave of pastoral activity, capital formation in the late 1870s was aimed at increasing the yield of the land: fencing and water conservation were the two major ways. Fencing improved the productive output of land and water conservation increased the area which could be used for grazing. The restocking of the Flinders region with sheep in the early 1880s was accompanied by huge outlays for improvements. By 1881 *Manfred Downs* was all fenced for sheep and it was reported by Frank Hann that the owners of the station had to bring 300 tons of wire, iron and roofing from Emerald.[109] With wire costing between £15 and £16 per ton[110] not to mention the cost of freight[111] and labour, some indication of the costly nature of extensive improvements can be gained. On *Marathon* station in the 1880s there was "lots of fencing" which had cost £38 per mile.[112] *Bowen Downs* had 100 miles of fencing constructed in 1876 at an estimated cost of between £10 000 and £11 000, an average of £100 to £110 per mile.[113] The Carandotta Pastoral Co. was formed in 1879 with £250 000 capital with the aim of fencing and improving the vast stretch of land to accommodate 500 000 head of sheep and at least 20 000 cattle.[114] When funds ran low a bank loan was secured for £80 000 and when this was exhausted, the bank foreclosed. Alexander Kennedy described the Carandotta experience as one of the biggest pastoral disasters in Queensland.[115]

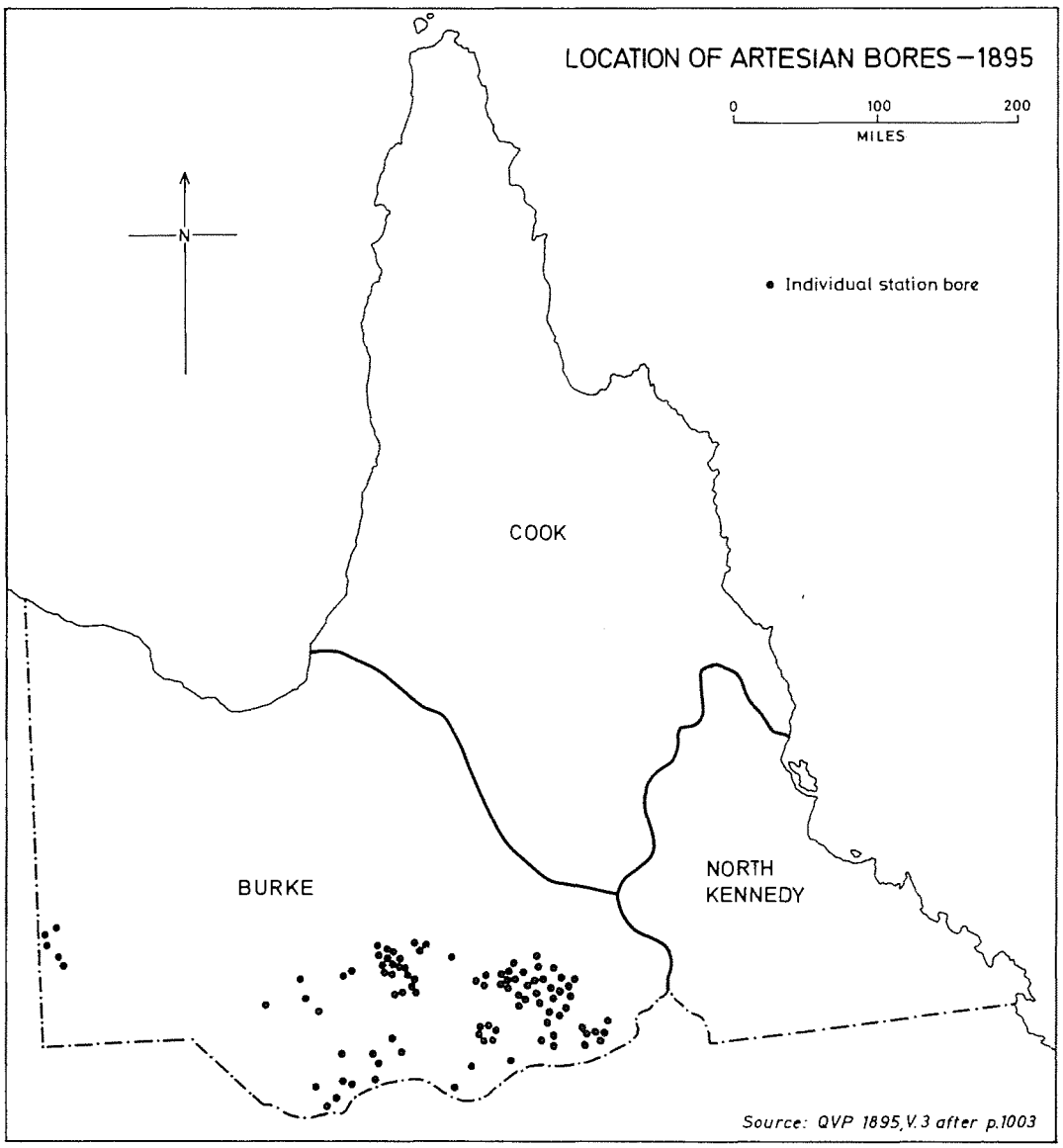
Fencing however was not adopted to the same extent on outside cattle stations; well past the turn of the century, the open range system of grazing remained the normal practice. The typical outside cattle station consisted of a fairly primitive homestead[116] with an assortment of buildings used as store, saddle room, men's quarters etc., a stockyard where drafting, branding and speying was carried out and perhaps a couple of paddocks near the homestead for horses and stud cattle. On large properties the erection of outstations, usually consisting of a hut and a series of stockyards, made cattle management more efficient, eliminating the need to bring cattle to the head station and reducing deaths in calves due to unnecessary droving. In 1889 *Oak Park* station, with an area of 640 square miles, had three such stations: the Billabong, Pine and Gorge yards.[117] On inside cattle stations some fencing was evident in the early 1870s: *Fanning River* had two paddocks enclosing 1200 acres,[118] at *Dotswood* there were six paddocks,[119] a feature of *Woodhouse* was the division of the property by fences and natural features to separate breeding and fattening cattle[120] and at *Salisbury Plains,* heifer and weaning stations were fenced.[121] Separating heifers from the main herd helped to eliminate the problem of dwarfed and illgrown cattle which resulted from the mixing of cattle at too early an age.[122] To some extent owners of the unfenced cattle properties attempted to separate their herd by placing weaners on unoccupied parts of the run after a general muster had

been carried out. It was usually necessary to have a stockman tail the group until they had settled.[123] One ex-station manager believed that for successful sheep breeding fencing was *sine qua non*, but for the ordinary cattle squatter with a large and workable run, it was not recommended apart from weaning paddocks and home paddocks for stud cattle. He believed that more labour was utilized in simply caring for fences than in working cattle without fences.[124] Of course the assumption in his argument was that there would be no change in the herd size after fencing. In general terms, however, subject to the availability of grass and water, fencing greatly increased the carrying capacity of the land.

North Queensland squatters first experienced the effects of a serious drought in 1866-1868. At the time some individuals such as Robert Gray found that water could be obtained by putting wells and troughs down into river beds. They had not, however, discovered that by sinking wells 30 feet or so into the river bed, in some areas a better supply of water could be obtained.[125] With the advent of another drought in 1877 water conservation became a major issue once more. Little had been done in the intervening period to minimise the effects of drought. The editor of the *Queenslander* wrote that:

> The man who fences and otherwise improves his land, but does not, by damming or well sinking, provide a permanent water supply for himself and his stock . . . has only himself to blame for the loss which such a season as this will surely inflict upon him.[126]

One of the first properties in the north to undertake damming was *Cameron Downs* where one large earth dam and several smaller ones were constructed in 1879 but although the dam gave the owner about 20 feet of water which stretched back 2½ miles[127] it did not overcome the water shortage problem as dams were subjected to considerable evaporation. The owners of *Afton Downs* were among those prudent enough to construct a series of dams[128] but during the drought of 1884, still had to travel 11 000 sheep.[129] Several wells were sunk on *Cambridge Downs* around the same time and it was found that on the flats, water could be obtained almost anywhere at 18 feet.[130] Many other owners, dilatory in their efforts to conserve water, suffered the consequences. Another method of water conservation used in the mid 1880s was the tank and dam system where holes were dug either in the beds of creeks and billabongs or just beside them in such a way that water would flow into the excavations. The disadvantage of this method was that stock trampled the walls and defiled the water.[131] By the late 1880s artesian bores were being put down[132] and by 1892 it was claimed that the gulf and western country was "rapidly becoming a network of artesian waters, fresh supplies being struck every month".[133] Among the first stations in the district to have bores were *Afton Downs*,[134] *Bunda Bunda*,[135] *Cambridge Downs*,[136] *Compton Downs*,[137] *Maxwellton*,[138] *Rocklands*,[139] and *Richmond Downs*.[140] The cost of tapping sub-artesian and artesian water of course depended on the depth of the bore. At *Bunda Bunda* three bores were sunk giving a flow of 4 000 000 gallons a day for only £2 503.6.0.[141] The average cost of putting down a bore was 37s. a foot[142] but taking into account the fact that numerous bores were often put down on the one station and usually in excess of


LOCATION OF ARTESIAN BORES – 1895
0
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N
• Individual station bore
COOK
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NORTH
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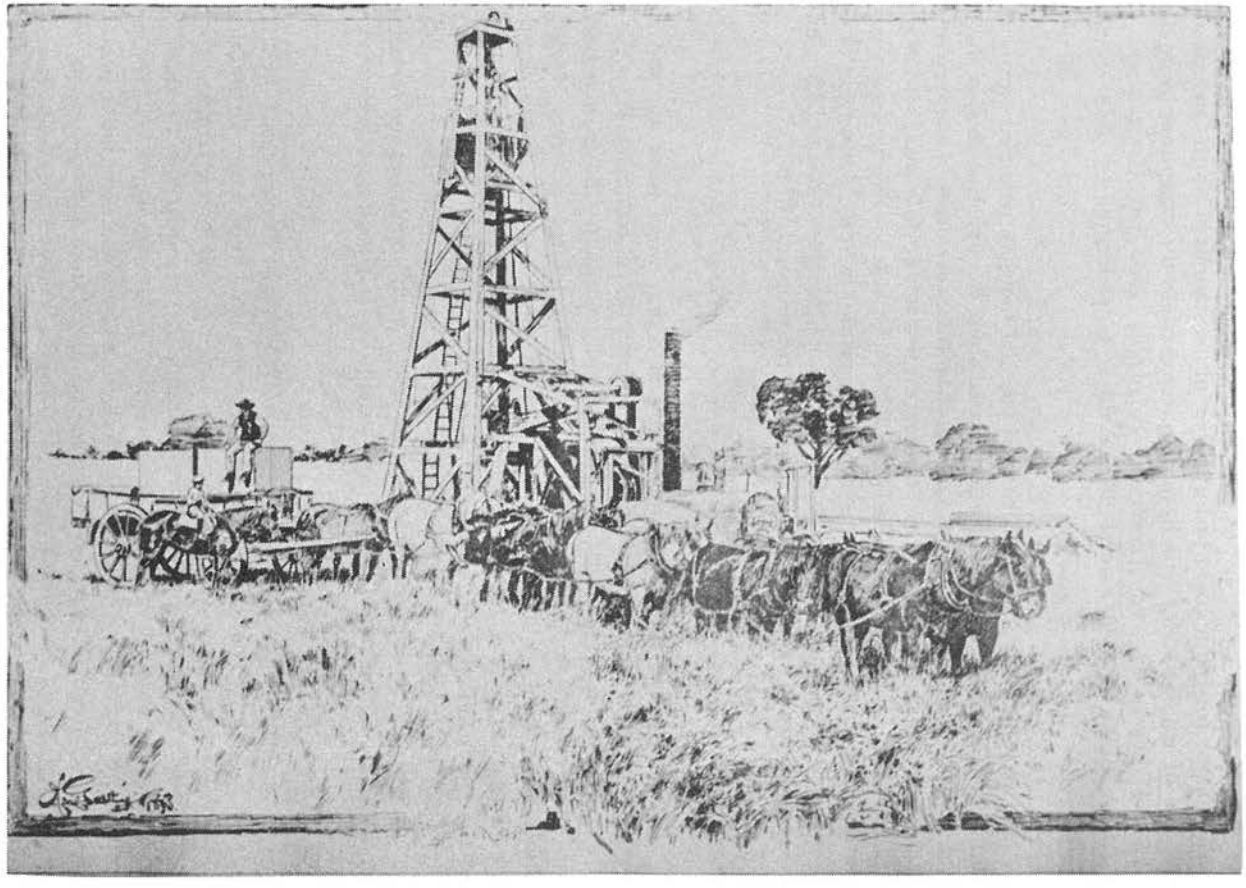
Source: QVP 1895, V.3 after p.1003



A well boring plant at work – a familiar sight in the early 1890s. (*Queenslander* 28 January 1893, p. 169)

1 000 feet, the total cost could be high. Most of the stations in North Queensland taking advantage of artesian water were however sheep stations the exceptions being *Compton Downs, Richmond Downs, Rocklands, Dalgonally* and *Fort Constantine.* For the remainder of the district, natural surface water supplemented by wells remained the normal source.

By the 1880s the North Queensland pastoral industry consisted mostly of cattle stations apart from the sheep properties located along the upper reaches of the Flinders River. Few of these cattle stations had significant improvements in the way of fencing and water conservation yet most had mortgages. It seems obvious that in many instances loans had been obtained to service past debts. This was indeed the case with Roger Sheaffe and Alexander Kennedy who owned *Devoncourt* in 1887. A mortgage of £40 000 was obtained from the Australian and New Zealand Mortgage Co. Ltd. After bills were paid, the partnership had £10 000 left to develop the property.[143]

* * * * *

Although North Queensland was settled at a time when there was still a bias in favour of sheep, there were some individuals who stocked with cattle from the outset. The increased demand for sheep for the stocking of new country drove prices beyond the means of some intending squatters. For those who had limited resources, it was cheaper to stock with cattle. A block of 25 square miles could be stocked with sheep to the minimum capacity for £375 whereas it only cost £250 to stock the same block with cattle. Another advantage of cattle was their greater mobility. Given that the right of occupancy was bestowed on the first to stock the country, it sometimes meant that those with cattle obtained the best land. But with only a small population and no satisfactory way developed at the time for exporting surplus meat, it must have been obvious that those who chose cattle would have marketing difficulties.

In the 1860s, one of the few means of disposing of surplus cattle locally was to sell them to other squatters requiring stock for new runs. John Ewen Davidson stocked with cattle bought from *Burdekin Downs* in 1866[144] and Frank Jardine bought 259 cows and bullocks from Stenhouse for stocking the *Somerset* run in 1864.[145] The boiling-down works which opened in Townsville[146] and Burketown[147] in 1866 provided an alternative outlet for cattle. Five hundred from *Dotswood* were the first mob to be treated in Townsville[148] and were followed by drafts from *Salisbury Plains, Burdekin Downs, Bluff Downs*[149] and *Inkerman.*[150] However, in the ensuing four years of operation, the boiling-down works mainly operated on sheep[151] and throughout the 1870s stock were not boiled down in the north at all. The export of canned meat was a possible solution to the marketing problem. However the taste of Australian canned meat was never really acceptable to the English palate and in addition, the cost tended to prohibit its widespread use. In 1873, the consumption was confined entirely to middle class people with moderate incomes and to public institutions.[152] Moreover, for preserved

meat to be profitable, it was necessary to obtain stock at low prices. With the increasing prices of the 1870s, the practice came to a standstill in 1874. The editor of the *Queenslander* was one who welcomed the suspension of preserving, considering it wasteful of stock and unsatisfactory to consumers. The only virtue in the practice, in his eyes, was that for the removal of superfluous stock it was better than boiling down.[153] Some local demand for fresh meat was created in the late 1860s by the discovery of gold in various parts of the north. Among the fortunate squatters who found markets at the diggings was Robert Gray of *Glendower* who made small sales to the Cape diggings in 1868 and Ravenswood in 1870.[154] Throughout the 1870s and 1880s additional fields were opened[155] exposing more squatters to local markets.

All the properties advertised for sale at the time highlighted this aspect. *Lolworth*'s virtue was that it was "close to the Northern goldfields",[156] *Woodhouse*'s owners claimed that "over the past two years numerous and continuous drafts of fat stock have been disposed of at the diggings in the neighbourhood",[157] and *Natal Downs*' great advantage was that it was "near the northern goldfields".[158]

The real boost to the North Queensland cattle industry generally came with the opening of the Palmer goldfield. At the beginning of 1874, the earliest miners on the field were cut off from Cooktown. With rations in short supply one man cut up his horse on the road to the Palmer and sold the flesh for food[159] but as time progressed and all food resources were depleted, several men actually died of starvation.[160] With rapidly increasing herds, cattlemen responded to this much publicised fact with a mass convergence on the Palmer as soon as it was possible to travel. The Palmer correspondent for the *Queenslander* expected 3 300 head of cattle to arrive in the area before the end of June.[161] "When they reach the Palmer there will be a bullock a man," the correspondent wrote and warned that the population was too unreliable to speculate on sending mobs from the south.[162]

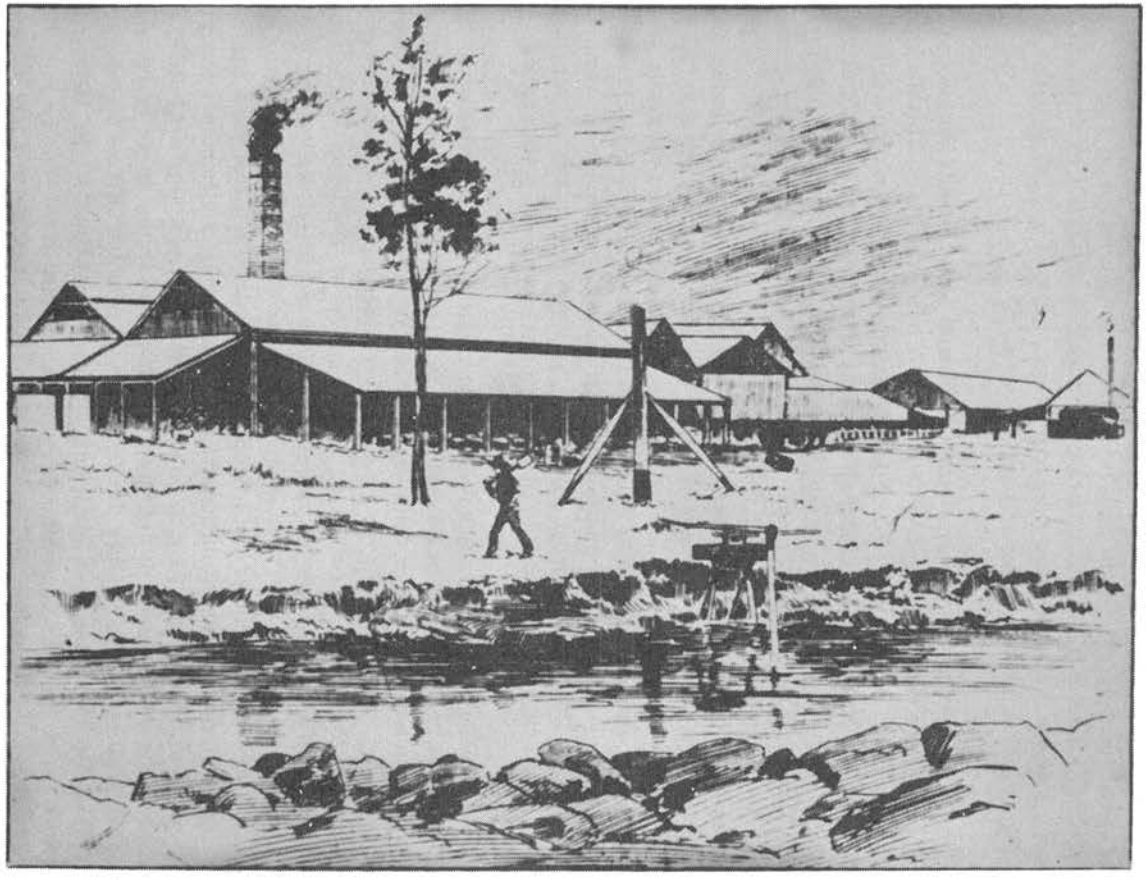
The demand for cattle continued on the Palmer where good bullocks were bringing £15 - £17 a head in 1875 and wethers from 20s. to 24s.[163] The Palmer market was supplied by stations from all parts of North Queensland even as far west as *Lawn Hill* near the Northern Territory border[164] and it remained the principal market for North Queensland cattle throughout the 1870s and into the early 1880s. However, by 1879 the population of the goldfield was declining rapidly and this was accompanied by a fall in the price of cattle. Whereas fats were fetching £9 - £10 a head in 1878[165] the price received for *Bunda Bunda* cattle the following year was only £5.10.0 and by 1880 the highest bid one mob of cattle could raise was £2 a head.[166] The reduced price deterred several stations from sending cattle to the market in 1879.[167]

However, due to the increased demand for stocking of new country[168] not only in North Queensland but also in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, prices of store cattle were beginning to rise. Moreover from 1879 and throughout the early 1880s

north western Queensland stations were supplying Port Darwin with fat cattle; although the prices received for stock were somewhat better than those offered on the Palmer and Brisbane markets, they were considerably below the high prices of the Palmer up to 1878.[169] While supplying store cattle eased the problem of disposing of the cast for some squatters in the short run, it only served to exacerbate the problem in the long term. The market was already grossly oversupplied as evidenced by the extremely low price of cattle at the end of the 1870s and the stocking of new country further increased the potential supply. The export of frozen meat was the only possible solution to a situation where supply was increasing much faster than local demand. It was calculated by one of the participants in the Surplus Stock debate that to absorb the superfluity, it would be necessary to employ five steamers weekly.[170]

With grossly overstocked runs, no viable markets and the frozen meat export problem unresolved, North Queensland pastoralists once again turned to the despised boiling-down. The Townsville boiling-down works reopened in 1880.[171] In May that year the shareholders, mainly local graziers, examined the question of exporting meat under the Bell-Coleman system but the general feeling was that it was beyond the means of the company.[172] A few months earlier a joint enterprise of Queensland, Victorian and New South Wales pastoralists had equipped the "*Strathleven*" with Bell-Coleman dry air compression machinery and managed to land refrigerated meat in London.[173] The success was shortlived; future shipments sold at a loss due to a glut on the English market.[174] Before the fall in the price of frozen meat, Robert Christison managed to interest a group of British businessmen, including the Lord Mayor of London, to establish a freezing works in North Queensland. Christison also persuaded 14 local squatters to subscribe to the company[175] and Queensland's first meat freezing export company was duly located at Poole Island just off Bowen. However, in January 1884 the works sustained extensive damage from a cyclone while the first shipment of frozen meat was being loaded.[176] Throughout the 1880s all other attempts at freezing were hampered by meat inferior to that exported from South America, intermittent supply and insufficient capital.

Meanwhile squatters received a respite from the problem as the prices of cattle on the southern markets were beginning to rise in the 1880s due to the fact that some southern pastoralists were switching from cattle to sheep. However until 1886 North Queensland squatters found it more profitable to send their cattle to the boiling-down works in Townsville[177] or to the proliferation of scattered mining and plantation settlements. The drought of 1884-1886 would also have imposed restrictions on the marketing of cattle because of inability to travel. But from 1886 North Queensland cattlemen began to participate in southern markets, especially Melbourne and Adelaide. Those cattle bound for the Wodonga saleyards travelled overland to Bourke where some were railed to Victoria. Others travelled the entire journey on foot. It was estimated that up to 1891, 50 000 cattle per annum had been dispatched from stations within 200 miles of Normanton alone.[178] However, the relatively high prices of the 1880s began to fall and Edward

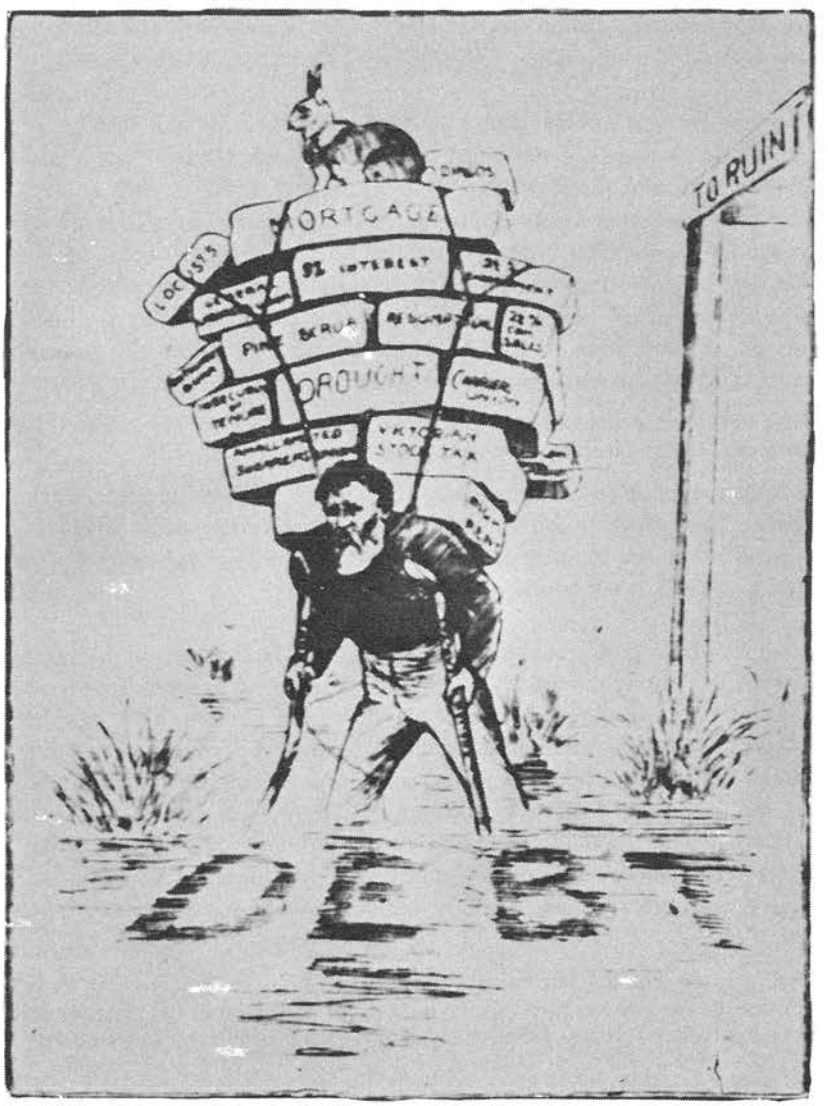


North Queensland Meat Export Co.'s works at Alligator Creek. (*Queenslander* 3 September 1892, p. 457)

Palmer of *Canobie* reported that 900 bullocks did not realise more than 35s. per head after all expenses, droving, commission, losses on the road etc.[179] Pleuro pneumonia was an additional hazard which had to be taken into account when overlanding cattle. The disease had initially been introduced to North Queensland in 1864.[180] However, deaths from disease were usually greater in travelling stock as a result of the increased stress to which the cattle were subjected. It was reported in 1887 that the disease was killing a considerable proportion of travelling stock.[181]

By the end of 1891 most North Queensland squatters had decided to resort to boiling-down or the extract works at Alligator Creek or Selheim. This decision was no doubt aided by the fact that New South Wales was enforcing the imposition of a poll tax of 5s. per head of cattle entering the colony from 1 March 1892. Victoria which had imposed a similar tax in 1888, by 1893 raised it to £1 a head thereby completely closing that colony as a market for store cattle. From 1889 squatters once again closed ranks to try and find an alternative outlet for their product. The list in Appendix C gives some idea of the flurry of activity undertaken by North Queensland pastoralists in a bid to overcome their marketing problem. Although the list is not exhaustive, it does give some indication of the concern of local pastoralists. Only some of the proposals were in fact implemented and then only with limited success. At the time, de Burgh Persse[182] wrote from London warning that the outlook for Queensland exported meat was not good as the Americans had the upper hand sending larger live shipments than ever. In addition, chilled meat which was preferred to frozen meat was exceedingly well supplied.[183]

Meanwhile Queensland stockowners were about to be burdened with an additional tax. Northern squatters met in Townsville on 16 March 1892 to discuss the government's proposed stock tax, the aim of which was to raise a fund to provide a bonus to encourage the export of meat. Those at the meeting agreed that the tax was desirable,[184] as did Bowen stockowners.[185] One squatter, E. Cunningham of *Woodhouse* claimed that in the past a great many pastoralists had not shared in the burden of dealing with the problem of surplus stock. In his view, an across the board tax would force all squatters to participate.[186] Another cattleman, H. C. Wilson of *Gunnawarra* felt that most squatters were up to their necks in financial difficulties brought about by the ruinously low prices and that heavy sacrifices would have to be made to meet the additional tax burden.[187] With the advantage of hindsight A. J. Cotton, a prominent identity in the industry, believed that the *Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act* had done more up until 1933 than anything else to advance the cattle industry in Queensland.[188] In 1894 four works received grants from the meat fund. These included Queensland Meat Export, Townsville £13 250; Bowen Meat Export and Agency Co. Ltd £16 052.10.0; Mareeba Meat Preserving and Export Co. £5 000 and Cardwell Meat Preserving Co. Ltd £1 500.[189] However, as foreshadowed by de Burgh Persse, freezing did not provide a complete solution for North Queensland squatters' marketing problems. Poor prices for frozen meat were experienced on the London markets; it was claimed that one owner of a large cattle station near Hughenden had to pay £1 500 to meet expenses on his cattle sent to




Cartoon depicting the Debt Burdened Squatter. (*Queenslander* 3 September 1892, p.459)

the London market.[190] In 1895 a joint committee of the two houses of parliament met to consider steps to be taken to place the meat export industry on a successful basis. Evidence at the enquiry confirmed that exporting frozen meat to London was unprofitable. It was shown that 389 cows treated at Townsville and shipped to London on 3 January 1896 incurred a total loss of £72.5.6. (See Appendix D). Added to this loss were the costs associated with raising and transporting the cattle to Townsville.

And worse was yet to come. In 1895 ticks became the scourge of the north, reducing cattle numbers by one-third in the Cook and Kennedy districts alone.[191] Of course the losses on individual stations were frequently much higher. J. H. S. Barnes noted on passing through *Wando Vale* that the cattle had almost all gone with only 400 calves branded where they normally branded 4 000.[192] A. J. Cotton also recalled that *Bromby Park* near Proserpine lost 13 000 of its 19 000 head of cattle in 1895.[193] The presence of the severe tick infestation in Queensland caused the northern area to be quarantined. A deputation of Burke pastoralists who waited on the Minister for Lands claimed that in 1896 all markets were practically closed to them:

> The herds were disseminated and those herds that were clean might as well be in Fiji as in their isolated condition caused by the tick pest.[194]

Added to this was the severe drought of 1897-1902. As in all droughts, stock losses were high due to lack of water and grass. Moreover, those cattle which survived the drought were normally reduced to store condition. Stores not only attracted lower prices than fat cattle but also yielded less tallow when boiled down.

Throughout the nineteenth century a fundamental disequilibrium existed in the northern cattle industry. Excepting for the five year period between 1874 and 1878 when the northern population rapidly escalated due to the Palmer goldrushes, the supply of cattle greatly exceeded demand. Consequently, cattle prices were extremely depressed throughout most of the period and did not allow a sufficient margin of profit for the industry to be viable. Very few northern squatters made a financial success of their pastoral activities in the nineteenth century[195] and it would seem that undue effort and capital was expended in an industry which was years ahead of its time. But in spite of their financial failure northern squatters were highly regarded by their contemporaries. In the view of one:

> No greater pluck, determination, and self-sacrifice have been shown at Mafeking than these men displayed and be it remembered that their trials extended over as many years as those of Baden-Powell's . . . did months.[196]

## CHAPTER TWO

## NORTH QUEENSLAND PASTORAL LABOUR

Because of distance and isolation, poor working conditions and Aboriginal resistance, squatters initially found it necessary to offer high wages to induce workers into the industry. These rates were maintained after 1866 because of labour shortages resulting from competition from newly emerging industries and a loss of manpower to the North Queensland goldfields. In a bid to obtain an adequate supply of labour and to lower wages, pastoralists tried to inundate the market with European immigrants and, when this failed, to introduce cheap Melanesian[1] and Chinese labour. However the situation of excess demand for labour persisted until the mid 1880s (apart from a brief period in 1879) giving employees a strong bargaining position when negotiating wages. This began to alter with the intermittent bouts of unemployment during the 1880s. The long standing confrontation between labour and capital finally erupted in the pastoral strikes of 1891 and 1894.

The initial demand for labour in North Queensland was created by the movement of squatters with their flocks and herds into the region. Apart from the labour requirements for day to day operations of properties, considerable additional labour was required to help erect basic structures on newly established runs. The only existing potential supply of labour in the region at the time was the Aboriginal population. However some time would elapse before this valuable source could be tapped. In the meantime the labour supply which emerged resulted from the movement of workers from areas of earlier settlement.

There is no doubt that during the first half of the 1860s a definite shortage of labour existed in the embryonic northern pastoral industry. Several contemporary accounts highlight this fact. After purchasing 1800 ewes for as many guineas, Robert Gray found that when he arrived at *Mt McConnell* station in 1863 he was unable to obtain a shepherd; for some time was forced to care for them himself.[2] Even several years later R. S. Warry, a Bowen merchant, reported that squatters in the region were badly off for labour.[3] In the Gulf, several squatters also had to shepherd their own sheep in 1866 because of the scarcity of labour[4] while on the western boundary of the colony John Sutherland found a pattern of high wages and unprocurable station hands persisted until he abandoned *Rocklands* in 1868.[5]

Scarcity of labour in the area was to be expected. With sheep initially being preferred, shepherds were the main type of labour required and shepherding had always been regarded in Australia as an extremely uncongenial occupation carried out by cantankerous dotards, incapable of doing anything better with their lives. Typical of contemporary opinion were the unflattering views expressed in the *Queenslander* in 1871:

> The shepherds who for years have done nothing but dawdle through the day at the tail of a flock of sheep, seeing nobody for months together but the ration carrier and the overseer who occasionally comes to "count him up"; and whose only intervals of relaxation from his monotonous employment are spent at the nearest bush shanty, where he "knocks down his cheque", and gets *delirium tremens;* is certain to become unfitted for the hard continuous labour of the pioneer farmer – if he escapes partial idiocy, which is the fate of the majority of the men so employed for any number of years. That this is no exaggeration the records of our lunatic asylums and the testimony of almost any resident in the bush will prove. "As cranky as an old shepherd" has, in fact, come to be a proverb in country districts in Australia.[6]

It is hardly surprising that such an occupation would have difficulty in attracting workers even under the most favourable conditions. Moreover North Queensland squatters did not have access to a supply of convict labour, like other colonies, when the population exhibited an aversion to the occupation.[7] Because of the nature of the work, shepherds were frequently in the habit of throwing in their jobs without notice. A typical case was that of J. M. Black's shepherds who in 1864 yarded 5 000 sheep and told the owner he could shepherd them himself;[8] while McGettrick, before walking off to Bowen to take out a summons against his employers, told William Hann of *Bluff Downs* that the sheep were "in the yard and that [he] had better send some one to take them out".[9] The departure of shepherds under such circumstances severely affected station operations. It is probable that the high turnover in employees caused squatters to hire workers when they appeared whether or not they were needed at the time. In 1866, John Ewen Davidson, a small scale planter and pastoralist near Cardwell, hired a man who came looking for work in spite of the fact that he had enough hands.[10] Such actions exacerbated labour shortages.

Nor was the shortage of labour confined to shepherding. Bush workers needed for improvements and general maintenance were also in short supply in the 1860s. In part this can be explained in terms of the time lag before labourers could respond to job opportunities. The telegraph was not established in North Queensland until the early 1870s and other means of communications were extremely primitive. This aspect was highlighted by T. A. Brodie when recalling his experiences as a pioneer squatter at *Donor's Hill* in the 1860s:

> Newspapers we hardly ever saw, and only got letters occasionally by hand, as the nearest post office to Donors Hill was Bowen or Port Denison, a distance of 680 miles. At a later period a post office was established at Dalrymple, on the Upper Burdekin River, that reduced the distance to 500 miles. Some time later we were favoured with a post office at Richmond, on the Flinders, about 250 miles from Donors Hill, with a horse mail running once a month to Burketown and passing our station on the way.[11]

Information could be conveyed fairly rapidly between ports, but as distance from the coast increased, the standard of mail services declined. Consequently several months might elapse before a labour shortage reported in one area was circulated in another

inland location. Often the prospective employee considered the risk too great to warrant searching for work in the area when such a time lag was involved. Apart from the possibility of finding the labour situation changed, the worker also needed to consider the wages foregone in travelling to the source of employment. Alternatively, a squatter could be the one to bear the risk of hiring labour if he decided to recruit workers by going personally to Brisbane or to the immigration depot in Bowen. This involved a considerable loss of time for the squatter and it frequently happened that once engaged, newly arrived immigrants would have second thoughts about venturing into the Australian bush, thus leaving the squatter without the labour he had made the trip to obtain. Another means of hiring labour was through an agent in town but here, too, some time could elapse before the request reached the hands of the squatter's representative. In addition this system was expensive for the squatter who had to bear the cost of getting the worker to the property. On reaching their destinations many employees were found to be unsuitable for the work. A Burnett squatter urged that labour depots be formed in the bush where employers could personally select the labourers they wanted.[12]

Fear of the Aborigines was probably the major factor which inhibited labour from moving into the northern pastoral industry in the 1860s. The alienation of pastoral land in other parts of the colony had been accompanied by violent resistance from the original inhabitants.[13] On the frontier Europeans were outnumbered and vulnerable. The massacre of 19 members of the Wills' household at *Cullinlaringo* in Central Queensland, which received considerable newspaper coverage and coincided with the movement of squatters into North Queensland, served as a graphic reminder of the risks associated with employment on isolated stations. "Fear", Reynolds observed:

> followed the pioneer squatter into each new district. This was as true of South East Queensland in the 1840's as of Cape York half a century later. Thus in 1843 Patrick Leslie wrote in anguish from the Darling Downs of his "constant dread of the black", and a few years later Captain Griffin of Whiteside in the Brisbane Valley found his men in "perpetual suspense" and the neighbouring squatters "even on the tiptoe of expectation and indeed, sometimes in a state of mental tension". Alan Macpherson's employees at Mt. Abundance were frightened "into convulsions" by the blacks while those of Frederick McConnell of Cressbrook were afraid to leave their huts.[14]

In the Bowen hinterland where the spread of settlement was extremely rapid and where Aboriginal/European contact was more frequent, squatters encountered resistance almost from the beginning. In the Kennedy district conflict was at its worst between 1864 and 1868.[15] Robert Gray estimated that in the 1860s 10 to 15 per cent of the white population lost their lives at the hands of the blacks. One Native Mounted Police officer told Gray that he considered the death rate to be between 20 and 30 per cent.[16] Loos's extremely thorough research placed the death toll on the pastoral frontier at 56 during the 1860s with possibly another ten deaths.[17] However the fact that contemporaries believed the death rate to be as high as 30 per cent would have been a considerable deterrent to labour. Robert Gray recalled that when shepherds could be obtained it was necessary to visit them daily:

> and ride round the country they were shepherding on, to establish some degree of confidence, and two flocks were located at each hut, so that the men might have company at night, but after several shepherds had been murdered and the body of one of them laid on his own camp fire could not without difficulty be induced to take the risk.[18]

Clearly many workers considered 30 shillings a week and rations poor compensation for the dangers involved.

Thus the labour shortage was further exacerbated by the need to have extra staff for self protection. Phillip Somer, one of North Queensland's earliest pioneer pastoralists, wrote to the Colonial Secretary explaining that:

> the very great distance between the headstations, and still greater distances between the few police camps, and townships, compelled every squatter to keep a larger staff of men to protect each other – than would otherwise have been required to work the stations; and altho' in nearly every case squatters had extra hands, still they would have been entirely at the mercy of the blacks if the blacks had been allowed in to see the squatters weak points, for instance what could a half dozen or twenty men do if surprised and surrounded by a host of savages as in the case of Wills' massacre in 1861.[19]

After 1875 there were only isolated reports of European deaths on the pastoral frontier except in the Cloncurry district[20] and the newly opened Cape York Peninsula which were at the time the most dangerous places to work.[21]

There is no doubt that for the squatter and his employees alike, life on the frontier was characterised by hardship and deprivation. Apart from the isolation and continual fear of the Aborigines, living conditions were primitive in the extreme. C. S. Bowly, a new chum who was gaining colonial experience on *Lammermoor* station, wrote to his parents in 1874 that the life in the bush was sometimes "rather irksome".[22] At *Lammermoor* however he was fortunate enough to have a small bedroom about ten feet by eight feet in the homestead – a building of rough hewn slabs with a bark roof and a dirt floor but devoid of ceilings or glass in the windows.[23] He did not realise at the time that compared with some of his later billets, *Lammermoor* was quite palatial. On moving to *Mt. Cornish* he found it to be a rougher place than he had expected. All the staff including the overseer had to sleep out of doors although in wet weather some men were allowed to sleep on the floor of the parlour in the manager's house.[24]

Mustering and droving in the wet season often proved to be highly uncomfortable. Bowly described the conditions at *Ambi*, an outstation of *Mt. Cornish*. There were:

> some temporary huts made of galvanised iron, also a tarpaulin and leaking tent. I made up my bed on the ground under the tarpaulin with Campbell, but unfortunately just after tea we had a heavy thunderstorm and the camp being pitched in a bad place on the side of a ridge, all of the huts etc., were flooded out with water before we had time to dig trenches around them. All my bedding (i.e. sheets, etc.) got wet through, also my clothes etc., my blanket not being spread out on the ground did not get much wetted, so I got

> a sheet of iron and placed it on the floor of the largest iron hut, which was, however, inches deep in mud. There were five of us in this place which was about 10 feet again. However in spite of all inconveniences I slept well. I had to move my bed out during the day this being the general eating and store house. The rain continued all next day and there was no chance to dry anything. About midday Cameron's party came in having had a most miserable time of it, no tents and wet things all night – so I saw how little reason I had to complain when others were so much worse off. Poor fellows. They were indeed in a sorry plight, and coming to us seemed like getting out of the frying pan into the fire as all available room seemed already occupied.[25]

As a result of distance and isolation there were often periods when rations were in short supply and even non-existent. At such times the diet might consist of meat, which was usually plentiful, and wild portulaca[26] to ward off scurvy. During their earliest North Queensland days, the Anning family's only rations were a bag or two of flour packed occasionally from Bowen.[27] Ultimately many North Queensland station-owners employed Chinese gardeners but until gardens were established, fresh fruit and vegetables were not a feature of bushworkers' normal diet. This not only had a detrimental effect on health but rendered the traditional bush fare of damper, salt beef and black tea intolerably monotonous.[28]

It is not surprising that given such poor conditions many bushworkers did not stay long in any one place.[29] Some observers even attributed the bushmen's improvidence and intemperance to the poor diet and living conditions.[30] Less benevolent contemporaries believed that the hardship was self-inflicted; in their view, if bushmen spent a portion of their wages on a few luxuries such as pickles, their lifestyle could be considerably enhanced.[31] Some frontier workers were faced with a dilemma. They drank excessively because of the hardship of their existence; but because of their drinking habits, they were unable to improve their situation. Indeed few employees in the more remote parts had the desire or expectation of becoming anything but wage-earners[32] although those in the more settled areas may well have "expected that the land would be generous and provide [them] with at least a modest opportunity for self improvement".[33]

With the excess demand for labour which existed up to the depression of 1866, workers had considerable bargaining power and could demand and receive above average wages. Shepherds earned in the vicinity of 35 shillings a week plus rations.[34] This compared most favourably with the wage rate of £25 - £40 per annum with rations in the more settled areas.[35] However it was not simply a matter of militant workers demanding higher wages. They expected to be compensated in monetary terms for the hardships they endured. Margins for skill were as applicable then as now. The most highly paid worker, apart from the manager who received approximately £200 per annum,[36] was the bullock driver who received around 40 shillings a week plus rations.[37] However, as Rachel Henning pointed out to her sister, "it [took] a great deal of skill and practice to make 14 bullocks pull together".[38]

North Queensland shearers, however, earned wages only slightly higher than their counterparts in the settled districts. The general ruling rate was between 17s. 6d. and 25s. per 100 sheep throughout the 1860s[39] while the 1867 Dalrymple rate was 20s. to 25s.[40] A confrontation between Kennedy pastoralists and shearers had however occurred in 1864. According to a contemporary observer, J. B. Stevenson, shearers at that time were:

> perfect masters of the situation. There was only one mob of them in the district, and the squatters were completely in their hands. They dictated their own terms and if the squatter refused to accede to them, they simply saddled up and told him in language more forcible than polite, to shear his sheep himself . . . if [the squatter] ventured to remonstrate with one of them, even if the shearing was disgracefully bad, a general throwing down of shears, and preparation to go was the consequence.[41]

The Bowen squatters apparently banded together to resist the shearers' actions, agreeing not to pay more than a set rate. In 1865 Selheim of *Strathmore* set a precedent by placing a 4s. a score ceiling on shearers' wage rates.[42] Prior to this action, the ruling South Kennedy rate had been set between4s. 9d. and 5s. 3d.

Many contemporaries believed that immigration was the panacea for the labour problems. A correspondent writing to the *Port Denison Times* in 1865, for instance, believed that by increasing the labour supply through immigration, wages would fall and more people would be employed resulting in denser settlement. As a result workers would be more comfortable and secure and less susceptible to attacks from Aborigines[43] — wonderful in theory but it bore little resemblance to the reality. The colonial government encouraged immigration and at the end of 1862 the annual increase from that source was 9 805. This relatively high figure was maintained in the ensuing four years. (See Appendix E). However, it was found that the landing of immigrants in Brisbane did little to help solve the labour problems of the unsettled districts as few voluntarily made their way north, preferring to remain in the more familiar urban environment.[44] Even when the government did disembark immigrants in northern ports, squatters received little respite from their labour problems as many new arrivals were either unsuitable or unwilling to enter the alien bush environment. Rachel Henning wrote to her sister that their brother Biddulph had hired two Irish immigrants in 1863 who had a "great talent for losing their way and were most mortally afraid of the blacks".[45] A squatter scathingly wrote that the immigrants left over for the pastoral industry were the refuse of the agriculturalist including:

> men physically weak and totally unfit for hard labour and lazy men all sent out here by our wise Immigration Agents in Britain so that these are the men we are forced to employ; thereby freeing the revenue from the costs of these do-nothings who would in an agricultural district be a burden and cost money.[46]

Charles Eden, himself a "new chum", wrote of the harm done by employing inexperienced men at shepherding and this perhaps explains some of the animosity which

squatters exhibited towards immigrants:

> The best part of their time is occupied in avoiding losing themselves; they therefore only take their flock a very limited distance and over the same ground day after day; besides which, being afraid the sheep will stray, they keep them all huddled together, by constantly sending their dogs to "round them up" in place of taking them to spread as far as they like.[47]

Because of the immigrants' inexperience, there was a tendency for squatters to hire those who did venture into the industry at a lower rate than that paid to old hands.[48] Justifying such practices one squatter wrote that:

> if a person set a couple of them to do a certain piece of work, the probability is that they know nothing about it, and the employer will have to send an old hand with them to show them what is required to be done and whilst showing them, the old hand could do the work himself. Again, send one of them out, with a flock of sheep, the chances are that neither shepherd nor sheep will return at night. The consequences is that the old hand will have to leave his work to look for the lost shepherd and sheep. The probability is that he will find the shepherd with half the flock, the remainder scattered with the native dogs. The value of the sheep destroyed by them would pay the wages of the old hand for 12 months. If he does not lose the sheep the chances are that, being so afraid of doing so, he will be dogging them together all day, doing as much harm that way as the other. And this is the man that expects to get an experienced man's wages.[49]

This attitude to "new chums" would help to account for the wide range of wages offered in any one region. In 1867 the Flinders rate for shepherds ranged between 20s. and 35s.[50] and in Dalrymple between 25s. and 40s.[51] with the "new chums" presumably getting the lower rates. Complaining of this practice some years later, one Charters Towers correspondent expressed the view that the wages given to immigrants were too low for the work required. With an average working day of 10 hours, 6 days a week and allowing for rations, he claimed that the hourly remuneration amounted to only 4d. per hour which was certainly insufficient reason to travel half way around the globe.[52] Those squatters who did pay high wages to immigrants were soundly criticised for their actions. A correspondent argued in the *Port Denison Times* that:

> When the last emigrant ship arrived in this port [Bowen] the squatter went to the depot to engage "hands" with no settled idea as to the amount of remuneration they would allow. Mr A. seeing a man who would suit him, and being desirous to obtain his services at once offers him £80 or £100 per annum and probably engages the man. In less than 5 minutes the news has flown around the depot that "Tom has engaged as a shepherd and is to get £100 a year and his keep". All congratulate Tom on his good fortune, and determine not to engage for less. And thus when Mr B. comes and offers £50 a year he is almost laughed at and is told that his mate got £100 . . . if the new chum should accept the £50 he is dubbed by his comrades with anything but complimentary epithets and is hooted for "trying to reduce the wage".[53]

Coghlan attributed the pool of unemployed immigrants in a community where labour even of the roughest kind was in great demand, to the peculair mental attitude of the immigrant:

> He had come to Queensland to engage in a certain description of work, and to none other would he put his hand.[54]

When one takes into account the fact that migration was normally a response to inter-regional income differentials giving the opportunity of economic improvement for the participants, the immigrants were probably not as inflexible as portrayed by Coghlan. Rather, because of the tendency of pastoralists to lower the wage offered to the immigrants, there was a considerable gap between the actual and expected pecuniary benefits. Their response to this was a frequent refusal to take up positions in the industry, especially in view of their inherent preference for an urban environment.

* * * * *

The period between 1866-1871 was characterised by continued high wages. On the demand side there were a number of factors operating to reduce the level of wages. The financial crisis of 1866 and the downward movement of prices for pastoral products throughout the period considerably reduced the profitability of the industry. As a result improvements on runs were curtailed or diminished with the demand for labour accordingly reduced. The widespread abandonment of runs at the end of the decade further reduced the demand for labour and the switch from sheep to cattle by a large proportion of the remaining North Queensland squatters augmented the trend as cattle raising proved to be less labour intensive than sheep farming. Given a fixed supply of labour and the lack of restrictions on the downward movement of wages, it would be expected that wages would fall. That this did not occur was probably due in part to factors at work on the supply side of labour.

In 1866 the labour supply was temporarily reduced as many workers left the western and gulf regions due to the widespread incidence of fever.[55] Thirty-one deaths in Burketown in a five month period were officially attributed to the disease. Of these, 15 were people who contracted it outside the town but had gone there to seek medical assistance.[56] As well countless others died in the bush.[57] Many of the old hands returned to the Gulf the following year as the fever subsided but by then new dimensions were being added to the North Queensland economy.

Both mining and agriculture were beginning to challenge the predominance of the pastoral industry in the labour market. It is impossible to gauge how great the leakage was of workers from the pastoral to the mining industry. In 1869 the estimated European population of the northern goldfields was 2 339, increasing to 2 650 the following year and to 3 242 in 1871.[58] Many of these were people who came north specifically to pursue mining activities and had no impact on the pastoral labour supply. However

squatters[59] and northern pastoral workers also tried their luck at the Cape River diggings. Among the latter group was W. H. Corfield who left employment on his uncle's property *Clifton* to pursue alluvial mining. Thoroughly disgusted with events at the Cape River diggings, he turned to carrying which was paying extremely well at the time.[60] The lure of gold and the general excitement was in marked contrast with the loneliness and isolation of life on the pastoral frontier. In addition, little capital was required for alluvial mining, placing the prospect of independence from an employer seemingly within the reach of the lucky digger. But even when the alluvial failed there was a strong demand for workers as reefing and quarrying were a feature of most northern fields and this imposed an additional drain on the existing labour supply.

Meanwhile pioneer attempts at agriculture on the coast were accompanied by an increased demand for labour. However there appeared to be less inter-industry movement of workers between the pastoral and agricultural than between the mining and pastoral sectors. At the end of 1871, coinciding with growing unemployment in the pastoral industry, farmers and planters were having difficulty in obtaining an adequate supply of workers. However there was an obvious aversion by pastoral employees to fill the agricultural positions. This may have been due to the fact that farm labourers' wages were generally lower than those of bushworkers in the pastoral industry, but it is also likely that some loss of independence occurred when pastoral workers moved into farming. Because of the large size of sheep and cattle stations, workers were less under the close scrutiny of the employer and had more freedom than would have been the case on a more confined farm. Russel Ward pointed out that the work the farmer demanded of casual labourers "was usually harder, though not necessarily more skilled, than that to which the men from 'farther out' were accustomed".[61] Steele Rudd's portraits, penned in the 1890s, also bear out the hard – even miserable – nature of agricultural labour.[62] It is also probable that bushmen considered a loss of status was involved when they moved into agriculture. One only has to look at the bush balladists' reverence for shearers, stockmen and drovers to understand this. Ward wrote that there was little evidence of antagonism between the itinerant bushmen and small landowners in Queensland before 1880 because of the relatively small amount of agriculture there compared with Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.[63] While the economy may well have been dominated by the pastoral industry in Queensland, antipathy to the small farmer was still very evident.

Farmers likewise exhibited an aversion to the employment of pastoral workers and it was claimed by the editor of the *Queenslander* that farmers who required:

> hired labour look with as much dislike and suspicion on station hands as the owners or superintendents of a station does on a "new chum".[64]

Thus, although the demand for labour decreased in the late 1860s the supply of labour also diminished with the result that the high wages of the early 1860s persisted. Squatters were loud in their condemnation of labour costs claiming that they severely retarded the development of the northern industry. Outlining the situation, one northern pastoralist complained that:

> All the squatters are calling for cheaper labour, wages are still very high out here, being 35s per week. There are hundreds of things they want done, but owing to the fearful high price of labour they are unable to do them. Several squatters have spoken to me and expressed a hope that when immigration is again carried out by the government, they will send around at least one shipment to the Gulf, as they certainly think they are entitled to some according to a promise made by Mr. McAlister when in office, to that effect. There is an abundance of work here if men could be got at anything like reasonable wages to do to.[65]

The inference in this letter was that the proposed immigrants would receive something less than 35s., the only condition on which additional labour could be employed.

Throughout 1868 squatters continued to express their resentment of the high wages which had to be paid to their workers who, in spite of the worsening financial position of their employers, were "as unwilling as ever to take low wages".[66] On the other hand, a very unhealthy situation existed with respect to the payment of station workers' wages. Under the existing legislation a mortgagee could foreclose his mortgage and refuse to pay wages leaving the employee without redress. As it was quite common at the time to pay wages only once every six months, the loss to the employee was substantial. In 1869 a *Station Wages and Debts Bill* was introduced into the colonial parliament to correct the situation but this was vigorously opposed[67] on the grounds that it would have a detrimental effect on squatters' ability to raise finance. A second reason advanced for opposing the Bill was that it applied to one class of property only. The following year however an Act was passed which made no distinction between classes and provided for the recovery of wages from the mortgagee in cases of failure to recover from the mortgagor.[68]

Though obviously not the only source of conflict, the determination of the wage rate created a significant barrier between labour and capital even in the early 1870s. An obvious clash of interests occurred as employers attempted to gain labour as cheaply as possible while wage labourers sought the most advantageous rates given their favourable bargaining position. In 1873 the *Port Denison Times* and the *Brisbane Courier* both highlighted the perpetual struggle which had been going on for some years between employers and the employed as to which was to "get the best of the other". The northern newspaper called for a more "healthy relationship" than existed at the time.[69] The potential for conflict however was limited to a certain extent by the prevailing belief in the identity of interest between capital and labour. "Pastoral employees," Walker noted:

> . . . were primarily seeking security and an improved position within the capitalist system, not rejecting it. They possessed no concept of the Marxian model of the inevitability of class conflict.[70]

* * * * *

Meanwhile some northern squatters found that they could reduce operating costs by using cheap coloured labour.[71] The first shipment of 201 Melanesians arrived at Bowen aboard the *Fanny Nicholson* in July 1867. There was an air of inevitability about the letter of "Sea Island" published in the *Port Denison Times* a few days later:

> For better or worse North Queensland station holders have gone in for South Sea Labour with the "Fanny Nicholson" the first of many shipments in the future. The sudden influx of cheap labour will throw many shepherds, hut-keepers and bushmen out of employment for a time at least.[72]

It was reported a week later in the same paper that some station owners had signed agreements between the Islanders and themselves. In bringing their employees under the Master and Servants Act it was hoped to invalidate any charge of slavery.[73] This Act however conferred on the employer remarkable power giving him legal control over his employees who could incur penalties for not entering into service according to the agreement (which could be verbal or written), for absenting themselves from service, for fraudulent breach of agreement and for wilfully spoiling or losing property.[74]

One of the first stations in the north to use Melanesian labour was *Strathmore* where ten workers were signed on in 1867[75] and by March 1868, 16 Bowen squatters employed 104 Islanders with a further 10 employed by a Burke squatter – an average of almost 7 Melanesians each.[76] Robert Gray and his neighbours in the Flinders employed a "good many South Sea Islanders" at the end of the 1860s. He wrote that they were introduced:

> a year or two previously, white men having been scarce and shepherds wages up to 35s. a week exclusive of rations so that with higher rates of carriage in addition, there was no room for profit. The saying at that day therefore amongst the men was that it was no use going out to the Flinders for a job; you had to ride 30 miles for a drink of water, and on going up to a station you were hunted off by kanakas.[77]

Meanwhile Gulf squatters also called for the introduction of Melanesians to their areas so that they too could "reap a benefit".[78] In the beginning of 1869 the *Pioneer* arrived at the Norman River settlement and discharged her cargo of long awaited labourers. All but one were transferred to Towns and Co.'s *Plains of Promise* and as a result more than half the European employees were discharged.[79] Only a year later, William Landsborough, at the time Police Magistrate at the Norman, was able to report that the Melanesians made "first rate shepherds" and in general appeared to be well treated by their European employers. However, only a few had received wages and Ellis Read, agent for Towns and Co. claimed that this was due to a "shortage of coin in the district".[80] Two Gulf pioneers Martin Hetzer of *Urilla* and Brodie of *Donor's Hill* were obviously pleased with their labourers and claimed that if Europeans and Melanesians could be obtained at the same wage, the latter was preferable.[81]

Melanesians had a reputation for being more docile and easier to handle than the often cantankerous European shepherds. Moreover, because the Islanders were indentured

for three years, the squatter was assured of a far more stable labour supply than he was accustomed to with white workers. As well, Melanesians were cheaper. Their annual wage, regardless of where they were employed was £6. To this had to be added agency expenses, return fares to the Melanesians' homes at the expiration of their term, tobacco, clothing and blankets. With rations it was estimated that this averaged out to around £41.0.8 per annum over the three year period[82] compared with approximately £100 for a white shepherd in the north.[83] Many employers of Melanesian labour claimed however that it was dearer because two men were required to do the work of one white. This claim was made both by disgruntled workers who resented the swamping of the market with cheap labour and by squatters who wanted to play down the obvious economic benefits accruing to them.

Many Islanders, especially the newly arrived recruits, had difficulty adjusting to the different environment. The Melanesian death rate was at times five or six times higher than that for the Europeans with respiratory illnesses being the major cause of death. In 1876 a contemporary medical observer reported that Islanders were susceptible to the cold and "if not taken care of or imprudently camped out, they were almost sure to have an attack of inflammation of the lungs".[84] It was also believed that the drastic change in diet, from one based on fish and coconuts to one with a large meat component, often caused dysentary and ultimately death.[85] However after careful analysis of the circumstances one historian concluded:

> That death was most prevalent the first years of residence in Queensland of itself disposes entirely of any suggestion that over-work, insufficient or unsuitable food or lack of medical care (or any combination of these) was the cause, since these would obviously have a combined effect, making the death rate increase with length of residence. Exposure to the new disease environment was the fundamental cause of death. Neither employers nor government can be blamed for the high death rate accompanying the use of Melanesian indentured labour.[86]

But as a result of the staggering death rate of Melanesian shepherds along with the hostility which the working class exhibited towards cheap indentured labour, moves were instigated in 1880 to restrict the use of Melanesian labour to tropical and semi-tropical agriculture.[87]

The Islanders had been of most benefit to North Queensland squatters as shepherds[88] especially during the period of depressed wool prices. However, by the end of the 1870s, sheep raising was confined to relatively small sections of the north so the introduction of the legislation evoked only limited opposition from northern squatters.[89] Those who did object to the exclusion of this type of labour were more concerned with the loss of a reliable workforce than with being deprived of cheap labour which had been the initial impetus for its introduction.

Prior to the arrival of the first Melanesians in Bowen in 1867, local squatters had been casting their eyes northward for a source of cheap labour. A.J. Scott implored his

brother, Walter at *Valley of Lagoons* to employ as much cheap labour as possible as a means of economising:

> Certainly the expenses have been enormous but if you can manage to get Chinamen or coolies, and we *must* and *will* have them, the sheep will pay.[90]

After learning of the proposal to introduce Chinese for sugar plantations in 1866, one Flinders River resident, R. E. Halloran suggested that an additional 100 be secured as an average of five men could be used on each sheep station. He claimed that the reason why squatters were anxious to employ "coolies" was that:

> the increase of stock in this part is almost monthly caused by the squatters having their different times for lambing so that form of labour is greatly on the increase, and as whites prefer shade to sunshine, a lot of country is left underpastured.[91]

The following month a group of squatters formed an Eastern Labour Association to import Chinese from Java. They were to be indentured for four years and were to receive an annual salary of between £10 and £25 with an additional cost of £8 for fares.[92] Because of the absence of an immigration agent, nothing came of the scheme. Seven years later, a group of 29 Kennedy employers petitioned the government requesting that appropriate facilities be provided so that the importation of voluntary "coolie" labour could proceed. This was requested on the grounds that white workers found the northern climate difficult. Moreover, because of the proximity of the goldfields, white labour was unavailable.[93] There is a fundamental contradiction in these statements. The commonly held belief at the time was that Europeans were physically unable to labour in the tropics for any sustained period without damage to their health.[94] However the belief appeared to be conveniently shelved when it came to the northern goldfields where white men not only willingly worked long and physically demanding hours, but did all in their power to exclude the Chinese from the industry. With some twenty years' experience of hard tropical labour, Frank Hann of *Lawn Hill* was one contemporary who rejected the popular belief. He wrote to the *Queenslander* that he had:

> been out cutting stockyard rails all day, and it was 114 degrees in the shade, and yet I was not killed. A man can work as well in the Gulf as anywhere else.[95]

And springing to support the accuracy of Hann's statement, a fellow pastoralist, Edward Palmer, wrote that his acquaintance:

> with the climate and district goes back to 1864, and for 12 years following that I did as much work as any ordinary man need be expected to do; and notwithstanding my having worked so far in the North for 24 years I was accepted by the leading insurance society of Australia as a first class life three years ago.[96]

* * * * *

Labour was still in short supply in the early 1870s[97] with Chinese labour the only available source for shepherding.[98] When Robert Gray's Melanesian employees returned to their islands and most white men were at the goldfields, he had to for some time rely solely on Chinese shepherds. He had a married couple engaged at domestic duties around the homestead while the overseer and he constructed sheep yards, buildings, thatching, counting sheep, butchering and generally looked after the two Chinese shepherds.[99] In 1872 one Charters Towers squatter[100] tried for three days to get shepherds on a three month agreement in the mining town, but without success.[101] The opening of the Palmer further exacerbated this situation and by 1874 all the properties in the vicinity of *Valley of Lagoons* experienced serious labour shortages. In Walter Scott's opinion:

> The thing that is in the mouths of all and very seriously in the minds of employers of labour is the Palmer Goldfield which is taking every man away. What the sugar planters are doing who have not enough Kanakas, and none of them have to cultivate their cane, I do not know. . . Not a man of any kind is to be had for station work. . . Fulford of Lyndhurst writes me "I have been wanting a stockman here at Lyndhurst since the commencement of the year, and cannot get one, so you will see that I too am very shorthanded if I had not got 4 blackboys I don't know what I should do so far as the working of the cattle is concerned". Barker's only stockman left him this week, so he will be in a fix. . . I have no one I can put tailing, it is by no means a job you can trust to any jackeroo or blackboy. . . It takes what hands there are at Pelican Lakes i.e., Marrett and a blackboy and occasionally Craig all their time to look after the young horses they are breaking into that run, besides the Pelican Lake cattle, bullocks and heifers. . .[102]

Around the same time C. W. Bowly gave a similar account of the labour situation, writing that:

> There are no men to be had, as the Palmer is getting such a great Gold Field, even Chinamen want £2 a week to stop as cooks or shepherds.[103]

Coinciding with this vast decrease in the white labour supply was the fact that for a number of reasons, demand for labour had increased. The flocks and herds in North Queensland were increasing yearly and thus needed additional labour for their management; and additional drovers and stockmen were required to take the numerous mobs of cattle to the Palmer market. Another factor which militated against the pastoralist getting an adequate number of employees was the fact that wage labour on the Etheridge was being offered £4 a week and even at that relatively high rate, great difficulty was experienced in obtaining enough workers.[104] In spite of his generally improved financial situation resulting from the Palmer market, the northern squatter did not appear to have ever tried to match this wage rate; £2 plus keep seemed to have been the highest wage paid in the pastoral industry at the time. Consequently those men who did not want to take the risk of alluvial mining and did not have a strong preference for pastoral work, would have opted for wage labour on the fields where wages were almost double.[105]

But even after the miners began leaving the Palmer, the pastoral industry continued to experience labour shortages for some time. Men who had experienced the egalitarianism

and independence of alluvial mining were reluctant to return immediately to the status of wage labour. Thus in 1876 a Charters Towers squatter noted the effect of the goldfield:

> I admit there are more working men in the colony than eight years ago, but since the digging began to flourish a feeling sprang up amongst the labouring class to "work for a squatter" was derogatory, and many men would rather exist on bare rations than do so, and when compelled by sheer necessity to take employment, they work in a careless, insolent manner, to show their mistaken idea of independence. If you have doubts on this subject, ask your correspondents on the diggings, no digger will deny the fact.[106]

To support his assertion the correspondent claimed that four years previously he had been unable to obtain labour in Charters Towers "just after the failure of this place" although hundreds of men were reported to be starving and were actually taking Government relief to carry them south. The situation four years later was virtually unchanged. In the period between 1 January and the end of August 1876 eight men had passed the correspondent's property, eighty miles out of Charters Towers looking for work:

> Of these two were old station hands, and took work as boundary rider and shepherd respectively at 25s and 20s per week respectively; of the other six, one said he'd stay three months but wouldn't shepherd – "anything else", the other five wouldn't think of shepherding, but would do bush work (none of which was going), and wouldn't agree for anything whatever.[107]

The situation in the outside district was still the same in 1878; a Lower Flinders correspondent wrote to the *Queenslander* that the serious drawback to the Burke district was the want of labour of any sort:

> it being difficult to get bushmen or fencers to work, though there is plenty of work to be done on almost every station and new ones form along the outside. A drover refused £2.5.0 per week and another declined £3 per week – both were travelling about looking for work. People in the district have to trust to blackboys to do most of their work. Wages in the outside district are 25s and 30s but in Burke £2 and upwards is the rate. No doubt in time men will find their way out but it should be made known that stockmen, bushmen and fencers can always find employment out here.[108]

In spite of this rash claim the following year was marked by unemployment in all parts of the colony. Many destitute and unemployed miners were brought by the government to work on the Townsville railway.[109] In the western pastoral districts hundreds of men were unsuccessfully looking for work. They had been employed in fencing, dam-making and other station improvements but because of extremely low prices, this type of work ceased with the result that *genuine* underemployment of labour was probably experienced for the first time in the northern industry. All *Queenslander* correspondents assured the editor in May 1879 that unemployment was great in the interior.[110]

However with the conversion of many former cattle stations to sheep, there was a vast improvement in employment for bushworkers in the early 1880s. By 1882 the Gulf and western areas were once again experiencing a scarcity of labour with fencing, shearing

and dam-making proceeding as vigorously "as the labour shortage would permit".[111] In fact several western and Gulf centres petitioned the government to land a regular number of immigrants in their towns.[112] However the severe drought which lasted from 1883 to 1886 halted many of the improvements being carried out inland.[113] Moreover, with the implementation of the 1884 Crown Land Act, squatters were reluctant to carry out improvements until they knew which part of their run was to be resumed.[114] Unemployment appeared to peak in 1886 when it was reported that hundreds of men out west were "humping Bluey" looking for work and in many cases offering their services for food.[115] One correspondent to the *Queenslander* believed the unemployment rate to be as high as 50 per cent.[116]

There was some improvement in employment after 1886 but declining prices for pastoral products at the end of the decade, along with the generally depressed state of the economy, saw the situation deteriorate once more. The position was further exacerbated by an influx of southern workers to the north.[117] In 1892 the *Western Champion* asserted that the supply of labour had been considerably in excess of demand for the previous few years:

> occasioned principally by the large influx of shearers and shed labour who have crossed the border of Queensland from the other colonies, attracted by the reports of high wages so industriously circulated and often exaggerated by the southern press.[118]

The undercurrent of conflict between pastoralists and their employees which had been evident in the industry from the 1860s came to a head in 1891. Taking advantage of the surplus labour situation, pastoralists provoked a confrontation with bush unions[119] at the beginning of the year in order to regain ground lost at *Jondaryan* in 1890.[120] The 1891 strike affected relatively few of North Queensland's pastoral workers directly as only shearers and shed hands were involved; employees in the cattle industry did not participate. As the strike became more protracted, it spread north with strikers' camps being located at Hughenden and Torrens Creek. Charters Towers residents were among the northern communities to pledge support for the unionists[121] but there was some trepidation when the Kennedy regiment, allegedly full of miners and unionists, was called to provide protection for non-union labour. It was with considerable relief that a Charters Towers correspondent reported that only "some booing" had occurred when the regiment left the town.[122] By June, with funds completely exhausted as a result of supporting almost 8 000 strikers, the Committee had no option but to declare the strike off.[123] However in 1894 the industry was once again crippled by industrial disputes as unionists fought to halt the deterioration in conditions and rates of pay for bushworkers. On *Bunda Bunda* station workers struck for a return of their wage to 30s. and the owners acceded fairly rapidly to their demands,[124] but *Cambridge Downs* where the owners were not so accommodating, it was claimed that the strikers were responsible for the burning of a woolshed.[125] But while non-union labour[126] was once again used to break the strike, the troop deployments of 1891 were not repeated.

Station hands going out to muster on *Gregory Downs* (*North Queensland Register* 20 January 1902, p. 26)

Until the 1880s great difficulty was experienced in obtaining an adequate supply of labour throughout the north. Squatters considered their European employees expensive and often hard to manage. Imported coloured labour was cheaper and more docile but its use was politically contentious and aggravated the precarious relationship between labour and capital. By contrast, Aboriginal workers were accessible and cheap yet did not attract the political controversy associated with imported labour. However Aboriginal labour had its own unique problems. In the next chapter these disadvantages along with the advantages will be evaluated.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ABORIGINAL LABOUR IN THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

Aboriginal labour was used by many intending pastoralists prior to their northern experience; as a result settlers often took with them at least one southern black. In 1861 Allingham was accompanied by a "very intelligent and civilized Aborigine named Jimmy";[1] Hann's black Toby was purchased in Rockhampton;[2] Frank Jardine took four blacks from Rockhampton to establish *Point Vallack* on the tip of Cape York Peninsula;[3] Henning's Aborigine, Jacky along with a married couple Biddy and Alick who were working at *Exmoor* in 1862 were no doubt brought from Marlborough.[4] John Atherton took at least one Aborigine when he overlanded 1 000 cattle from Rockhampton to settle *Cashmere* in 1875;[5] Alexander Kennedy was assisted by two blacks, Jimmy and Tommy along with their wives Nellie and Maggie when he took up Sulieman Creek country in the late 1870s;[6] *Bowen Downs* was established in 1863 with a staff of two white men, four native stockmen, three Aboriginal women and a black youth;[7] and George McGillvray had obviously taken Aboriginal stockmen with him when he moved to *Eddington.*[8]

As the use of Aboriginal labour became more common in the 1870s, Europeans developed the habit of taking a black companion on almost any overland journey. One of his primary roles was to act as a groom, to look for horses in the morning and hobble and feed them at night. This was an extension of the practice instituted on properties where an Aborigine was assigned the duty of bringing in required horses. In 1864 Rachel Henning lamented to her sister that one of the *Exmoor* blacks was sick and hoped that he would be better soon "as we are short of horses and no one can find them like a blackboy".[9] In another letter she highlighted some additional advantages of having an Aboriginal companion:

> People who are going on a long journey almost always take a blackboy with them. They are most useful servants in the bush, get up the horses in the morning, light fires at night, and know by a sort of instinct if there are any wild blacks in the neighbourhood of their camps. They are faithful too. I never heard for an instance of a traveller being murdered or robbed by his own blackboy.[10]

The knowledge that her brother was accompanied by an Aborigine at a time when people frequently became lost in the bush was very reassuring for Rachel Henning.[11] Aborigines could always be relied on to provide bush food when travellers were caught without supplies[12] and their acute perception of the environment often prevented them from becoming disoriented. One instance was recorded by R. M. Watson. On his return from a sea voyage between Thursday Island and Burketown, the squatter was accompanied by an Aboriginal companion. As they approached Burketown Drummer knew instantly where they were because he could identify a particular group of trees as being the ones near which he had previously caught some horses.[13] A. S. Haydon of *Vena Park* reported that

on two occasions when he had to take his station blacks on droving trips to the Lynd and Palmer areas, he had to send them back to the property by themselves – in each case a trip of approximately 300 miles without defined tracks. They seemingly managed the feat without any difficulty.[14] There is some evidence that when Aborigines were removed from their own environment, they became bewildered and lost.[15] However, their inability to cope in new territory may have resulted from other factors such as the fear of local blacks.

By the early 1870s, as black resistance was subdued, local Aborigines were rapidly absorbed into the North Queensland pastoral economy. In 1875 it was reported that at Bowen, Townsville and on many northern stations, the Aborigines had been "domesticated in great numbers and trained to the performance of many of the duties that formerly belonged to white people".[16] A correspondent wrote in 1884 there was "hardly a cattle station in the outside district but what is not either wholly or partially worked by Aboriginal slaves".[17] However Percival Walsh of *Iffley* considered this a gross exaggeration. He reported that:

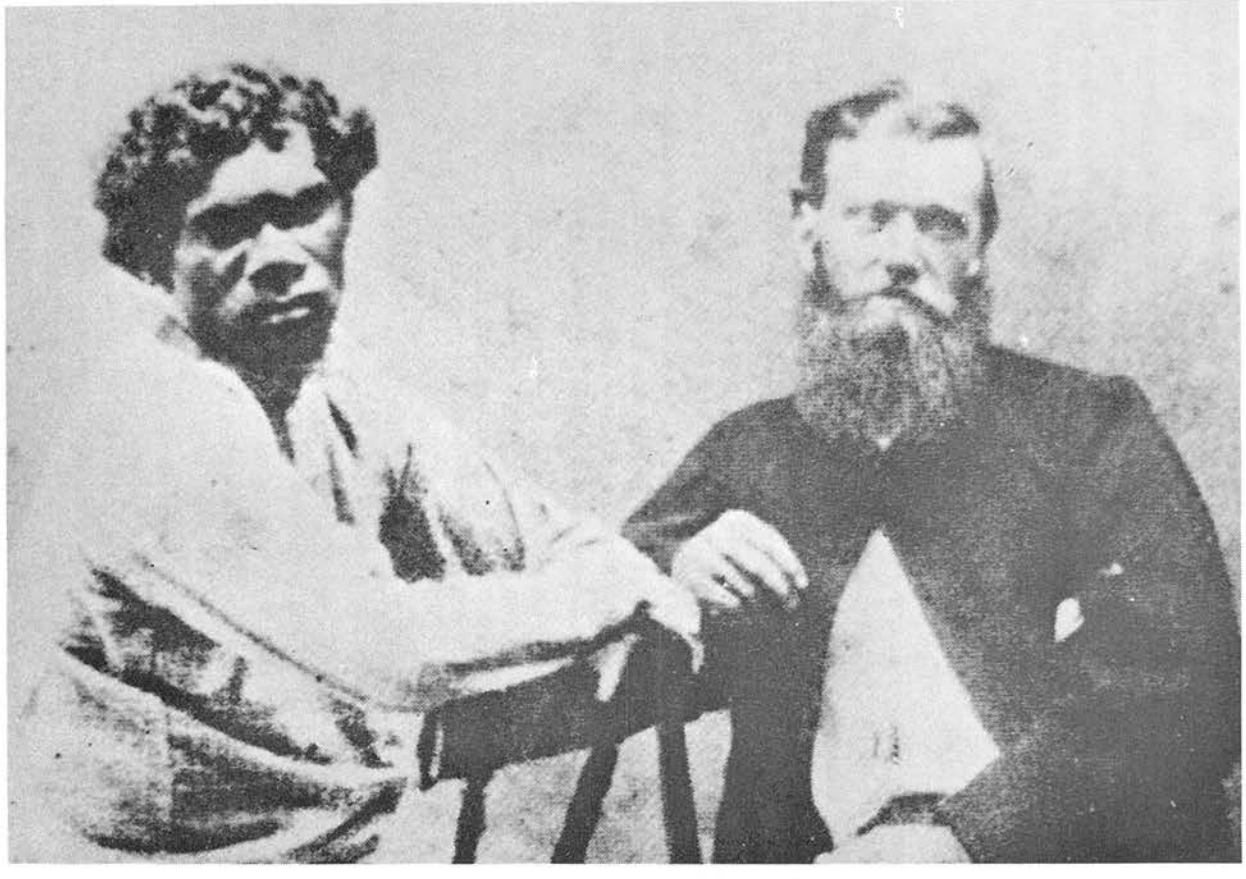
> On most stations it is customary to employ 1 or 2 native boys who . . . assist in the station work.[18]

Another Burke squatter, A. S. Haydon estimated that there were in excess of 500 blacks employed in his district. A large proportion of these Aborigines were born on the station or belonged to the country on which they were located.[19] This would certainly indicate that there were more than one or two on each station as reported by Walsh, especially in view of the fact that E. Palmer of *Canobie* and R. Sheaffe of *Fort Constantine* employed "a good many aboriginals on their stations"[20] at the time.

What of the more settled area? No comparable piece of contemporary evidence has come to light to indicate the extent of usage there. However a correspondent travelling through the north indicated that Aboriginal labour was equally prominent in the Kennedy district in 1895. After visiting *Gainsford,*[21] *Southwick,*[22] *Bluff Downs,*[23] *Hillgrove,*[24] *Maryvale,*[25] and *Wando Vale*[26] he reported that "a peculiar novelty on [*Christmas Creek*] station [was] the non-existence of blacks, not one being employed or allowed about the place".[27] Almost six years earlier a correspondent reported that at *Wando Vale:*

> the question of "what to do with blacks", is satisfactorily solved. Nearly the whole work of the homestead is done by the blacks, well fed and well clothed, they do their work much the same as their brothers and sisters.[28]

Aborigines were not counted in censuses during the nineteenth century, so their numerical importance to the pastoral industry can only be estimated. One approach is to look at the figures for the North Queensland pastoral workforce along with the stock statistics. The workforce required to manage this number of stock can then be calculated. The deficit between the required and the enumerated workforce should thus give a rough indication of the number of Aborigines employed in the industry. There are difficulties with such an approach and these are outlined in Appendix J. However, in the absence of



Station manager, Mark Watt Reid and his Aboriginal companion. (*Townsville 100,* courtesy T. Willmett & Sons Pty. Ltd.)

any other method of determining the workforce, the assumptions are justified. It has been estimated that in 1876 there were at the very least 404 Aborigines employed in the northern pastoral industry and 1004 in 1886. This represented 41 per cent of the total pastoral workforce in the former year and 48 per cent in the latter period. Taking into account the fact that Aboriginal workers were almost solely confined to the cattle industry in 1886, 55 per cent of that workforce was black. During busy periods such as annual musters, this figure would have been considerably higher.

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The most obvious advantage of using black workers was the fact that they were on the spot. In 1895 a *Queenslander* correspondent recalled that "in the early days when white labour was scarce, they were always on hand".[29] Aboriginal workers formed a pool of labour which had the characteristics of a labour exchange situated on the property: squatters were able to obtain workers without delay or recruitment cost. In addition they had the opportunity of personally examining and selecting their workers and this was particularly beneficial as much of the work in the industry was of a seasonal nature.[30] The corollary to this however was that for a substantial part of the time many blacks were not engaged in station duties. Visitors seeing large numbers of idle blacks reported unfavourably on the industriousness of station blacks as a group. Typical of such criticism was the report on *Southwick* which appeared in the *Queenslander* in 1876:

> Numbers of blacks are allowed in on the station, where they make themselves useful after their own fashion, but for the few who do any actual work, there are hundreds of idlers who camp about the road, and headstation and assail the passer-by with demands for tobacco and matches.[31]

Another advantage of Aboriginal labour which squatters may not have appreciated at the time was the fact that local blacks had a spiritual link with the land. Regardless of the conditions, if the station was located on the home of the tribe's ancestral spirits, it would be the desire of the fully-initiated men to spend a considerable amount of time in the territory to maintain their spiritual sites. While the full implications were not realised, certain aspects of Aboriginal labour could not be overlooked. Cardwell Police Magistrate, William Swan noticed that:

> The black man's extreme love for his own country will not suffer him to abide even in luxurience [sic] at any distance away from there. Hence the impossibility of concentrating tribes or of influencing them for good otherwise than by the system of administering to the wants of each family or tribe in its own particular locality. It is a pleasure to have to relate of the pastoral tenants of this district that a few of these gentlemen have by partially adopting this latter system now established a modus vivindi [sic] with the blacks inhabiting their runs.[32]

It is unlikely that in 1880 Walter Scott of *Valley of Lagoons* appreciated this link when he tried to establish amicable relations with groups of travelling Aborigines. His intention was to have them settle permanently on his property.[33] Without realising it, many

northern squatters by that time however had experienced the benefits of the Aborigines' association with the land. While Europeans were infected by "gold fever" and left the industry in droves, Aboriginal workers remained in their home territory. Thus Fulford of *Lyndhurst* depended on the services of four Aboriginal stockmen when his white employees deserted him in favour of the fields. Another squatter to rely heavily on Aboriginal labour was William Chatfield of *Natal Downs*. He had been using local Aborigines for sheepwashing since 1871 and remembered that had it not been:

> for aborigines doing nearly all my work during the late rush to the Palmer, while white labour was not to be had, my losses would have been simply ruinous.[34]

Two years later the position had not changed and he complained that:

> It is quite common for a station to be left without any hands during the most critical times such as shearing or lambing and during '74 and '75 the writer lost heavily from this cause (and would have been ruined but for Aborigines).[35]

The situation was similar in the cattle industry and it seems likely that many squatters would have found it difficult to participate in the lucrative Palmer market had it not been for Aboriginal stockmen. In the late 1870s both Frank Hann of *Lawn Hill* and A. S. Haydon of *Vena Park* were totally dependent on black employees while taking cattle to the markets;[36] and there is nothing to suggest that these two cases were exceptional. Thus the shortage of labour occasioned by the northern gold rushes served as a substantial stimulus to the use of Aboriginal labour. This labour supply was available as a result of Aborigines' attachment to their home land. However it is likely that many people did not appreciate the reason for this. Consequently as late as 1937 writers still assumed that the reluctance of Aborigines to leave a particular station was evidence that they had been well treated by the owners of the property. For instance a *Brisbane Courier* correspondent wrote that:

> As a general rule [Aborigines] become good workers and the best evidence that they are generally well treated by the owners and managers of various properties is that, when once they settle on a station, they are seldom known to leave it.[37]

However this link with the country worked against the squatter when he sold his property and wanted to take his Aboriginal workers with him. They were usually reluctant to move to another property if it was outside their tribal area. When Bob Atkinson moved to *Cashmere* in 1904 he wanted to take Cocky, one of his faithful old stockmen with him, but the Aborigine would not move from *Abergowrie*.[38]

Another advantage of using Aboriginal labour was that it was cheap. This was important in the north where returns were often lower and costs greater than in the less remote areas.[39] Initially Aborigines were paid in kind – in food, clothing, blankets and perhaps tobacco.[40] The quantities issued were determined by the individual employers as no regulation existed. Such a system was obviously open to abuse. Station owners for

instance sometimes abused the government policy of issuing blankets to needy blacks.[41] A Townsville correspondent calling himself "Fair Play for the Blacks" reported in 1892 that:

> Some station managers get [blankets] from the magistrates and police for their blackboys and have the cheek to sell them, or, in other words, stop payment from the few shillings a week doled out to the blackboys as wages.[42]

Other squatters believed that it was not necessary to give Aborigines wages. Exposure to European civilization was considered a fair return for services rendered. A Northern Territory squatter, Joseph Bradshaw, advised the South Australian Royal Commission on Aborigines that he "always endeavoured to instil habits of industry into [the blacks] by employing them".[43] At the same enquiry, W. G. Field, a Queensland squatter, also expressed the belief that the employment of Aborigines on stations had a tendency to "civilize them and make them useful".[44] In return for exposure to European civilization Aborigines were not only expected to provide manpower but to display gratitude. In 1901 one Queensland squatter wrote that:

> All those who have had an intimate acquaintance and knowledge of the blacks of North Queensland in the pursuit of stockkeeping etc. have been impressed with the total absence of genuine gratitude in the blacks. It is a lamentable truth that kindness produces a diminished respect for the white. . .[45]

Squatters also justified their small outlays for Aboriginal workers on the grounds that the blacks were not in the habit of acquiring personal property.[46]

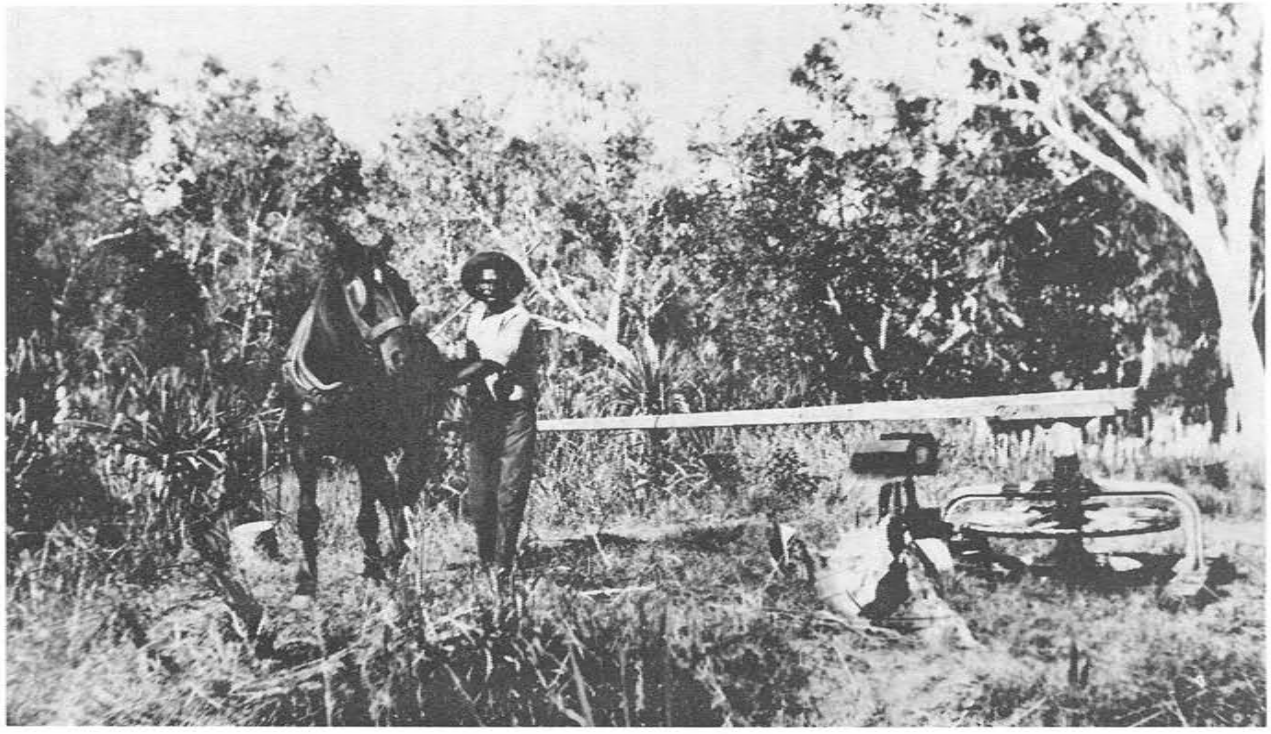
While many employers were exploitive, others were paternalistic. Indeed paternalism appeared to be the overriding sentiment in A. S. Haydon's letter to the *Queenslander* in 1884:

> One objection to giving young boys money is that old blacks about town get them to buy grog and give it to them to get drunk on, so it is far better to buy them things they require yourself, and the first thing a boy does when he comes to town is to get his boss to buy him a new rig-out of clothes.[47]

But while the squatter may have thought he was acting in the best interest of his employees, in fact his actions were a central attack on the Aboriginal system of kinship and reciprocity.[48]

By the early 1880s northern employers claimed that their black workers received wages as well as keep. Defending himself against a charge of slavery, Percival Walsh wrote that:

> Between Norman and Cloncurry, most of the blacks employed on stations receive regular wages. On one large station there are 2 boys, each getting 30 shillings per week and nearly all instances where blackboys are worth it they receive some remuneration from their employers.[49]



Drawing water at *Riversleigh* Station, ca. 1918 (courtesy of Mrs A.E. Becker)

A. S. Haydon also attested to the fact that in the same area "a good many are paid wages varying from 5 shillings to 30 shillings".[50] It has already been noted that wages were used to buy clothing and blankets. These items were supposed to be included in keep so in effect any wages received on paper were balanced against Aborigines' store accounts. When Haydon's statement that "each black costs his employer from £15-£25 a year for food, clothes and wages"[51] is considered, it becomes evident that wages must have constituted a very small portion of the costs: a year's rations alone were estimated at £18 in 1876.[52] Furthermore, it was not until 1901 that any minimum wage was set for Queensland Aborigines and even then it was only 5 shillings a month.[53] The average cash wage before then would obviously not have been greatly in excess of this figure. At the time the Aborigines were possibly not unduly concerned at their lack of wages as long as their basic needs were satisfied.[54] However it did cast the die for the future pattern of wage discrimination.

Compared with the cost of employing Melanesians or Europeans, Aborigines were considerably less expensive:[55] at least four blacks could be engaged at the same cost as one European. Even when differences in productivity are taken into account, Aboriginal workers were far more economical. However, because of their accessibility and cheapness, it is possible that employers were wasteful with this resource, using more blacks than necessary. It is reasonable to assume that in the long run, the demand for pastoral labour was highly elastic. In the absence of detailed information, it can only be suggested that the low cost may have retarded improvements which would have been instituted at an earlier date had cheap Aboriginal labour not been available. Without improvements such as fencing, the highly inefficient system of open range grazing persisted in the northern cattle industry[56] turning off poor quality meat for which there was little demand for as Ross Duncan wrote:

> The United Kingdom market, which increasingly demanded young, early matured, light-weight beasts, normally received from Queensland cattle which were old, heavy, poor in conformation and of poor quality. It was these shortcomings even more than the inability to ship chilled beef, which so grievously handicapped the Australian product.[57]

In the short term then Aboriginal labour was cheap. But in fact its use may well have been a false economy.

The skills the Aborigines had traditionally developed did not match those generally demanded by white employers. Moreover the speed with which pastoral expansion occurred prevented the possibility of a gradual acquisition of European techniques.[58] However squatters were enormously impressed by the Aborigines' hunting skills and knowledge of the environment, qualities which proved to be both highly adaptable and beneficial to the northern pastoralist. One of the squatters' most difficult tasks was to keep cattle on the unfenced runs and it was in dealing with this problem that the Aboriginal skills were not only useful but superior to those of the white man. While addressing a London audience in 1880 Robert Christison noted that:

> I have seldom known a white man become a good tracker, he does fairly well when the trail is straight ahead, but it requires a black to overcome this most intricate and tedious task of early pastoral life.[59]

Another observer who was far less sympathetic to the Aborigines than Christison was forced to admit that the blacks' redeeming qualities "were the wonderful power of tracking [and] knowledge of the country".[60] Some pioneers romanticised the Aborigines' traditional skills believing that their eyesight was so sharp that they could see the stars distinctly in clear daylight.[61] It was frequently alleged that Aboriginal stockmen had the ability to identify the tracks of individual animals. Christison's blackboy Barney could tell any horse in a mob of 20 by the print of his hoof.[62] Experienced stockmen may also have learnt to recognise many individual cattle. E. A. Daly, a drover related how *Granada* stockmen reacted when shown a photograph of a mob of station cattle on the road to the Victorian markets in the late 1880s. Pointing out individual cattle to each other they remarked:

> Nelly, you know him that one? Big fella horns, like it that (holding his arms over his head). You been get him near top water hole. There nother fella – white poley. Possum and me been run him out along scrub nother side ribber.[63]

In the early days considerable difficulty was experienced in settling cattle on new runs due to the fact that some of the leaders would always try to make their way back to their original home. Aboriginal skills were invaluable in the time consuming task of finding stray cattle. Writing of his experience, A. C. Grant noted that:

> Day by day the cattle on the camps were gone through and absent ones noted and searched for until found. In this duty the blackboys were simply invaluable and their interest in the work and untiring skill in tracking contributed chiefly to the success which attended the pioneers in keeping their herds together.[64]

Many people believed that Aborigines had a natural aptitude for stockwork[65] and indeed they do seem to have mastered radically new techniques. On *Lolworth* in the 1890s many of the workers were blacks:

> exceedingly active and clever with the leg ropes and head ropes, the marking of calves, branding, ear marking and castrating occupying but a few seconds.[66]

While many Aborigines became effective cattlemen, they also showed skill and aptitude in working with sheep. Because of their tracking abilities they made useful shepherds on the few northern stations retaining sheep in the 1870s. On *Cameron Downs,* for instance, they were "first rate shepherds and for lambing [were] unequalled".[67] However with the introduction of fencing they seem to have become less prominent in the sheep industry. This can perhaps best be explained when the type of labour required is studied. Aborigines could have been employed as boundary riders, a relatively unskilled position which required a horseman to ride along fences to ensure that there were no

breaks which would allow dingoes to get in and play havoc with the sheep. However owners believed that Aborigines were unsuited to this task because they needed supervision. Aborigines themselves, used to being in the company of a group of people, would have found boundary riding a very lonely life. Moreover, with the fenced sheep properties there was little need any longer for the Aborigines' tracking skills. They lacked the skills for overseeing, bookkeeping, cooking and maintenance positions. A few found work as "general usefuls" around the station homesteads but it is highly unlikely that they derived much pleasure from this type of work. Admittedly, they did it on cattle stations but there it was interspersed with the stock duties where they enjoyed the great excitement of mustering.

A further advantage of Aboriginal labour was that its use did not antagonise white workers as much as other cheap coloured labour. Noel Loos has pointed out that there is surprisingly little evidence that white workers in North Queensland objected to the use of black labour.[68] One of the few detected instances was concerned with the employment of Aboriginal women as station domestics. A correspondent to the *Queenslander* remarked that by employing this group the owner of *Avon Downs* was keeping his "own class of women out of work".[69] While the limited opposition to Aboriginal labour may have resulted from the lack of competition in some fields of work[70] it was not the case in the pastoral industry where European stockmen worked side by side with Aborigines.[71]

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The beneficial attributes of Aboriginal labour were offset by some significant disadvantages. The most commonly expressed criticism was that blacks were unreliable, needing constant supervision, that they had no real concept of work. Indeed almost every squatter, including Christison of *Lammermoor,* who showed a rare aptitude for handling black labour,[72] recounted tales of the black employees running away at a time when stations were at their busiest or particularly shorthanded. Where Aborigines were foreign to the area, runaways may have been trying to get back to their own tribal lands; this was probably the case with Cassady's black who ran away in 1863.[73] However, local Aborigines who absconded from stations often did so in order to attend necessary religious ceremonies and social events. Jacob Lowe, a MacIntyre squatter told the Select Committee on Native Police in 1861 that Aborigines "will go off at the very time you want to gather cattle if there is a corroboree or any other gathering of blacks".[74] Religious ceremonies were extremely important to the Aborigines who believed that through these events, the natural world was controlled. They considered they had a responsibility to perform the increase ceremonies:

> which ensured the proper ordering of nature, the coming of rain and the renewal of plant and animal life. Belief in the necessity and the efficacy of increase ceremonies continued well into the period of European settlement. Europeans brought change and damage to many local ecologies but the larger rhythms of nature remained constant and predictable to those who had learnt the signs.[75]

Aborigines had deep obligations to participate in these ceremonies. C. and R. Berndt explained:

> religious commitment was something that involved the whole community. Everyone was caught up in it, actively or passively, not only from birth but from the moment of conception. Traditionally nobody could opt out. . . . In the principal religious rituals they had no choice about whether or not to participate. The question didn't come up . . . Where people did have a choice about joining in or not was mostly in regard to ordinary camp ceremonies.[76]

The fact that within a day or two the runaways would frequently return to their stations of their own accord suggested that Aborigines were responding to their social and cultural obligations. Obviously Europeans did not understand this compulsion as their normal response was to send other employees to search for absconding blacks. The normal sequence then was running away – attendance at a religious ceremony – voluntary return. Squatters often noted the departure of Aborigines in their daily diaries,[77] even mentioned it in letters to England[78] and their return was usually recorded as well. Occasionally a perceptive squatter noticed the staging of a religious ceremony. For instance the entries on two consecutive days in F. S. Grant's diary highlight this phenomenon:

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 October 1889 | Charlie and Peter bolted last night. I went to Wooroora after the boys and went on to Cara in the afternoon. Saw a big corroboree in the eve. |
| 3 October 1889 | Left Cara and came to Wooroora for lunch, found runaways there they having come in during the night. I started back to Woodleigh with the boys.[79] |

Where Europeans such as Jacob Lowe did realize that blacks had left their stations to attend corroborees, there was no evidence that squatters understood the Aborigines' obligation. Consequently squatters frequently tried to prevent their station blacks from attending tribal ceremonies because they were convinced that their workers became unsettled and difficult to handle after participating in these events.

As evidence of the Aborigines' lack of aptitude for efficient work effort, it was commonly alleged that "blacks washing sheep have always managed to drown a great many".[80] At face value, squatters would certainly be justified in considering this gross incompetence on the part of black employees. However from the Aborigines' point of view it was sometimes a means of obtaining food utilising hunting skills developed in traditional life. W. H. Corfield wrote that:

> Blacks had to be watched closely at sheep washing as if the opportunity offered, they would catch a sheep's hind leg with their toes, and drown the animal expecting they would get the meat. I detected them in the act, so I burnt the carcase. This put an end to the practice.[81]

When Aborigines had adequate food, they may not have resorted to this practice. Thus Rod McLeod was able to wash 22 000 sheep with the help of 20 blacks, the washing being at least as well done as if it had been done by Europeans.[82]

There is ample evidence that forced labourers work well below their capabilities.[83] Without incentives, the Australian Aborigines were no different in this respect and their careless handling of sheep and cattle can also be attributed to labour grudgingly given.

Many squatters believed that the most difficult feature encountered in utilising Aborigines was their nomadism. "Those of us," wrote one pioneer cattleman:

> who are accustomed to the blacks upon stations know that they are able-bodied and strong and capable of doing as much work (if they choose) as many of the Kanakas that we are now introducing into the colony, and also have as much intelligence but owing to their nomadic habits you cannot get them to settle in one place for any length of time. Clothe them and feed them, treat them with all kindness, the craving for the bush and for the society of their tribes in the neighbourhood draws them off, and unless this can be overcome, it will be useless to draw them into any given point [for possible "civilization"].[84]

Clearly the Euopreans believed nomadism was an innate aspect of the Aboriginal personality rather than an economic response.

The rationale behind nomadism has been described by Sahlins:

> A modest number of people usually sooner than later reduce the food resources within convenient range of camp. Thereafter, they may stay on only by absorbing an increase in real costs or a decline in real returns: rise in costs if the people choose to search farther and farther afield declining returns if they are satisfied to live on the shorter supplies or inferior foods in easier reach. The solution of course, is to go somewhere else. Thus the first and decisive contingency of hunting-gathering: it requires movement to maintain production on advantageous terms.[85]

While not appreciating the rationale, squatters were willing nevertheless to accommodate the Aborigines' nomadism to derive the benefits of their labour. Thus it became the practice on many stations to send blacks away during quieter periods. For instance the entire *Oak Park* labour force was continually engaged at mustering throughout August and September 1889. On completion, the only Aborigine on the station at the time was sent off for a holiday to Gilberton.[86] There was work he could have done as two men were engaged soon after to split slabs for a well and posts for repairing fences. By foregoing 17 days labour, it was hoped to retain the services of the worker. On *Durham Downs* it was alleged that station blacks of both sexes were "sent on walk about"[87] while D. McLean told the South Australian Select Committee Inquiry on Aborigines that on his south-west Queensland property:

> All but a few fairly civilized [blacks] go away on a holiday during the four hot summer months, when they occupy their time as of old hunting, fishing, corroboreeing, and sleeping. When the cool weather sets in they return again.[88]

Although detribalization and the destruction of the environment no doubt took its toll of tribal rituals it is likely that Aborigines attempted to accommodate the pastoral

economy within their system by changing the timing of religious ceremonies to coincide with quieter periods on stations.[89] Evidence from the Northern Territory revealed that one of the central rules demanded of those who worked for Europeans was that ceremonies had to take place outside working hours.[90]

Another way of accommodating Aboriginal nomadism with the labour needs of the industry was for blacks to be employed for short periods. It was fortuitous that the nature of the work allowed this while the spiritual link with the land ensured that local Aborigines returned to their own country. After three years William Chatfield of *Natal Downs* considered that he had solved the problem of nomadism:

> I generally find that if they [Aborigines] agreed to a certain time, generally "two moons" if a consideration in the way of tobacco, blankets etc, they will stop to their time, but not an instant longer.[91]

Another Queensland squatter who understood the need for flexibility in employment was Frank Beardmore of *Balcomba* in Central Queensland. From his personal experiences, he suggested that the best way of coping with the uncontacted Aborigines around Cooktown, Cairns and different settlements in the north in 1882 was to engage the blacks for short periods to do specific jobs. However he warned that it was also necessary to occasionally allow them days for hunting or their corroborees.[92]

Squatters frequently encountered problems with Aboriginal employees who were alien to the area. In the earliest stages of settlement they were often in as much danger from the local Aborigines as the whites. Following the killing of settlers at Woonoona by Aborigines from local clans there was considerable uneasiness among both the whites and station blacks as the latter "were also foreign to the district".[93] In another instance in the 1880s the blacks around *Valley of Springs* on the Macarthur River were equally hostile to an Aboriginal employee and the white station population.[94] Fear of the local Aborigines severely restricted the movement of the alien blacks. Relating his experiences on *Bluff Downs* J. B. Stevenson wrote that his Aboriginal assistant originally from the Rockhampton area was:

> of very little use to me . . . he had such a terror of the wild blacks, that, even in the daytime, he was afraid to bring water from the creek which was about 150 yards away.[95]

Some Europeans exploited this disadvantage using it as a means of retaining black labour. Aborigines obtained from distant tribes were often too afraid to return to their own people because of fear of hostile Aborigines between the two locations.

Illiteracy imposed rigorous restrictions on the use of Aboriginal labour. Problems were even encountered in giving basic instructions such as "bring in 20 cows" when Aborigines were unable to count.[96] Even towards the end of the century when individual Aborigines had shown themselves to be highly competent and efficient stockmen, they were excluded from management positions because of their inability to read and write.[97]

Did the advantages of Aboriginal labour outweigh the disadvantages? Obviously pastoralists believed that the advantages were greater or they would not have used black labour to the extent they did. In the next chapter the treatment of blacks by pastoralists will be studied – how the Aborigines were initially obtained and then retained once they had been drawn into the pastoral economy. Other factors such as housing, feeding and medical care will be evaluated.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE TREATMENT OF ABORIGINAL LABOUR

The most significant means of obtaining Aboriginal labour was through the "letting in" policy. The first combined effort by the northern squatters to deal with the problem of black resistance by means other than "dispersal" occurred in 1867 when a public meeting was held in Bowen at which it was proposed that a number of stations be set apart where Aborigines would be "let in".[1] The editor of the *Queenslander* was astute enough to recognise at a glance that the scheme was for the sole benefit of the squatters "and not for the amelioration of the blackfellows".[2] Nevertheless he considered the proposal was worthy of consideration for while there was:

> some self interest in it, there is not more than in the present system by which blacks are shot down most ruthlessly for weeks and months after a case of murder or theft has been reported, and when many innocent are either killed in order that the guilty may possibly be included in the number or so hunted about that the spirit of revenge is aroused in them, more crime committed, the breach made wider, and the hope of ever improving the black and inducing him to pursue settled occupations, rendered more futile.[3]

The decision to encourage blacks into pastoral stations was not by any means unanimous amongst Kennedy squatters. William Clark of the Selheim River wrote to the *Port Denison Times*[4] explaining that public opinion in his area was strongly opposed to the purpose of the Bowen meeting. The general consensus there was that allowing the Aborigines into the stations would only expose the white man's numerical weakness.[5] There was opposition in Brisbane too because of the fear that the blacks would suffer when they "mingled indiscriminately with the European population".[6] But despite the caution in the capital the first Kennedy squatter took the initiative, and without the protection of additional Native Mounted Police, allowed the Aborigines on his station.

But even before this decision was made, Robert Christison of *Lammermoor* in the Mitchell district[7] had been actively encouraging the Aborigines to come in to his run.[8] He was pursuing this strategy while it was the avowed policy of all others in the region to keep the blacks out. Only a short time before, in late 1864 and early 1865, a total of 12 station hands had been killed by Aborigines on nearby *Natal Downs.*[9] Christison gained the confidence of a young black as a prelude to establishing meaningful communications with other clan members. By clearly defining an area that the group could use and by stipulating that they could kill kangaroos and emus as before but not the sheep or horses[10] Christison was able to minimise the competition for the available economic resources. In the remote Gulf country squatters appeared to be using local Aboriginal labour from as early as 1867. "The blackboys of Burketown," wrote a *Port Denison Times* correspondent:

> have already been found to be as active on horseback or on foot as any other of Australian blacks, and quite as intelligent looking. No doubt the old gins

> will be found as useful at lambing time as any of their race elsewhere.[11]

It is not clear whether these Aborigines had voluntarily come in to the stations or had been taken out of the bush by force. However a correspondent writing in 1869 claimed that three Europeans had been killed near Burketown because whites had forcibly taken Aboriginal women and boys from the tribes.[12]

William Chatfield of *Natal Downs* was the first Kennedy squatter to successfully "let in" the blacks; this was in January 1868.[13] In the following year, Bode of *Strathdon* succeeded in bringing in 100 Aborigines with the help of an Aboriginal woman who had been living on the station for 12 months. It was reported some time later that the "experiment proved successful and [Bode] found the blackboys of great use in the stockyard".[14] At about the same time, Mark Reid, superintendent of *Woodstock* informed the Police Magistrate at Townsville that the blacks had been allowed in on Towns and Co.'s properties *Woodstock* and *Jarvisfield* and as a result "no cattle or other property [had] since that time been destroyed; the behaviour of the blacks since they have been let in has been without exception good".[15] The news of the apparent success of the venture spread rapidly and by May 1869 a correspondent calling himself "Within 100 miles of the Burdekin" wrote to the *Port Denison Times* with the news that:

> All the squatters in this part of the Kennedy are anxious to let in the blacks, and on most of the stations have so far succeeded that the blacks may now be seen hunting fearless of danger in their immediate vicinity. The squatters are alive to the risks they run and are always prepared and watchful.[16]

The depredation of stock and the threat to white lives did not always cease when the blacks came in. Although the Aborigines were allowed in on the stations around Hughenden in 1869, Robert Gray advised the Colonial Secretary that the Aborigines were "rewarding station holders by spearing their cattle and doing other mischief".[17] Writing from *Valley of Lagoons* Walter Scott informed his brother in 1874 that none of his neighbours were willing to allow the Aborigines in; Mitchell had done so but soon drove them out again.[18] The problem was aptly summed up by Inspector Lamond who wrote specifically about Cape York Peninsula some thirty years after the first squatters had moved into North Queensland. He felt sure:

> that the managers would be quite willing to allow the blacks back on the country if there was sufficient protection and capable officers to break the blacks in to keeping within their tribal boundaries. Every station would have its own recognised tribe of blacks who could be employed on the runs, the blacks thereby would have employment if willing to work and the station would have the best of labour, the other blacks not employed would have first class hunting and they could soon be taught to keep away from stock etc. and the stock would soon become used to them, same as they are in the southern districts.[19]

Although the immediate benefits to the pioneer pastoralists of letting the blacks in were in terms of capital conservation, the long run advantages were far more significant.

They were provided with a large pool of cheap labour and they soon realised this. By 1872 letting in was defined as that time when Aborigines were:

> allowed and encouraged to come and make themselves useful, shepherding a few sheep, chopping wood, stripping bark and a thousand odd jobs to which they are adapted, receiving in return protection as long as they behave well and little presents of blankets, tomahawks, etc.[20]

Both push and pull factors were evident in the decision made by Aborigines to go into pastoral stations. They were pushed reluctantly towards European society because of the hunger and violence associated with the rapid occupation of their land. At the same time, others were pulled by the attraction of European commodities.[21] It was rather a unique event however which caused a group of Aborigines to go into *Gregory Downs* homestead in the 1880s. Recounting the episode R. M. Watson wrote that:

> In 1884 there were great sounds from the North West like big explosions then one day we saw a dozen naked black gins approaching our house. They were waving branches. We told Drummer our blackboy to go and see what was the matter and he found that these blacks had been frightened by the loud explosions. . . when they found we were friendly to these gins, up came 7 or 8 blackmen. [Subsequently] these blacks were very helpful to us and gave us no trouble at all.[22]

Another way in which squatters obtained individual blacks was from Native Police officers. Walter Scott wrote to his mother of a "young scamp named Aaron" given him by Sub Inspector Johnstone. The lad had been caught while the police officer was "punishing" the blacks north of Cardwell for killing the shipwrecked survivors from the *"Maria"*.[23] While in Bowen, John Ewen Davidson made arrangements with Inspector Marlow to obtain, if possible, a black from the Wide Bay area.[24] Inspector Uhr gave two runaway station blacks to Biddulph Henning of *Exmoor* in 1864. The two had joined forces with 11 absconding troopers from Rockingham Bay and all had taken refuge at *Exmoor* before the arrival of the pursuing Native Police officer.[25] The Watson brothers of *Gregory Downs* acquired an Aborigine named Drummer from the Native Police on the Leichhardt River in 1876. The boy and his mate had been caught by the police and were to be killed because they knew a few words of English.[26] The Watsons arrived soon after Drummer's friend had been shot and after some arguing, the police agreed to let the men have Drummer as long as they took him out of the district. Writing to the *Queenslander* from Normanton in 1880, Isaac Watson[27] asserted that the Aborigines in the Gulf were generally inclined to be peaceful. He complained that the police however were always:

> rounding them up and shooting them for the purpose of kidnapping gins and little boys and making them travel to some station or else to the township of Normanton, where they are made to work and slave against their will.[28]

A similar story was reported from the Cardwell area by the pioneer squatter James Cassady. He wrote to the *Queenslander* that:

> It is not a very uncommon thing for Native Police officers to kidnap gins and boys. I know of a good many people in this locality that are indebted to Sub Inspector Armit for the black boy or gin they have got.[29]

Inspector Brooke reported that after a group of Cape York Aborigines had displayed a willingness to work[30] E. Palmer of *Gamboola* and Skene of *Wrotham Park* were both in favour of having Aboriginal clans on their runs. In this instance the police appear to have shown a desire to conciliate the blacks. The officer sent the group belonging to Palmer's country to *Gamboola* and the Walsh blacks to Skene's run.[31]

Some squatters recruited their labour from the fringe camps which appeared on the edges of European settlement from the early 1870s. They were the best source of labour for pastoralists who did not have access to local Aboriginal clans.[32] The owners of *Oak Park* were among those forced to obtain workers from camps as until 1883 there was a Native Police camp located only two miles from the homestead. A white employee, sometimes accompanied by a station black, would be dispatched to either Mt Hogan or Gilberton when additional labour was required for mustering.[33] Spare horses were always taken for the workers which the station hoped to recruit. Other than this, no details are available to indicate the incentives offered to blacks to induce them to leave the camps. It is certain that, at the time, the *Oak Park* owner did not pay a cash wage to his Aboriginal workers[34] but the prospect of the use of a horse and regular rationing was probably enough incentive for young Aboriginal men eking out an existence on the periphery of a small European settlement. At the end of the 1880s the Grant brothers of *Woodleigh* also obtained their Aboriginal labour from a fringe camp – in that instance from the mining settlement at Coolgarra.[35] The diaries of F. S. Grant dating from 1889 reveal that initially the station staff included three Europeans and one permanent Aborigine[36] supplemented by an unstable workforce obtained from Coolgarra. As many of these workers had no previous experience of European labour habits, it was necessary to teach them how to "work".[37] Presumably this meant learning how to handle stock. But by 1892 the Aboriginal workforce on *Woodleigh* appears to have been stabilised with all the station work from then on being carried out by blacks under the supervision of one European.[38]

The desire to obtain Aboriginal children attracted squatters to fringe camps even when they already had access to local tribes. It was commonly believed away from the influence of their own clan the children could be more readily "Europeanised" and this would ultimately improve their reliability. Often well treated by the pastoralists these children were sometimes brought up in the house away from the station blacks. At least two of the blacks in the employ of Richard Anning of *Cargoon* had grown up in the family. In a subsequent court case, an Aboriginal woman testified that the Annings had been very kind to her giving her presents and sending her to school in Sydney for a time.[39] William Hann of *Maryvale* and Gray of *Hughenden* acquired three Aboriginal children from Cape Marlow[40] while in Townsville in 1870. On their return journey, the two men spent all day at *Burdekin Downs* resting the children.[41] No mention is made how these children were obtained from the camp. Contemporary European sources

indicate that in this instance they may have been purchased for a small fee as the Hann family had previously purchased an Aboriginal child from his mother in Rockhampton for four shillings.[42] There is no evidence of payment in many other cases however. William Chatfield of *Natal Downs* reported to the Attorney General that it was becoming "a *common* practice in this district to kidnap boys from the camps of quiet blacks".[43] Fearing that the kidnapping would cause Aboriginal depredations to recommence, he felt prompted to take action explaining that he had:

> been advised by [his] solicitor Mr E. Norris to write to you on the subject particularly as it pays so well stealing and selling the boys that most probably the offence will be continued.[44]

William Landsborough, Police Magistrate at Sweers Island, informed the Attorney General in 1868 that Aboriginal children had been taken by force from Bentick Island[45] and Michael Bird Hall assured the Colonial Secretary that a police officer took a customs boat from Sweers Island and grabbed two Bentick Island boys aged between 8 and 10 years. One of the boys was subsequently exchanged for "grog".[46] Two Aboriginal women at *Kings Plains* complained to W. E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, that their children were being detained against their wishes at a neighbouring station. Roth reported that:

> Maggie has a full-blooded son 8-9 at Springvale, whence he has already attempted to run away from and been brought back: Mollie has a little half-caste girl at Oakey Creek.[47]

Many children "bolted" if they were old enough and the distance not too great.[48] Some children however so enjoyed the contact with the European culture that they were reluctant to return to their own society. "The boys," wrote a *Port Denison Times* correspondent:

> when they have been once in the saddle, soon get reconciled to the change. The father of a smart little fellow, took his son away but he ran away from his parents and came back to the station.[49]

Meston reported that one of the more undesirable aspects evident after prolonged indiscriminate kidnapping was that:

> scattered among the stations of Western Queensland are small parties of aborigines among whom the family ties have long been severed, and so fathers and mothers and children are widely separated with little chance under the old conditions of seeing each other again.[50]

In the remote parts of North Queensland squatters went out into the bush to round up previously uncontacted Aborigines for station work. The manager of *Rocklands,* W.H. Crawford personally took a black out of the bush for station work in the early 1880s.[51] The drover E. A. Daly wrote to the *Queenslander* with details of how a young Aboriginal boy was captured in the bush and brought to work as a stockman on *Granada* in the 1880s.[52] Reporting on the condition of Northern Territory Aborigines in 1898, the Inspector of Police wrote that in the unsettled parts of the Territory:

> in many instances boys who assist in station work were and perhaps are still, obtained by what is termed "running them down" and forcibly taking them

> from tribes to stations some distances away from the tribe. . . This practice I believe was introduced from Western Queensland.[53]

Why did the squatters in the more remote parts of the colony resort to this practice? A number of reasons can be suggested. Because both European settlement and black population were more sparse than in the coastal regions, Aborigines may have been less inclined to come in to the pastoral stations voluntarily. In addition, the settlement and resettlement of much of the area did not begin until the late 1870s and coincided with a period of acute labour shortage. From their experience elsewhere squatters knew that the bush blacks could fill the void in the industry. Moreover, Europeans had virtual freedom of action with respect to the treatment of Aborigines in outlying settlements. When Alexander Kennedy complained to the Police Commissioner about the lack of protection from Aborigines in the outlying districts, he was advised that the department would do what it could to increase the number of police patrols. But in the meantime the Commissioner remarked, "if you have any trouble you know what to do".[54]

Force played a large part in capturing Aborigines in the bush and this practice continued to be employed when using black labour. C. J. Dashwood, Government Resident of the Northern Territory giving evidence at a Select Committee inquiry related the experiences of two Aborigines on a Barclay tablelands property. He explained that:

> If they did not obey certain orders they were tied up and stock whipped when out on the run. If they disobeyed certain orders the deceased Perry knocked one of them off his horse and ran his spurs up and down the unfortunate native's face. The marks of the injuries which he had received on the face were exhibited in the court.[55]

Sometimes harsh treatment was meted out even when no breach of instructions occurred. An Aboriginal boy captured by *Granada* stockmen consented immediately to the offer of station employment but was nevertheless placed in leg irons for a day or two to "settle him down".[56] When a young Aboriginal boy ran away from *Valley of Lagoons* in 1872 he was brought back to the station. Scott wrote to his mother that he:

> gave Master Aaron a good flogging and chained him up in the toolhouse. . . Aaron is now sitting in the ashes with a pair of handcuffs round his ancls [sic].[57]

Writing in 1900 A. Meston, the Southern Protector of Aborigines considered that the Aborigines west of Warrego lived in a state of terror. Never before had he seen:

> aboriginal men living under such extraordinary terrorism, many of them fine athletic fellows who could in case of a row have settled their terrorisers in a summary fashion. But many of them had long been treated as the dogs are treated and were scared into a belief that their employers wielded the power of life and death. They also knew that amongst most of the station there was a mutual understanding that any run-away black would be hunted or brought back, as they had no one to whom they could appeal and nowhere to go they finally regarded their doom as inevitable and bore their wrongs in silence.[58]

The relatively few references to physical force in squatters' reminiscences serves to highlight the common acceptance of this practice.[59]

There is no doubt that more violence was used against black than white workers[60] but it would be incorrect to think that Aborigines submitted passively to physical abuse. When a certain threshold was reached, the Aborigines had two alternatives – to leave the station or retaliate with physical force themselves. The former was the more common practice and although station workers were generally sent after absconding Aborigines, there are many accounts of successful escapes. On a number of occasions however, Aborigines met physical abuse by resorting to murder. The two Barclay blacks previously mentioned, killed their employer who grossly mistreated them. In the Cook district a 13 year-old Aboriginal boy was charged with the murder of his employer in 1890. It was stated that Harry Jones of *Koolburra* worked the boy too hard and at one stage the squatter threatened to shoot the lad. The boy claimed that, "me shoot 'im Jones first, cause Jones say him shoot 'im me".[61] Long after Aboriginal resistance was subdued, many squatters continued to carry guns because they feared that their Aboriginal employees could become aggressive if mistreated. A "reliable northern correspondent" wrote to the *Queenslander* in 1897 explaining that he had:

> spent six years looking after a Northern cattle station with generally only 5 blackboys for stockmen. Some of these boys could almost read and write yet so closely did I observe their hidden nature that a revolver, generally loaded, was like my stockwhip, my constant companion. It was the only way to keep in check their latent evil passions.[62]

These sentiments were supported by another northern cattleman calling himself "Piemelon" of Bowen. He wrote to the *Queenslander* outlining his views:

> I have long experience of the ways and manners of the blacks. In 1873 I went away to the "back blocks" and until 18 months ago resided continually in the Never Never and for 8 years managed a station with 20,000 head of cattle solely with blackboys. During those years I never employed a white man (except Chinaman cook and gardener) and the boys and I got on splendidly. But I may also state that I would never trust a black – would no more go on the run without my revolver than stockwhip.[63]

A gun also provided security for C. W. Bowly when his Aboriginal companion became aggressive. He wrote that:

> I had some trouble with my black companion, indeed he was very saucy and I was obliged to show him my revolver though of course I should not have used it unless attacked.[64]

While some squatters resorted to brutality, others found that a policy of firmness and, above all, keeping a promise, was the best way to handle Aboriginal labour. One experienced bushman offered the following advice to employers of blacks:

1. Never make free with them in any way whatever,
2. If you make a promise to one of them, keep it, no matter what it costs, or how easy or unimportant it may seem to break it, once you break

faith with an aboriginal, he never forgives or forgets.
3. If he misbehaves himself, or cheeks you, punish him, but do it quickly and have done with.
4. If ever you have to bargain with a nigger to do anything for you, and promise him food, never give him a scrap until he has completed his task.[65]

Robert Christison employed a policy of kindness and firmness but also used an incentive system. In a letter to his mother in which he discussed the *Lammermoor* blacks, C. W. Bowly wrote that they would:

> soon have to wash the sheep and I do not think they would do this if it were not for the expectation of what they will get when the "Wheelbarrow" (as they call it) comes up. The best men will then get a blanket, shirt, trousers and tobacco.[66]

Some employers believed that they could handle their black workers more easily if they were given opium. Although the Chinese were generally regarded as the main suppliers of opium to the Aborigines[67] many Europeans were also involved in the practice. In 1896 A. Meston reported that scores of Aborigines were dying in the west from the effects of opium use. He wrote that at first "the blacks were taught to use it by the Chinese but now many whites give it as an inducement to work".[68] The Mackay Protector of Aborigines believed that in his district:

> Most of the aborigines are opium smokers, and will not work without it. I have good reason to believe that most of the settlers keep it for the purpose of getting work out of the blacks.[69]

In 1882 the central Queensland squatter, Frank Beardmore, complained of the widespread use of opium in the pastoral industry saying "Some squatters now get opium for their boys because they say they cannot keep them without it".[70] He believed that the opium habit had been introduced to the area by an Aboriginal woman who became addicted to it while on a visit to Cooktown with her European employer.[71] It was claimed that on her return, the woman introduced the custom to other members of her clan.[72] In spite of his resolution not to supply opium to his Aboriginal employees, Beardmore succumbed to the widely accepted practice. In a letter to the editor of the *Queenslander* he explained his reasons:

> I myself refused to give [opium] to the blacks for a long time. My best boys left me and were employed by my neighbours, who gave them opium regularly in spite of my repeated letters to them begging them to desist from the practice, on the commonsense plea that if the blacks knew they could not get the drug the craving would cease. My requests were of no avail. This year, finding that my struggles on behalf of the blacks were of no avail, I bought some opium, and will give you some plain facts connected with it. The craving for it is exactly the same as for grog. If a black knows he cannot get it, he will not want it, but if there is any place within 50 miles where it can be had he must and will have it.[73]

Writing to the Colonial Secretary about the same time, Beardmore revealed that all Europeans, including the police in the area, used opium to secure the services of Aborigines.[74] In framing the 1897 Aborigines Protection legislation the Home Secretary expressed his opposition to the issue of opium to Aborigines. He was adamant that the government did not:

> propose to allow [opium] to be used as it is at present; we are not going to allow people to obtain the assistance of Aboriginals in working their properties, and then pay them in large supplies of opium.[75]

Historian Ray Evans detected the fundamental contradiction between the pernicious effect of opium and at the same time, the use of it as an incentive to extract work from Aborigines. He reasoned that granted opium:

> Was supplied on many stations by both Chinese and white, it was mostly supplied in return for work or women rendered, the only reasons why the Aboriginal was retained. It was not supplied to make the Aboriginal completely useless to the supplier.[76]

Although opium was widely used in the pastoral industry at the end of the century, it was obviously handed out in judicious amounts. This was the impression given by Beardmore in 1886. He wrote that on a station where the black "gets his opium regularly a very small quantity a day is enough for him."[77]

* * * * *

Traditionally black and white workers were quartered separately. The station blacks' camp was located some distance from the remainder of the buildings – far enough away to be out of sight, yet close enough to be accessible when workers were required. A number of significant developments emerged from this arrangement. It created and maintained a barrier between the Aborigines and Europeans from the outset. Moreover, as a result of having a sedentary lifestyle imposed on them, blacks continually lived in squalid conditions. Their nomadism in traditional life had previously prevented this situation from developing. Fixed camp sites also created increased tensions for the blacks when a death occurred in the camp. For instance when a black worker died in the blacks' hut on *Oak Park* in 1891, the station blacks would not sleep in the building for three weeks after the death.[78] Tradition required that the site be vacated but obviously station owners would not condone the continual relocation of blacks' camps.

Initially the buildings erected for the blacks were of a very primitive nature. For instance, on *Lolworth* station which had been operating for more than 20 years, valued Aboriginal employees slept in "a bit of a humpy" in the blacks' camp.[79] The situation at *Wando Vale* in 1890 was atypical with respect to Aboriginal housing at the time and was probably related to the fact that an attempt had been made to recreate an English style estate. It was claimed that a good building had been erected for the use of the large number of blacks employed on the station.[80] Aborigines who were in regular employment and did not have a strong tie with the local blacks were generally housed in one of

the station huts, but still separate from the white stockmen. On *Maryvale* station[81] where very good relations existed between the owners and black employees, one family even had their own house. It was reported that:

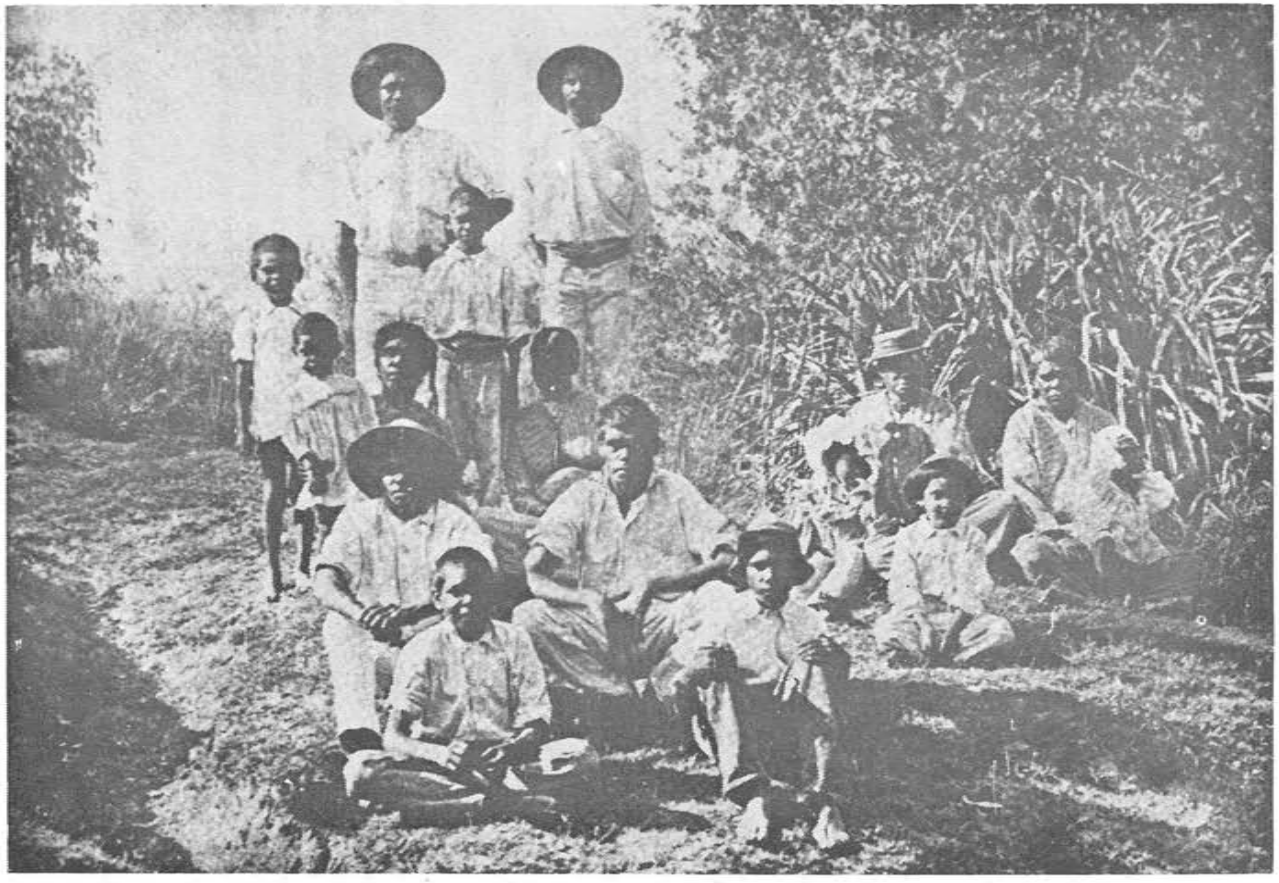
> One coloured family occupy quarters of their own and are sort of "belonging to the place" – a worthy old pair of "cullud pussons" aboriginal and Kanaka having a numerous grown up family.[82]

Generally the blacks' huts were of an inferior standard when compared with other accommodation. *Canobie* was a typical example of this: the iron blacks' hut had the lowest valuation of all the improvements on the property in 1899.[83] On other stations, blacks' huts were made of bark, a popular building material because of its relative availability and cheapness. The new blacks' hut constructed on *Oak Park* in 1890 was made of this material and had timber wallplates and posts. However the addition of bunks must have proved quite a novelty to those Aborigines who used the hut.[84]

Station owners and managers seem to have exhibited a fairly responsible attitude to their obligations to feed their Aboriginal workers.[85] Available evidence suggests that in the main, blacks were possibly as well fed as the white workers. One squatter explained that "the boys all have their food cooked by the cook on the station and get just the same as the station hands. . . for there is only one lot going in the camp".[86] However it has already been pointed out that there was a lack of dietetic balance in the rations consumed by frontier pastoral workers generally[87] and this affected their work effort. Employees, regardless of colour, could not be expected to achieve their maximum productive capacity when they were suffering from malnutrition.[88]

Communal cooking was another feature of most pastoral stations. A variety of reasons can be suggested for this: less time was wasted by workers in preparing their own food which meant that more time could be devoted to station work; another reason suggested by a contemporary was that it was often done to "protect [the black] from the rapacity of his friends, with whom he is bound by tribal laws to divide his food".[89] While it may not have been deliberately intended, this was one of a multitude of insidious ways in which the traditional Aboriginal culture was gradually eroded. Juxtaposed with this was the fact that communal cooking inhibited the development towards a more European pattern of existence. But while black and white workers ate food from the same source, segregated eating was the norm. Rachel Henning rather flippantly remarked that "The blacks are not allowed to dine with the white aristocracy. They take their meals in the wash "ouse" or, in other words, on the bench outside the kitchen door".[90]

While the black station hands may have been as well fed as white workers, this cannot be said of the remainder of the tribe who eked out an existence in the station blacks' camp. A benevolent owner such as Alexander Kennedy gave offal, and perhaps even flour if it was abundant, to the dependants, but it was expected that the bulk of the food would be gained by traditional methods.[91] However, as most of the able bodied members of the tribe were usually engaged in station work, those left in the camps often



Aboriginal station employees *Lawn Hill*. (*North Queensland Register* 20 January 1902, p. 23)

found it difficult to collect food. One Camooweal police officer argued that Aborigines employed on stations should be paid a wage which would be used to provide for their sick and aged dependants:

> The very fact of these squatters taking these young boys and girls from the old people thus deprives them of their children's assistance in hunting for food over these endless plains, and I can assure you sirs, that in droughty conditions, such have just passed, these old people, when alone, have very many miles to traverse before finding anything. I have frequently met poor old gins sitting down under a currant bush, fairly knocked up. She has, of necessity, to carry a big coolamon of water all the time, and after walking very many miles may only succeed in finding a few small lizards and an iguana occasionally.[92]

Clearly squatters believed that they did not have an obligation to support the dependants of their workers. This was highlighted in a letter written by the De Salis brothers to the Colonial Secretary:

> There are on this station, 8 old blacks that ought to be assisted – six of them are decrepit old gins – some blind and others diseased and two old blind blackfellows. None of these blacks are able to gain their own livelihood and certainly deserve to be fed, as well as receive an annual blanket. The poor old creatures are supported by the blacks on the station – we employ about 20 – and of course comes out of our pocket, we have to feed those we employ. These poor old things are certainly deserving of charity and there may be charitable institutions to receive them – but I think it would be kinder to provide them with food here which is their home, and where they are with relatives. I do not consider that we are called upon to continue feeding them but if you will provide them with flour, tea, and sugar, we will provide their beef and see that they receive any rations allowed them.[93]

The Colonial Secretary however was of the opinion that the station and not the government was responsible for these aged blacks. The reply to the De Salis brothers pointed out that as:

> Strathmore has been carried on for years past almost solely by the labour of the aboriginals of the District, amongst whom may doubtless be . . . those whose unfortunate condition you describe, it may be very properly contended that the neglect to provide for the latter in their old age will reflect disgrace upon those who have made profitable use of them during their years of health and strength rather than upon the Government.[94]

Unlike missionaries, pastoralists did not require their Aboriginal employees to abandon their culture completely. Few stationowners insisted on their stockmen or housemaids behaving like black Europeans. Most employees however did adopt the practice of wearing clothing. Aboriginal stockmen wore trousers for practical reasons as they provided protection for their bodies. Shirts and hats were as much needed by the blacks as the whites and in fact the former were probably less used to working in the sun than the Europeans. In traditional life, Aborigines rested during the hottest part of the day, doing their hunting when the temperature was more conducive to work effort. But apart from these

aspects, many Aborigines simply wore clothing to emulate Europeans. Several contemporaries noted the effects of clothing on Aboriginal health. For instance E. R. Gribble, a Yarrabah missionary, believed that blacks contracted diseases as a result of wearing wet clothing after being drenched in tropical downpours[95] while another northern observer, Carl Lumholtz, reported that Australian Aborigines were not much "affected with illnesses; only where they have become 'civilized' and wear clothes, do illness ensue". Lumholtz believed that as a result of constantly putting clothing on and taking it off again, the blacks were subjected to "many colds and chest complaints which like fever [were] unknown to them in their natural state".[96] Washing facilities were not a feature of the station blacks' camp and this meant that Aborigines wore dirty clothes which harboured parasites such as lice. Their bites caused skin rashes which when scratched, became infected and reduced the blacks' tolerance to other diseases.

Nevertheless the physical condition of permanently employed station blacks was better than those leading a traditional lifestyle. Sgt Green of the Cloncurry Police station reported that within a 100 mile radius of Cloncurry there were 108 bush blacks. He described the physical condition of 40 of them as bad. "Some [were] old and feeble, some [were] sick, one crippled and three blind". By contrast the condition of the 76 in permanent employment on the surrounding stations was classed as "good".[97] There is no way of determining if some of those old feeble blacks had been employees who had been cast aside by stations after they became ineffective but analysis of the situation on properties suggested otherwise. Where no direct physical contact was required, bush blacks were almost as vulnerable to introduced European diseases as were the blacks in close association with whites.[98] However those employed on stations had access to some medical facilities, rudimentary as they were[99] and for this reason alone, it would be expected that their physical condition would be better.[100] Constable Reside reported that in the Boulia district:

> The Aboriginals that have a very miserable existence around here is the walk about Blacks both male and female of them are nearly all suffering from venereal disease and are horrible to look at through being covered with sores some of them are hardly able to walk and some of them are almost blind, no one to cure them or take any interest in them, and owing to their being in so helpless a state it is very hard for them to gather enough food for their existence.[101]

It was in the interest of pastoralists not to allow the physical condition of their employees to deteriorate to such an extent that they were unable to work. This was especially true as the blacks became more skilled in their tasks and it became increasingly difficult to replace them due to diminishing numbers.

The administering of European medical assistance was sometimes difficult because of conflicting tribal conventions. Rebecca Bode, wife of the pioneer squatter F. R. Bode, had a frightening experience; her granddaughter wrote that a black child was:

> very ill and a black boy stockman named Budakey persuaded her to let Grandmother have a look at it. Finding that it was taking convulsions, she put it into a hot bath. All the watching blacks became terribly angry and threatening. Budakey gave the baby back to them and told Grandma that she had broken a tribal custom by putting the baby into water, so she shut herself and family inside the house and had a frightening night as they roamed around the place shouting and yelling.[102]

Although not as well fed as in pre-European traditional life[103] station blacks had more to eat than those eking out an existence in the bush. Alexander Gordon, a former station manager, described the starvation experienced by the majority of bush blacks between Camooweal and Birdsville in the 1890s. He wrote that during the previous three years:

> owing to the drought, they have been deprived of the back country for hunting purposes and what little water there is in the river they are not allowed to go near as it is crowded with stock. They are consequently compelled to congregate about the townships and stations where there are wells, and even then, in many instances, they are forced to steal the water. I admit that in most cases the whites do what they can for them, but there are some who do not.[104]

Obviously the attitude of individual owners and managers determined to some extent how Aborigines were treated on their respective stations. While some employers showed humanitarian concern for their black employees, others were brutally cruel. In spite of the general trend over time towards improved treatment of Aboriginal employees however all employers discriminated between black and white workers in wages and conditions.

* * * * *

Some aspects of female Aboriginal employment differed markedly from the male situation and therefore warrants separate treatment. For one thing the predominance of European males on the frontier meant that Aboriginal women were demanded not only as a source of labour but for sexual gratification as well. In traditional society there was some provision for the exchange of wives; on ocassions this was extended to Europeans. However many whites interpreted this as promiscuous behaviour and justified their abuse of black women on the grounds of the Aboriginal lack of morality. In part of south-west Queensland where there were no white women on the stations, it was claimed that Aboriginal women "were usually at the mercy of anybody, from the proprietor or Manager to the stockmen, cook rouseabout, and jackaroo".[105] The situation was not unique to that area; after visiting the more northern regions including Hughenden, Cloncurry, Urandangie and Boulia, Walter Hume, Under Secretary and Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands, reported that the Aboriginal women he encountered were "nothing more or less than common prostitutes, every township and station having its quota residing in adjacent

camps".[106] Hume's claims were subsequently corroborated in the Boulia Sub District, Constable Reside reporting that all the "gins" were common prostitutes:

> The Aboriginal camps adjacent to the stations and the "Gins" that live in them are locally known and called by the name of "Stud Gins", these Gins are employed by the stations as domestic servants, but in fact they are kept for immoral purposes, for the use of men living on the station, these Gins as a rule are well supplied in food and cloths [sic] and some of the men working on the stations spend nearly all their wages on them buying them dresses, Tobacco, Pipes, matches etc. The men living around here talk freely about seducing "Gins" and reckon they have done a clever act if they seduce a "Gin" belonging to an adjoining station.[107]

Police officer R. C. Thorpe reported to his Darwin based superior that in the Camooweal district sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women was common. He felt sure that:

> if half the young lubras now being detained (I won't call it kept for I know most of them would clear away if they could) were approached on the subject they would say that they were run down by station blackguards on horseback and taken to the stations for licentious purposes and there kept more like slaves than anything else. I have heard it said that these same lubras have been locked up for weeks at a time – anyway whilst their heartless persecutors have been mustering cattle on their respective runs. Some I have heard take these lubras with them, but take the precaution to tie them up securely for the night to prevent them escaping. Of course, sirs, these allegations are, as you know, very difficult to prove against any individual persons, still I am positive these acts of cruelty are being performed and I think still worse.[108]

The same officer also complained about the incidence of young female Aborigines suffering from venereal diseases:

> I have seen poor young gins, mere children between 11 and 14 years of age, suffering from syphilis in all its stages. The old blacks assure me that white men had run them down and ruined them.[109]

Even when non-Aborigines were apprehended for these crimes they were invariably discharged because of insufficient evidence to prove the age of the victim. C. J. Dashwood, Government Resident and Judge of the Northern Territory urged the introduction of legislation so that when:

> these crimes were perpetrated the offenders should be brought to punishment without having technical objections raised, while there should be some proper supervision of the employment of natives, no matter by whom they were so employed. My mind is particularly directed to the need of this legislation also in consequence of a conversation which I had with the late Chief Secretary of Queensland, the Hon. Horace Tozer, who was about to bring in legislation dealing with the same matters in that colony, where the conditions are similar to those of the Northern Territory.[110]

Initially then most Aboriginal women appear to have been taken by force. But as food sources became more scarce, starvation forced many into prostitution. A former manager of a large western station argued that "the average gin [was] not nearly so

immoral as most people believe, and they are generally forced into a life of prostitution through want of food etc."[111]

While casual sex was the overriding consideration for many frontier males, others developed a more meaningful relationship with Aboriginal women. A northern correspondent wrote to the *Queenslander* of the loneliness of frontier life and how it was considerably enhanced by the presence of an Aboriginal female companion:

> The white man who lives in the remote parts of Queensland lives a lonely and monotonous life, he suffers many hardships for a small wage, his hours are from daylight to dark, and his only holidays are an occasional Sunday in his camps, which he spends washing and mending his clothes, making hide hobbles etc. Truly a glorious recreation: After a hard day's riding, watching cattle on camp, or drafting on a hot and sultry day amidst clouds of dust and perspiration rolling off him, he returns to his hut to cook his supper, carry wood and water, and wash up and tidy things generally. This life is the same from years end to years end the only variation being a trip to some neighbouring station for a general muster, where he sees a few faces for a while and works yet harder than at home. Small wonder then that many of these men have taken gins under their protection and through constant association have learnt, if not exactly to love them, to treat them with due consideration and kindness and to find their homes brighter and more comfortable through being there.[112]

Aboriginal women were also subjected to sexual advances from the male Aborigines introduced to the area by the pioneer squatters, the majority unaccompanied by females. It is difficult to determine whether these Aborigines emulated their European employers in the taking of Aboriginal women by force or not. Although available accounts are replete with stories of Aboriginal males abducting local Aboriginal women, the European males were more reticent about their own violation of black women. On *Gregory Downs* an alien black employee kidnapped a local woman without any prior example being set by his employers. However they not only condoned the practice but actively participated in it. R. M. Watson who witnessed the event, reported that:

> After some months Drummer wanted a wife, so we went down the river to near the Punjaub station is now and found some gins in a lagoon getting waterlily roots and mussels. The poor things were so scared that they would not come out until they were nearly frozen or drowned. Well, we had a look through them and told Drummer to pick one but to try and get one with curly hair and small feet (as they are the most intelligent). Drummer chose one, put her on his horse behind him, and we all returned to the 20 mile camp.[113]

This was obviously a common practice which had begun in the area at least ten years earlier. In 1867 a correspondent wrote to the *Port Denison Times* that in the Gulf region some squatters were "taking or allowing to be taken, gins for wives for their blackboys".[114]

There can be no doubt that the manner in which Europeans treated Aboriginal women sustained tensions between blacks and whites. C. J. Dashwood believed that most of the differences arising between Aborigines and Europeans in the Northern Territory and Queensland were caused by white men interfering with black women.[115] For instance when a white overseer criminally assaulted a female Aboriginal employee on a western property in 1880 her Aboriginal husband inflicted a flesh wound on the overseer. It was decided, an observer wrote:

> that a black who raised his hand to a white man ought not to live. A reward was offered to the half-wild blacks living on the station. He was captured and hamstrung and was shot to death by the Native Police who happened along. The wounded overseer was well in a week.[116]

Chief Commissioner of Crown Land, Walter Hume believed that the situation of widespread prostitution of Aboriginal women had a demoralising effect on the Aboriginal men in the localities he visited in the west. According to him "It blunted their susceptibility to good, and rendered them accustomed to live in a state that often can only be designated as piggery".[117] C. J. Dashwood also observed the effect on Aboriginal males and considered that they have become more immoral as a result of coming under the "civilizing" influence of whites. He noted that:

> There may be some cases where a native would not allow intercourse with his lubra, but in the great majority of these cases that have come under my notice, the native would allow intercourse with his lubra if he received a consideration for it. One native might want a larger consideration than another.[118]

* * * * *

Aboriginal women performed work not normally done by their European counterparts at that time as station tasks were not allocated in accordance with European sex-roles. For example in the more unsettled parts of North Queensland, black women were used for stockwork in the 1880s. After travelling around the Burke district a correspondent wrote to the *Queenslander* about the occurrence:

> What strikes one most forcibly is to see the gins, who are employed as stockmen nearly everywhere out here, strutting about in moles and flannel shirts, and with felt hats crammed extinguisher fashion on their lovely heads and smoking short black pipes. Oh woman, how varied are thy charms! They make first rate stockmen – I beg pardon, stockwomen would be more correct – and are splendid trackers.[119]

In the early 1880s the head stockman at *Beaudesert* was a female named Kitty,[120] and at *Granada* Dinah, the best stockrider on the station, held a similar position.[121] In planning mustering strategies, Europeans consulted with and valued the opinions of these female employees. For example on one occasion on *Granada* the owner, Hopkins had a different plan from that of the stockrider Dinah. However he decided to follow the woman's scheme as she had grown up in the area and knew exactly where surface water

"These young gins ride as well as blackfellows" (*Queenslander* 24 March 1894, p. 550)

could be expected at that time of the year.[122] Foelsche, the Inspector of Northern Territory police, recalled an instance where a squatter arrived in Darwin and had only female Aboriginal assistants:

> Some 18 years ago [in 1881] a Queensland squatter arrived on our goldfields with a mob of fat cattle; his only assistants were three or four so called black boys but were in reality, as the squatter himself informed me, young gins dressed in men's clothes.[123]

While all blacks were considered to have first class tracking ability, the Aboriginal wives of two of Alexander Kennedy's stockmen had even more acute skills than their husbands.[124] In another case, it was alleged that Kitty of *Beaudesert* could "track a mosquito up a stone wall".[125]

Aboriginal women had a reputation for being able to endure more tedious work than their menfolk. One Queensland observer was lavish in his praise for the female blacks who provided most of the labour for 20,000 sheep but adopted a more sarcastic tone for the "half dozen Amazons [who] turned out in grand style to muster cattle on horses".[126] Women were adapted to tedious work such as shepherding because in their traditional gathering role they performed the time consuming tasks. The gathering of tiny seeds which had to be winnowed and pounded and crushed before cooking required considerable patience and perseverance. Squatters frequently preferred Aboriginal females because it was believed they were easier to handle. They were "more obedient, or more easily frightened into obedience than the boys and as a rule far more attentive to their work. The squatters prefer them to the boys and do their best to have a few to help in mustering".[127] The pioneer pastoralist, Edward Palmer was particularly impressed with their "endurance and vitality".[128]

Aboriginal women also performed those tasks traditionally assigned to European females such as domestic duties and childcare. On the male-dominated frontier domestic work often went hand in hand with sexual services[129] and the acquisition of a permanent Aboriginal female companion considerably enhanced the lives of many European males. As the number of European women increased on pastoral stations, more domestic labour was required of the Aboriginal women and their sexual role became less obvious.[130] Typical of many stations in the 1890s, was a neighbouring property of *Avon Downs* which employed four black women who were responsible for the laundry, kitchen duties, cleaning and watering the garden.[131] At *Vena Park* the female Aborigines were considered the "maids of all work". A visitor to the station wrote that to see "a gin carrying water out of the lagoon to the vegetable garden at day dawn is a novel sight and more they do it without being told".[132] On *Wando Vale* it was the sole duty of an Aboriginal woman to draw water from a well using a horse. It was explained that a mutual understanding:

> exists between the pair and the latter sternly declines to pull even the sprat off the proverbial gridiron for anyone else but his coloured mistress. Mr Mytton is a firm believer in this primitive method of raising water in prefer-

> ence to a pump, calculating that more water can be raised to the minute with a 5 gallon bucket than with a hand pump.[133]

On *Granada,* in spite of the most primitive laundry conditions, Aboriginal women produced a high standard of workmanship and it was believed that "many a station housewife [could] tell of washing . . . and starching and ironing too done by a gin as well as any white laundress could do it".[134] An Aboriginal woman did the milking for the *Wando Vale* household[135] as did a woman on *Vena Park.*[136] However one task which women did not normally undertake on stations at the time was cooking. There was less pressure on them to learn these skills while Chinese cooks were so readily available on the frontier.

Another commonly performed task was caring for European children. In fact most white children who grew up on North Queensland cattle stations last century would have recalled an Aboriginal "nurse" in their childhood. Traditional Aboriginal child raising techniques differed markedly from European methods.[137] Although little evidence can be produced to support the view, it is likely that when Aboriginal women had sole custody of white children they may have used Aboriginal techniques.[138]

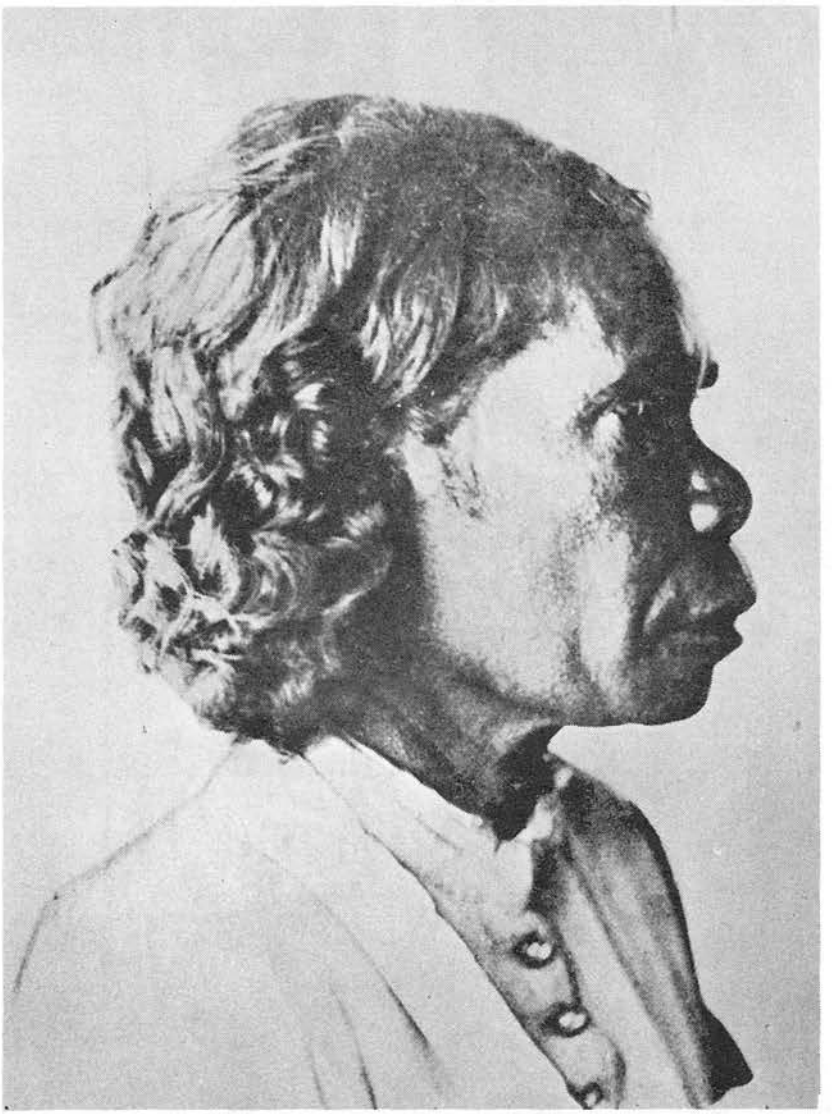
Many white women would have found frontier conditions quite arduous and the assistance rendered by black women around the homesteads must have been invaluable. One observer of the western scene reflected that "Many a station manager or owner would never have been able to take his women folk had it not been for the lubras as they with a good cook and Chinaman gardener, assisted to make life out there more endurable".[139]

In many respects Aboriginal women filled a more diverse range of tasks than their male counterparts. When stock duties permitted males shared chores such as watering the garden but they were rarely permitted inside the homestead as were their wives. Individual females showed remarkable versatility in the alien environment. In spite of having only ten years contact with the European material culture, one woman on *Lammermoor* displayed far more adaptability than a European male. It was Bessie's job to take care of the newly born lambs and their mothers. However after the station cook left, she was placed in the kitchen and a "new chum" C. W. Bowly was delegated to the shepherding task. Describing his experience, Bowly wrote that it:

> was not long before I got into trouble for not knowing the ways of Mother Ewe. I found in the evening that half a dozen [out of 30] ewes had failed to retrieve their offspring, and their lamentation was great. Bob [Christison] told me I must look about and try to find them to save them from the dingoes . . . I only managed to get two of the strays which I carried back under my arms. I had had quite enough of shepherding to last me a life time [it was] arranged that I should swap billets with the gin in the kitchen.[140]

In the 1860s one Aboriginal employee on *Mt McConnell* spent part of her time working with horses. Eden wrote that "She rode just as well as [her husband] . . . She knew all the

Washing day at *Granada* Station. (*Queenslander* 4 February 1899, p. 216)



Wyma, a highly valued employee on *Lammermoor* Station. (Bennett, *Christison of Lammermoor*)

horses by name, and would go and catch any particular one you wanted."[141] Apart from her stockkeeping duties she washed the clothes, did housecleaning but was especially remembered for her role as the baby's nurse. Eden recalled that Kitty was "an affectionate little thing, always in a good humour, and would squat for hours before the child, amusing him by beating a piece of tin, or affording some other entertainment equally intellectual".[142] Recalling early memories of her childhood nurse, M. M. Bennett pointed out that in Wyma's lifetime she:

> saw the changes of a million years, for when she was born in the early fifties of the nineteenth century the white men had not come to disturb the stone age . . . [yet] within a relatively short period she became a very clever house and parlour maid and took a great pride in keeping the house clean and tidy. From house maid she was promoted to nurse maid.[143]

As a result of filling a more diverse range of tasks than their menfolk, Aboriginal women were brought into closer contact with European culture. Catherine Berndt suggested that this gave them the opportunity to enhance their status in the Aboriginal community.[144] There is little evidence in the North Queensland pastoral industry to support or reject this proposition although Ann McGrath argues that outside contact did not necessarily work to the females' advantage in the Northern Territory. There Aboriginal males used a series of devices to avoid onerous tasks thereby forcing the females to do the more menial jobs.[145]

While the change in status of Aboriginal women relative to men cannot be ascertained with any certainty, the relationship between the Aboriginal and capitalist modes of production can be more readily identified. Inevitably some transformation had to occur when the two confronted each other on the North Queensland frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century. The aim of the next chapter is to test the validity of the assumption that the arrival of the capitalist mode of production heralded the destruction of the Aboriginal mode.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE ARTICULATION OF THE CAPITALIST AND ABORIGINAL MODES

While the study of Aboriginal labour in the North Queensland cattle industry is an interesting local topic it does have much wider significance. The interaction between the capitalist and traditional systems which was taking place on the Australian frontier was occurring at the same time in other parts of the world including South Africa and Latin America. It has been argued by Marxist theorists that the process of incorporation of these peripheral economies into a changing world capitalist economy was determined by developments at the centre; the backwardness of Third World countries is not caused by factors internal to those societies but has resulted from the development of the richer countries. As a result the nature of the relationship between capitalism and pre-capitalist systems has been subjected to considerable scrutiny. Several schools of thought have emerged including dependency, underdevelopment and neo-colonialism. Within these schools vigorous debates have been waged and a vast literature produced. A number of theories have emanated variously termed structural dependency, mode of production, economic brokerage and internal colonisation. In general they have all analysed the articulation of capitalism with the pre-capitalist economic systems.[1]

The basic hypothesis of the theory of dependency is that development and underdevelopment are partial, interdependent, structures of one global system.[2] Andre Gunder Frank the leading defender of the dependency school believes that it was world capitalism which created the condition of underdevelopment and maintains its existence to this day.[3] His analysis explores the relationship of dependence and exploitation between the metropolitan centres and their satellites. According to Frank, the metropolitan power expropriates economic surplus from the colony in the exchange of commodities. He rejects both the conventional theories of "dualism"[4] and the notion that there are significant remnants of feudalism in their societies. He claims that Latin America has been capitalist from its inception, since it was already fully incorporated into the world market in the colonial period:

> The metropoli destroyed and/or totally transformed the earlier viable social and economic system of these societies, incorporated them into the metropolitan dominated world-wide capitalist system, and converted them into sources for its own metropolitan capital accumulation and development. The resulting fate of these conquered, transformed or newly acquired established societies was and remains their decapitalization, structurally generated unproductiveness, ever increasing misery for the masses – in a word, their underdevelopment.[5]

Proponents of the mode of production approach rejected Frank's view of the capitalist nature of Latin America and were critical of his preoccupation with markets. His omission of the relations of production in his definition of capitalism was considered a major shortcoming. Laclau for example argued that slavery and forced labour were the

dominant modes of production in Latin America and:

> this pre-capitalist character of the dominant relations of production . . . was not only *not* incompatible with production for world market, but was actually intensified by the expansion of the latter. The feudal regime of the haciendas tended to increase its servile exactions on the peasantry as the growing demands of the world market stimulated maximization of their surplus. Thus far from expansion of the external market acting as a disintegrating force on feudalism, its effect was rather to accentuate and consolidate it.[6]

The popularity of the notion of "articulation of the modes of production" can be traced to Pierre-Philipp Rey who distinguished three stages of articulation: 1. an initial link in the sphere of exchange where interaction with capitalism *reinforces* the pre-capitalist mode; 2. capitalism "takes root", subordinating the pre-capitalist modes but still making use of them; 3. the total disappearance of the pre-capitalist mode.[7] Rey's original insight was that:

> Capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceding modes of production, nor above all the relations of exploitation which characterize these modes of production. On the contrary, during the entire period it must reinforce these relations of exploitation, since it is only this development which permits its own provisioning with goods coming from these modes of production, or with men driven from these modes of production and therefore compelled to sell their labour power to capitalism in order to survive.[8]

Modes of production theorists believe that capitalism will not necessarily evolve from the preceding mode, nor does it necessarily dissolve it. Foster-Carter writes that far from capitalism banishing pre-capitalist forms "it not only coexists with them but buttresses them, and even on occasions devilishly conjures them up *ex nihilo*".[9] Thus the nature of social formations can be conceived as a single mode or a combination of modes none of which is dominant, or a combination of modes one of which is dominant.

Several other writers who have studied the nature of articulation but who are not necessarily aligned with the modes of production school, have postulated the possibility of capitalist development without capitalist transformation. They argue that the articulation of capitalism with the traditional modes produces a distinctive and different dependent capitalist mode of production. Amin for instance believes that in the peripheral dependent nations the capitalist mode is not exclusive nor is it identical with the formation at the centre. It is nevertheless dominant, determining the reproductive laws of the entire formation, acquiring values from other modes and determining the political and ideological supremacy of the dominant class. In his view, monetization, foreign trade and foreign investment are the three co-existing mechanism which transformed precapitalist modes of production into peripheral capitalism.[10]

The notion of rural entrepreneurs and economic brokers represents another aproach in studying the relationship between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies. It has been suggested that individuals play a major part in connecting local system with the wider socio-economic framework.[11] Norman Long argues that although the analysis of modes

of production enables us to:

> identify the type of horizontal relations that occur at local levels and helps to describe the ways in which these function to maintain certain types of vertical (or metropolitan-satellite) relations, we are left with a gap in our analysis if we do not also attempt to understand in detail the activities and strategies of such brokers.[12]

The colonial relationship in the theory of internal colonialism is characterised by two main elements: it occurs between two different countries; it involves domination, oppression and exploitation. Wolpe points out that much of the analysis of internal colonialism has been "based on the assumption that in the era of capitalist imperialism, exploitation everywhere takes place according to a single invariant mode".[13] He argues that the relationship of capitalism to non- or pre-capitalist modes of production may vary in a number of ways for different reasons:

> in one place the relationship of capital to non-capitalist mode of production may revolve around the extraction in different ways – by plunder, or the exchange of non-equivalent or by means of the process of price formation – of the commodities produced by the latter. . . At another place, the main focus of the relationship may be on the extraction, not of the product, but of labour power . . . While in both of these cases the associated political policy turns on the domination and preservation of the non-capitalist societies, in other instances the particular mode of economic exploitation may be destroying the non-capitalist societies.[14]

How relevant is this debate to Australia and North Queensland in particular? Independently of the accompanying ideology, the Marxist framework is a useful analytical method of studying Aboriginal/white relations. Most material in this debate covers Latin American and South African societies; when Australia has been mentioned the accompanying comments have been made with little knowledge of local historiography.Thus a leading figure in the modes of production school has erroneously identified Australia as having a capitalist mode from the beginning. Laclau wrote that only:

> in the pampas of Argentina, in Uruguay, and in other small areas, where no indigenous populations have previously existed – or where it had been very scarce and rapidly wiped out – did settlement assume capitalist forms from the beginning, which were then accentuated by the massive immigration of the nineteenth century. But these regions were more akin to the new settlements in temperate zones like Australia and New Zealand.[15]

Tony Barnett also believed the Frankian theory to be applicable to Australia and wrote that where:

> the indigenous population is reduced to insignificance and society is in essence a settler colony . . . total coercion resulting in many cases, in the virtual extermination of any indigenous population. This initial exercise of naked force is then followed by the construction of a new social and economic structure which entirely serves as a satellite of the colonising society.[16]

Mervyn Hartwig is one of the few Australian historians who has participated in the debate. He applied Wolpe's revised concept of internal colonialism to a preliminary analysis of Aboriginal/white relations in Australia. He acknowledges however the tentative nature of his work and points out that "many generalisations need to be elaborated on in greater detail with reference to the empirical data".[17]

* * * * *

A study of the nineteenth century North Queensland cattle industry reveals that this organisation incorporated aspects from both the capitalist and Aboriginal modes of production. This hybrid character needs to be examined more closely. In the capitalist mode of production, the ownership of the means of production is severed from the ownership of labour power. According to Marxist analysis, the owners of land are thus able to expropriate some of the returns to labour by paying less than its full value. In the Aboriginal mode, land had more than economic significance and was of social and religious importance as well. The clan's territory belonged to the entire group and they in turn belonged to it. Reciprocity and sharing were also fundamental to traditional society. Women contributed the bulk of the ordinary food – vegetables, small animals, shellfish, eggs and so on while the males contributed the larger meats such as kangaroo and emu. The catch was pooled and distributed among the whole group. Thus the Aboriginal mode was based on common ownership of land and the division of labour was based on sex. In usurping the land from the Aborigines, pastoralists were in effect separating the blacks from their means of production and subsistence. Europeans justified this in the name of progress. The editor of the *Port Denison Times* considered the squatters to be the avant courier of civilization. However he believed that the only tenable argument:

> that will justify us white men in Australia for taking possession of the country and holding it against the prior occupants is that we improve the ground more than they did, and that under our occupation it will produce more, and be more beneficial to the human race than it would under theirs.[18]

The strategy was clear. The traditional mode of production was to be totally replaced by the economic system of the metropolitan power.

The capitalist mode of production brought with it a transfer of European attitudes and values including the conflict between classes which emerged in the first quarter of the nineteenth century in England. Central to that attack on capitalism was the sense of exploitation. According to labour, capitalists made their profits by expropriating the surplus value of workers. Capitalists on the other hand claimed that the surplus value was simply the return on capital invested. The conflict between labour and capital lost little of its impetus in the transfer to the remote North Queensland pastoral stations.

A different relationship developed between Aborigines and their European employers in the pastoral industry. Squatters justified their exploitation of blacks on the grounds that they were contributing to the Aborigines' well-being by civilizing them and

providing protection. For instance Percival Walsh of *Iffley* wrote that:

> boys are very willing to leave their tribe and go with the white man: and is this not better than their running about the bush living from hand to mouth and a prey for the native police.[19]

Squatters believed that with respect to their black employees the relationship between "masters and servants [was] a credit to [the] community".[20] Nevertheless the rapport between Aborigines and Europeans was ambivalent: while the pastoralists provided protection for black employees, they also used considerable violence against them. Rey has argued that the articulation of the capitalist mode with all other modes of production except feudalism is a prolonged process because other pre-capitalist modes are fiercely resistant to change; violence is therefore a necessary component of the "natural economy" which has to be broken by extra-economic means.[21]

Exploitation of Aborigines became a common feature of the northern industry. If wages were paid at all, they were considerably less than the prevailing European rate. Initially however pastoralists were only interested in the acquisition of land. They obviously had no plan to utilize the local labour force as the interlopers frequently spent the first six years or so dispersing, killing and dispossessing the Aborigines – hardly the tactics of a group bent on taking advantage of the cheap labour. As the editor of the *Port Denison Times* observed in 1880, there can be:

> no question that the English race are good colonisers, but somehow they do not make the most of their acquisitions. It is possible to conceive that had people of another race occupied this vast country they would have endeavoured to utilize the natives, not destroy them at any rate they would have tried that first.[22]

Moreover the initial impetus for allowing the Aborigines into the stations was to conserve capital rather than to obtain workers. Although disliking the blacks intensely, Robert Gray decided to let them in on his property in 1869. At least that way he considered he could keep an eye on their activities.[23] The blacks in the region had waged a highly successful economic campaign against the pastoralists taking a heavy toll of sheep cattle and stores and even forcing some pioneers to abandon their runs. Reynolds and Loos consider that "Aboriginal resistance presented a many pronged threat to the economic viability of frontier squatting".[24]

In the mining industry, where capital was less vulnerable and valuable, no efforts were made to bring in the Aborigines. Kirkman found that on the Palmer the only limited conciliatory attempts were initiated by a single pastoralist and a handful of native police officers.[25] Similarly Wegner noted that on the Etheridge "no conciliation was effected on the mining frontier, conflict continuing until the mid 1880's when the starving remnants of the tribes "came in" to the various mining towns".[26] Moreover, in the sea industry which often depended for its survival on a large supply of cheap labour, blacks were recruited by deceit or outright kidnapping from the earliest stages of contact.[27] In fact squatters appear to have tried all other avenues before resorting to the widespread use of

Aboriginal labour in the north. European immigrants were expensive, difficult to obtain and often incompetent. Imported coloured labour was cheaper, easier to handle, but was ultimately restricted by legislation to tropical and semi-tropical agriculture. It was not until the chronic shortage of labour resulting from the northern gold rushes that Aborigines began to be a prominent feature of the industry.

Once Aborigines had been exposed to the capitalist mode of production a slow process of alienation from their traditional lifestyle was set in train. Whereas the Aboriginal mode was based on reciprocity and sharing, the central tenet of the capitalist mode was individualism. No longer was production distributed according to needs but rewards were proportional with individual effort. This meant that blacks were discouraged from sharing returns with their fellow clan members as they would have done in traditional life. One North Queenslander's objection to giving his young Aboriginal stockmen wages was the "old blacks about town [got] them to buy grog and [gave] it to them to get drunk on".[28] He preferred to buy the items the men needed himself ensuring that they personally got the benefit of their own labour. In reality this was an example of an attack on kinship and reciprocity, an attempt to impose the individualism of the capitalist mode. Another way that this occurred was in the system of feeding station blacks. Aboriginal employees were fed from a communal source away from the unemployed in the station camp. This particularly affected the older clan members who were unfit for work in the capitalist mode and were left without the assistance of the younger members who in traditional life would have contributed to their upkeep. As it has already been pointed out in Chapter 4, squatters did not consider that they had an obligation to feed these dependents who had not contributed to the operations of the station.[29]

On occasions a strong bond developed between Europeans and individual black companions who were portrayed in contemporary accounts as faithful and childlike black servants. A *Queenslander* correspondent reported that when the Flinders pioneer James McLean died he would be missed by many in the district and especially by his "blackboy Sandy whom he treated more as a son than anything".[30] In another instance M.M. Bennett considered that her father's Aboriginal companion would "die for him or anyone belonging to him".[31] Obviously when such a relationship developed there was a transfer of loyalty from the clan to the employer. Because these Aborigines were conforming to European expectations they were highly lauded and held up as "ideal" blacks.[32]

How successfully were the Aborigines incorporated into the capitalist mode of production? It was unrealistic of squatters to expect their newly contacted Aboriginal workers to display the labour patterns of the capitalist system. These disciplines had emerged only with the introduction of large scale machine-powered industry. Prior to this the European work pattern had been one of alternate bouts of intense labour and idleness whenever men were in control of their own working lives. Through a slow process of external and internal pressure involving the division of labour, fines, bells, and clocks,

money incentives, preachings and schoolings, the suppression of fairs and sports, new labour habits were formed and a new time discipline imposed. This process sometimes took several generations to achieve.[33] Moreover the perception of wages as proof of usefulness rather than proof of destitution only emerged between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Ivan Illich has pointed out that during the Middle Ages, wage-labour was a "badge of misery" and that when a man engaged in it "not occasionally as the member of a household but as a regular means of total support, he clearly signalled to the community that he like a widow or an orphan had no household, and so, stood in need of public assistance".[34] Aboriginal employees in the cattle industry could not instantly absorb the capitalist labour patterns. Consequently the general consensus among employers of black labour was that it was unreliable and in need of supervision. Appraising accounts from all parts of the Colony in 1874 the Aboriginal Commission concluded that "although there are exceptions, and Aborigines are in some instances satisfactorily employed by settlers and others, yet, upon the whole, they have an unconquerable aversion to persistent labour".[35] Relating the difficulties encountered with Cape York Aborigines in establishing a plantation, McLaren expressed the view that it was "no easy task to persuade the natives to work on succeeding days. We worked yesterday and are tired and would rest, they would say adding pointedly that in their habitual mode of life they worked not at all and hunted only when need for it was on them".[36] While Aborigines were sometimes prepared to submit to European labour habits for a period to achieve a short-term goal, many were unwilling to do this on a permanent basis. Europeans interpreted their actions as laziness.

The reasons for lack of motivation are only now becoming apparent as our understanding of hunting and gathering increases. At the time of contact hunting and gathering was perceived as a lifestyle where sheer hardships were experienced with the entire time being devoted to eking out a minimal existence. Consequently Europeans did not understand that employment in the pastoral industry where workers were required to toil from dawn to dusk six days a week was a retrograde step for the Aborigines. It was not until the Man the Hunter symposium in 1966 that new light was shed on the supposed hardships of a hunting and gathering existence. Thus Marshall Sahlins' revised view is that the hunter's life:

> is not as difficult as it looks from the outside. In some ways the economy reflects dire ecology but it is also a complete inversion. Reports of hunting and gathering of the ethnological present – specifically on those in marginal environments – suggests a mean of 3 to 5 hours per adult worker per day in food production. Hunters keep bankers' hours, notably less than modern industrial workers (unionized) who would surely settle for a 21-35 hour week.[37]

Because of Aborigines' unwillingness to conform to the standards of the capitalist mode of production employers often looked upon them as having low intellectual ability. This was reinforced by the prevailing scientific theories including phrenology and Social

Darwinism which placed the Australian Aborigines on the lowest scale of humanity.[38] Two developments emerged from this situation. Firstly violence was justified on the grounds of racial inferiority. Reynolds noted that "numerous observers referred to the causal link between racial hatred and frontier violence".[39] By resorting to physical abuse however employers were further reducing the output of their Aboriginal employees as a positive relationship existed between blacks' productive capacity and the employers' behaviour. Personal observation had convinced M.M. Bennett that the blacks would "make any effort for people whom they are fond of, and they will take a great pride in performing their work well, but if they are bullied they lose heart".[40] Belief in low Aboriginal intellectual ability also caused employers to adopt a paternalistic attitude to their black employees. One South Australian pastoralist who had been using black labour for 12 years was of the opinion that in all but very rare cases "blacks [were] just like children, and want treating as such".[41] This type of thinking, common among squatters, affected the quality of work as it presupposed that the Aboriginal race which often exhibited childlike simplicity was in fact inferior. Thus in response to paternalism Aborigines frequently accommodated their subservient status by producing childlike work. A. P. Elkin wrote that "this [was] part of their accommodation to what they sense[d] was inferred [was] expected".[42]

Even after Aborigines had been exposed to the capitalist mode of production the link obviously remained tenuous for some time. In 1886 a correspondent complained that blacks in the Gulf were "being slowly starved to death" because they were being chased away from their usual hunting grounds.[43] The normal justification for this practice was that among other things cattle were disturbed by the smell of blacks. This was obviously grossly exaggerated as Aboriginal stockmen would not have been able to work cattle so successfully had they been as sensitive to the smell of Aborigines as claimed by contemporaries. One Queenslander who had a vast experience of the blacks[44] was of the opinion that "at the bottom of all the opposition to their being allowed on runs is not that they disturb cattle but that it is hard to keep or get work from the boys employed if there are any camps about, as they are so fond of their relatives and hunting".[45]

Another difficulty in converting Aborigines to the capitalist mode of production was their non-economic affinity with the land. As C. and R. Berndt wrote, the local descent group:

> was responsible for looking after the stretch of country that they held as a hallowed trust. This had come to them from their sacred past, through their ancestors in the male line, and they in turn must pass it on intact, unharmed to their descendants. "Looking after" meant caring for and attending to, especially by performing the appropriate rites, prescribed from the past, related (for instance) to the mythical characters who were spiritually part of that country.[46]

While Europeans had managed to separate the land from the Aborigines in an economic sense they were not so successful in severing the Aborigines' spiritual link with the land.

Aboriginal stockmen at work on *Riversleigh*, ca. 1918 (courtesy of Mrs A.E. Becker)

Thus when a required religious ceremony was staged many blacks simply left the station, returning when their social and religious obligations were completed.[47] Aborigines were able to move readily from the capitalist to the Aboriginal mode because their hunting and gathering skills made them independent of the capitalist mode of production. Although European occupation had seriously damaged the Aboriginal means of subsistence, the blacks were nevertheless able to find sufficient food to enable them to return to their traditional lifestyle for intermittent periods.

One indication that Aboriginal employees were not perceived as part of the normal capitalist mode was the fact that no attempts were made to indenture them prior to 1897. Some squatters had experienced indentured Melanesian labour and would have applied the same system to Aborigines if they had thought it feasible. In reality, although blacks were prepared to accept imposition of the capitalist mode intermittently, they still retained much of their traditional Aboriginal lifestyle. According to Jay and Peter Read:

> Europeans often thought because Aborigines had accepted the trappings of material culture, and obeyed the rules, that they had accepted the whole of European culture but most Aborigines maintain that what was important to the Aboriginal culture was forced underground but retained.[48]

To use Aboriginal labour squatters had to adopt a more flexible approach than they did with white workers. Employers were able to accommodate the blacks' lack of commitment to the capitalist mode by making agreements for a specific period such as "two moons"[49] or by sending blacks away from the stations during quieter periods.[50] In this manner Aborigines were able to retain their traditional skills. The seasonal nature of station employment permitted such a system to operate. Employers made the effort to accommodate Aborigines in this manner because in the northern cattle industry parts of the traditional Aboriginal mode had become integral aspects of station management. The unfenced and rambling properties of the nineteenth century would have been impossible to manage without the tracking skills of Aboriginal stockmen together with their knowledge of local country. Recalling his experience with Aboriginal workers, A. J. Cotton believed that they had been of most benefit to the large nineteenth century cattle stations. He wrote that they were:

> of no real use once the big stations were cut up into smaller areas. They were a lazy race at any work but in the saddle, and with few exceptions showed no aptitude for anything else. They have served their purpose in assisting the white man to pioneer Australia in the same way that the Indians of America have done, and their fate is similar.[51]

On cattle stations mustering was normally done by groups of stockmen under the supervision of a European headstockman or manager, a type of organisation acceptable to the blacks who had the company of fellow Aborigines as they did in traditional life. The organisation also met with the approval of Europeans as black stockmen could be supervised which was deemed necessary. North Queensland sheep properties by contrast were

organised on a totally capitalist mode of production from the early 1880s.[52] Those Aborigines who found work there performed much the same role as those who worked around towns; they were engaged at rough and menial work which no one else would do.

There are certain similarities between a plantation system and the situation in the North Queensland cattle industry. Both used labour intensive methods in a bid to participate in the international market. In addition they resorted to non-market mechanisms of labour-force mobilization. J. R. Mandle who had made a detailed study of a plantation economy writes that:

> A plantation economy, because of the plantations' economic dominance and the characteristic chronic relative shortage of labor associated with this kind of production, requires some form of coercion to satisfy its manpower requirements. As a result of this coercion, work as unskilled labor on the estates is the only employment option available to the population, and ultimately such labor is compelled by the state through officially sanctioned legislation and violence.[53]

The northern industry was characterised by manpower shortages until the mid 1880s. Moreover Aborigines were compelled to work on stations for part of the time at least if they remained in their tribal territory due to the fact that land legislators had rapidly allocated almost all the land leaving very little unoccupied territory.[54] The proposition that North Queensland cattle stations could be classified as a plantation economy however is invalidated by the fact that antecedent cultural norms of the Aboriginal mode were not destroyed but preserved.[55]

In time, as the value of Aboriginal labour became increasingly evident and numbers diminished, physical abuse was accordingly reduced.[56] In 1900 Frank Anning of *Reedy Springs* stated that he took a great interest in the blacks and thought they were too valuable to be illtreated as he often had to depend on them.[57] The following expressions of support for the valuable nature of black labour were collected by one official who surveyed leading pastoralists in the Gulf in 1903:

> As stock-riders, better than ordinary pick-up hands (W. Ormsby Wiley, Milgarra).
> Better than the class walking about the Gulf (John Epworth, Delta Downs).
> They suit the purpose just as well as white labour (W. Wright, Wallabadah).
> As good and, in a great many instances, better (G.A. Bristow, Miranda Downs).
> Have proved more reliable than the general class of white stockmen in this district (Thos. A. Simpson, late manager Carpentaria Downs, Forest Home, and Magowra stations).
> Better than the general run of pick-up white men. They know the country better, and are more biddable (A.H. Underwood, Midlothian).
> Better than the average white (Daniel Thorn, drover and station manager since 1872).
> As stock-riders and bushmen in many cases superior to the general station hands (Reginald Hillcoat, Boomarra).
> They are preferable and far more reliable than white labour among cattle, always sober, and more biddable (John T. Roberts, Pastoral Inspector for the Bank of New South Wales).

> As good (J.V. Wilson, manager, Forest Home).
> Compare favourable with the ordinary class of white stockmen (Ross Maclean, manager, Magowra).[58]

The apparent acceptance of Aboriginal workers in the industry by white employees too was quite remarkable given the level of agitation directed at Melanesian and Chinese labour in Queensland at the time.[59] This may have been due to the fact that the status difference between Aborigines and Europeans was so great that the former were never perceived as a threat. However, it is also likely that Europeans were aware of the complementarity of the two modes of production in the cattle industry.

How closely did the North Queensland situation correspond to Rey's three stages of articulation? Due to the hunting and gathering nature of the Aboriginal mode, little surplus was available for exchange so the first stage of articulation was never present. Throughout the nineteenth century however the situation conforms closely to the second stage where capitalism had taken root, subordinating the Aboriginal mode as a result of the blacks' dispossession from the land. Nevertheless the capitalist mode still made use of certain aspects of the pre-capitalist mode – particularly tracking skills. The physical segregation of black employees on cattle stations helped to maintain and reinforce Aboriginal values and skills which were vital to the cattle industry.

The study of Aboriginal labour is an important component of the history of northern settlement, the pastoral industry and race relations in the past. Many of these patterns are still apparent today. However the frontier phenomenon had more than local significance. It was part of a world-wide mosaic created by the industrialised powers in the nineteenth century. Serious constraints on the future development of Europe were imposed by the shortage of land. As one historian has written "shortage of this resource was potentially the Archilles heel of European economic development".[60] However the penetration of underdeveloped regions such as Australia provided a solution to the problem. While it might appear that on the Australian frontier "the existing social order was not transformed so much as replaced by an alien culture"[61] the North Queensland cattle industry invalidates this proposition. There, the articulation of capitalism with the Aboriginal mode produced a hybrid progeny which retained its characteristics well into the twentieth century. The history of remote North Queensland cattle stations can thus be seen as fitting into some of the major patterns of modern world history.

# ENDNOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. N.G. Butlin, "The Shape of the Australian Economy, 1861-1900", *Economic Record,* Vol. 34, No. 67, April, 1958, p. 21. (Hereafter *E.R.*)

2. An important consideration was the construction of the railway west from Townsville, the first section of which was opened in 1880. The proposed Transcontinental Railway linking the Gulf with the southern districts of Queensland which was widely mooted in the early 1880s also stimulated investment in sheep. This proposal however was not put into operation nor was an alternative plan to connect Normanton and Cloncurry by rail.

3. N. Corfield, The Development of the Cattle Industry in Queensland, 1840-1890. B.A.(Hons) Thesis, Uni. of Q'ld, 1959, p. 97.

4. *Queenslander,* 10 October 1896, p. 677.

5. *Ibid.,* 29 January 1898, p. 204.

6. Letter to Ed. for EKV, *ibid.*, 1 March 1884, p. 332.

7. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1884, p. 219.

8. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1884, p. 579.

9. *Ibid.*, 10 October 1896, p. 677.

10. *Queensland Votes and Proceedings,* 1874, Vol. 2, pp. 439-442.

11. P. Biskup, *Not Slaves Not Citizens: The Aboriginal Problem in Western Australia 1898-1954*, Brisbane, 1973, pp. 39-40.

12. B. McGuiness, "Reviews 'Not Slaves Not Citizens' ", *Identity,* Vol. 1, No. 9, January 1974, p. 11.

13. *Townsville Daily Bulletin,* 20 November 1981, p. 4.

14. *Ibid.*, 23 November 1981, p. 4.

## CHAPTER ONE

1. B. Kingston, Theory and Practice in the Pastoral Settlement of Queensland, 1859-1869, B.A. Thesis, Uni. of Q'ld, 1963, pp. 3-4.

2. *Queenslander*, 4 December 1975. For further discussion on agrarianism see G. Lewis "Queensland Nationalism and Australian Capitalism" in E.L. Wheelwright and K. Buckley (Eds) *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism*, Vol. 2, Sydney, 1978 and G.C. Bolton, "How We Got to Here" in T. Van Dugteren (Ed.) *Rural Australia – the Other Nation*, Sydney, 1978.

3. Under the tender system land was licensed to the squatter who was willing to pay the largest licence fee.

4. *Queensland Statutes*, 24 Victoria No. 11 *An Act for Regulating the occupation of Unoccupied Crown Lands in the Unsettled Districts.*

5. A. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, Townsville, 1977, pp. 18-19. (Hereafter *Taming*).

6. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

8. *Queensland Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 2, 1867 2nd Session, p. 779. (Hereafter *QVP*). See M. Powell, The Rise, Courses and Consequences of the Crisis of 1866 in Queensland. B.Econ. Hons Thesis, Uni. of Q'ld, 1969 for an analysis of the depression.

9. *QVP*, 1867 2nd Session, Vol. 2, pp. 773-774.

10. *QVP*, 1868-9, Vol. 1, pp. 459-460; *Queenslander*, 20 February 1869.

11. *Queenslander*, 20 February 1869.

12. Source: 1866-1867 *QVP*, 1868, pp. 62-63; 1868-1870 *QVP*, 1871, p. 551. These figures represent absolute forfeitures. Frequently extensive lists of provisional forfeitures were published but according to Section 24 of the 1860 Act, lessees could defeat the forfeiture by payment within 90 days from the original rent of the full annual rent together with an additional quarter by way of penalty. Provisional forfeitures for 1866 were Burke 39, Cook 15, North Kennedy 28 and South Kennedy 20. *Queenslander*, 15 December 1866.

13. *Queensland Year Book 1901*, p. 127.

14. It was alleged that many members of the Assembly who assented to the pre-emptive purchase clause of the Act did not realise until after the Act had become law that a run might mean a block of 25 square miles and "that a lessee with a dozen blocks could secure strategic freeholds in as many different parts of his holding". The provision however remained unaltered until 1884. Government of Queensland, *Our First Half-Century*, Brisbane, 1909, p. 58.

15. R. Gray, *Reminiscences of India and North Queensland*, London, 1913, pp. 163-164. (Hereafter *Reminiscences*).

16. *Report of Commissioner of Crown Lands, QVP*, 1874, Vol. 2.

17. Improvements took the form of dwelling cottages and stock yards to the value of £1 682.10.0 on *Salisbury Plains;* £718 on *Strathdon* and £329 on *Proserpine. QVP*, Vol. 2, 1874, pp. 556-557.

18. The Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands expressed his disappointment at this in his 1870 Report, *QVP*, 1871, p. 541. However, under the provisions of the existing law, a large number of runs forfeited during 1869 and 1870 were unavailable for application as all forfeited runs had to be submitted to auction.

19. Source: 1876 *QVP*, 1876, Vol. 3, p. 198; 1880 *QVP*, 1881, Vol. 2, p. 152; 1881 *QVP*, 1882, Vol. 2, p. 632; 1882 *QVP*, 1883, p. 500; 1883 *QVP*, 1884, Vol. 2, p. 1056; 1884 *QVP*, 1885, Vol. 2, p. 1166.

20. *Queenslander*, 7 July 1877 Supplement, p. 17.

21. *Ibid.*, 18 August 1883, p. 263.

22. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1889, p. 538.

23. *Queensland Official Year Book 1901*, p. 128.

24. P.R. Gordon, *The Pastoral Industry*, London, 1886, p. 4.

25. In 1886 88½ square miles was resumed from the total consolidation. The annual rental of the remaining 370½ square miles was set at £421.16.6 per annum for the first five years. Queensland State Archives, Run File for *Glendower* LAN/AF1170.

26. Source: *Lands Department Reports, QVP.*

27. *QVP,* Vol. 1, 1886, pp. 374-375.

28. A copy of this booklet appears in the records collected by M.M. Bennett when compiling the history of Robert Christison. Microfilm copy in JCU – original held at John Oxley Library. (Hereafter Bennett MSS).

29. *Queenslander*, 1 March, 1884, p. 338.

30. *Ibid.*, 13 September 1884, p. 435. Cooper and Mytton bought *Wando Vale* in 1872. It had previously been owned by James Gibson, (*Pugh's Almanac,* 1869, p. 207), and Mitchell and Stenhouse (*Pugh's Almanac,* 1870, p. 253). Edward Mytton overlanded sheep to *Oak Park* in 1864 and took up the property in conjunction with Jones. J. Black, *North Queensland Pioneers,* Charters Towers, (1931), p. 81. (Hereafter *Pioneers*).

31. *Queensland Official Year Book 1901,* p. 128.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

33. J.H. Kelly, *Report on Beef Cattle Industry in Northern Australia.* Canberra, 1952, p. 51. (Hereafter *Report*).

34. The first person to lodge a claim for a run with the Bowen office – Allingham, *Taming,* p. 24.

35. E. Palmer, *Early Days in North Queensland,* Sydney, 1903, p. 134. (Hereafter *Early Days*).

36. G.C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away,* Canberra, 1970, p. 24. (Hereafter *Thousand*).

37. In 1868 the Australian Pastoral Company was floated in England. The specific object of the Company was to deal with an offer by Messrs Towns and Co. who it was alleged had upwards of 10 000 square miles of Crown land lease including the *Plains of Promise, Myall Downs* and *Burdekin Meadows* in North Queensland. The prospectus made the ludicrous claim that "under ordinary circumstances the return from a run only partially stocked, may be put at from 12-15 per cent for the first year or 2 of its occupation, and that each subsequent year the increase of flocks and herds is progressive until the run is fully stocked, when it may be put at from 20 to 30 per cent". Reprinted in *Queenslander*, 12 September 1868, p. 11. The company obviously failed to attract the desired £600 000 capital and most of Towns and Co.'s north Queensland runs were soon after abandoned.

38. D.S. MacMillan, "The Scottish Australian Company and Pastoral Development in Queensland 1860-1890", *Royal Historical Society of Queensland,* Vol. 6, No. 2, 1959-1960, p. 463. (Hereafter *R.H.S.Q.*) A half share in the company was owned by Morehead and Young, Australian representatives for Scottish Australian Company, a quarter share owned by William Landsborough with E.B. Cornish and N. Buchanan each holding a one eighth share, p. 459.

39. N.G. Butlin, "Company Ownership of New South Wales Pastoral Stations, 1865-1900", *Historical Studies,* Vol. 4, No. 14, May 1950, p. 70. (Hereafter *H.S.*).

40. There is some difficulty with the notion "company" because some firms incorporating the word "company" in their title were in fact partnerships. In addition as the publishers of *Pugh's Almanac* acknowledge, there was likely to be errors and omissions in the listings.

41. Source: Compiled from *Pugh's Almanac.*

42. Butlin, *H.S.*, p. 98.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

44. *Queenslander*, 22 August 1885, p. 321; 6 October 1888, p. 614; 28 December 1889, p. 1241; 6 June 1891, p. 1104.

45. It is more difficult to use the Brands Returns to gauge ownership in Kennedy and Cook districts because of the inclusion of grazing farms in the Brands Returns.

46. Compiled from Brands Assessment Returns, *QVP*, 1890, Vol.3, p.943.

47. Before this period the banks generally preferred not to accept liens directly from squatters and consequently it was far more common to find that they were taken as security by merchants who sought their own funds from the banks. The banks' reasons for this was to avoid locking up funds in securities which might not give a quick return and was strengthened by their past experiences in realising properties which they had acquired during the 1840s. A. Barnard, *The Australian Wool Industry 1840-1900,* Melbourne, 1958, pp. 118-119.

48. N.G. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900,* Cambridge, 1964, p. 34. (Hereafter *Investment*).

49. Between 1861 and 1875 a sum of £31 585 was spent on capital equipment (exclusive of stock) at *Warrah*, N.S.W. £18 277 was provided by the shareholders, mostly resident in England and £13 308 from retained earnings – J.R. Robertson, "Equipping

a Pastoral Property: Warrah, 1861-1875", *Business Archives and History*, Vol. 44, No. 1, February, 1964, p. 25. (Hereafter *B.A.H.*). In 1864 British shareholders in Queensland Sheep Investment Co. contributed £78 087 to purchase *Rawbelle* in the Burnett district – *Queenslander*, 12 January 1867, p. 12.

50. G.E. Dalrymple was the leader of a private expedition to the Burdekin in 1859. The undertaking was financed by a group of Sydney capitalists. Dalrymple became the first Commissioner of Crown Lands in Bowen in 1861. For more details see J. Farnfield, *Frontiersman*, Melbourne, 1968.
R.G. Herbert wrote to his mother on 18 May 1863 that "On my arrival [in Queensland] I found that the Scotts have entered into a squatting business reserving a place for me". B. Knox (Ed.) *The Queensland Years of R. Herbert: Premier: Letters and Papers*, Brisbane, 1977.

51. Bolton, *Thousand*, p. 32.

52. G.C. Bolton, "Valley of Lagoons", *B.A.H.*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1964, p. 107.

53. Allingham, *Taming*, p. 34.

54. Petition concerning Pastoral Leases in Northern District, *QVP*, 1867, 2nd session, Vol. 2, pp. 773-774. The wealthy Melbourne merchant and grazier William de Graves who held *Dotswood* in the 1860s was one who bitterly criticised the administration of the (Victorian) Lands Department for failing to protect the rights of pastoralists against selectors and jobbers. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 4, 1851-1890, p. 41.

55. Allingham, *Taming*, p. 50.

56. The pair were so poor that they lived on game to conserve their sheep. M.M. Bennett, *Christison of Lammermoor*, pp. 52-56. (Hereafter *Christison*).

57. A.J. Cotton, *With the Big Herds in Australia*, Brisbane, 1933, p. 89. (Hereafter *Herds*).

58. D. Adams (Ed.) *The Letters of Rachel Henning*, Sydney, 1954, p. vi. It appears that Henning was initially in partnership with the Tuckers at *Exmoor*. See Rachel to Boyce, 7 August 1864. (Hereafter *Letters*).

59. B5, W.J. Scott to A.J. Scott, 22 May 1874, in Valley of Lagoons Correspondence on microfilm in JCU. (Hereafter Scott Correspondence).

60. Farnfield, *Frontiersman*, p. 113.

61. Bennett, *Christison*, p. 118.

62. Gray, *Reminiscences*, p. 164.

63. *Lyndhurst* station. See *Queenslander*, 3 March 1877, p. 13.

64. So called because he made a lot of money out of the gold bearing stone below the watertable. Stubley was the major syndicate member in the two biggest mines in Charters Towers in the early 1870s. This is discussed in more detail by Diane Menghetti in the second chapter of *Readings in North Queensland Mining Industry*, Vol. 2, edited by K. Kennedy to be released in 1982.

65. *Queenslander*, 23 August 1879, p. 249; 29 July 1882, p. 131.

66. Gray, *Reminiscences*, p. 166.

67. *Queenslander*, 20 January 1877, p. 7. This property had been originally taken up by Towns and Stuart but later abandoned.

68. *Queenslander*, 13 May 1882, p. 582.

69. *Ibid.*, 10 August 1878, p. 661.

70. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1880, p. 699.

71. *Ibid.*, 13 November 1880, p. 633.

72. *Ibid.*, 28 October 1882. *Donor's Hill* was settled with sheep by the Brodie Bros. early in 1865 (Palmer, *Early*) but was converted to cattle by the Brodies. By 1890 the property carried both sheep and cattle. *QVP*, 1890, Vol. 3, p. 938.

73. *Queenslander*, 3 April 1880, p. 423. In 1866 A.H. Palmer was elected to the Legislative Assembly and served as Queensland Premier between 1870 and 1874.

74. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1881.

75. *Ibid.*, 21 January 1881, p. 71.

76. October Report reprinted in *Queenslander*, 4 November 1882, p. 633.

77. To gain the confidence and money of the British investor, it was not only necessary to be incorporated, but also to have the head office located there. N. Cain, "Capital Structure and Financial Disequilibrium: Pastoral Companies in Australia 1880-1893, *Australian Economic Papers*, September, 1962, p. 2. (Hereafter *A.E.P.*).

78. Barnard, *Wool*

79. G. Wood, *Borrowing and Business in Australia*, London, 1930, p. 51. (Hereafter *Borrowing*). Cain, *A.E.P.*, p. 3.

80. W.A. Sinclair, *The Process of Economic Development in Australia*, Melbourne, 1976, pp. 147-151. (Hereafter *Process*).

81. *Queenslander*, 25 May 1895, p. 971.

82. Compiled from *Pugh's Almanac*, 1889, pp. B66-B88.

83. Butlin, *E.R.*, p. 24.

84. Bolton, *Thousand*, p. 42.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

86. Diary of Joseph Hann and Family. Entry 7 April 1865. Held in JCU.

87. The traditional view was that fencing was originally introduced as a labour and cost saving device, e.g., Barnard, *Wool*, p. 13. Sinclair writes that "the association between some fencing in the 1850s and its proximity to the Victorian gold fields was probably that miners were available there to build fences on a part-time basis. Since fence-building is labour intensive it is not obvious why it would be helped by a shortage of labour. The outflow of labour from the goldfields from the later 1850s is therefore likely to have encouraged fencing. Although the motives of pastoralists in adopting fencing appears to have been complex, the labour-saving aspect of the new technology does not appear to have been uppermost in their minds. Increasingly over time it appears to have been the demonstrated effect of fencing on output which was the important influence". Sinclair, *Process*, p. 120.

88. Third Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Sheep, *QVP*, 1871, pp. 1015-1020; Gray, *Reminiscences*, p. 194.

89. The shepherding system however had a detrimental effect on wool production. An experiment was carried out in 1871 on the northern New South Wales property *Warrah* to assess the advantage of paddocking sheep over the shepherding system. Paddocked sheep were found to be less susceptible to disease and the wool was more mellow to the touch, cleaner and therefore very much more easily and quickly washed. Robertson, *B.A.H.*, p. 33.

90. Rachel to Etta, 17 September 1864, Adams, *Letters*.

91. Robert Herbert to his sister Jane, 17 January 1865, Knox, *Herbert.*

92. *Queenslander,* 3 August 1867, p. 11. See Appendix B for a typical station's stores order.

93. A mob of cattle boiled down at Townsville consisted of over 200 head from *Dotswood* and realised an average price of £6 per head. *Port Denison Times,* 24 July 1869. (Hereafter *PDT*).

94. *Queenslander,* 23 January 1875, p. 12.

95. Tracing the historical origins and development of the Australian character, Russel Ward highlighted the rough and ready nature of the bush worker on the pastoral frontier and his ability to improvise and turn his hand to anything. R. Ward, *The Australian Legend,* Melbourne, 1966. (Hereafter *Legend*).

96. Diary of Joseph Hann and Family. Entry 27 May 1864. *Bluff Downs* was stocked with sheep at the time and with shepherds engaged full time in the supervision of flocks, there would have been less underemployed labour available for construction work than would have been the case with cattle.

97. *Queenslander,* 29 May 1875, p. 12.

98. *Ibid.*, 7 September 1878, pp. 720-721.

99. *Ibid.*, 3 November 1883, p. 717. Along with *Eulolo* and *Strathfield, Beaudesert* was held in the name of Collins, White and Co.

100. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1880, p. 699.

101. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1877, p. 7.

102. *Loc. cit.*

103. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1877.

104. *Ibid.*, 28 October 1882, p. 601.

105. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1875, p. 5.

106. Palmer, *Early Days,* p. 139.

107. Black, *Pioneers,* p. 72.

108. *Queenslander,* 19 July 1884, pp. 115-116.

109. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1881, p. 460.

110. *Queenslander,* 15 October 1881, p. 512.

111. At the time cartage from the station to Normanton was between £5-£6 per ton of 2 000 pounds. At *Elderslie,* the fencing, buildings, dams, tanks and wells cost over £50 000 to construct. *Queenslander,* 17 December 1887, p. 962.

112. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1889, p. 886.

113. Macmillan, *R.H.S.Q.,* p. 471. The cost of fencing very much depended on the availability of suitable post material on the property.

114. The greatest number of sheep on the property was 170 000, but this was reduced to 50 000. H. Fysh, *Taming the North,* Sydney, 1950. (Hereafter *Taming the North*)

115. Cited in Fysh, *ibid.*, p. 118.

116. *Kamilaroi* — a slab house with thatched roof and flagged floor, *Queenslander,* 11 January 1879, p. 46; *Elvira*'s homestead was built entirely of tea tree bark, *Queenslander,* 18 January 1879, p. 77; at *Lawn Hill* there was an iron house with a rough sapling fence, *Queenslander,* 9 November 1878, p. 185.

117. Nimmo Diaries. *Oak Park* Station Records held in JCU. Entries 8 January 1889 to 1 April 1889 for details of how mustering was carried out.

118. *Queenslander,* 10 May 1879.

119. *Ibid.*, 23 January 1875, p. 12.

120. *Ibid.*, 17 January 1874.

121. *PDT,* 1 June 1872.

122. C. Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland,* London, 1872, p. 73. (Hereafter *Wife*).

123. See Nimmo Diary entry, 1 April 1889.

124. *Queenslander,* 9 November 1878, p. 186.

125. Gray, *Reminiscences,* p. 40.

126. *Queenslander,* 1 September 1877, p. 17.

127. *Ibid.*, 1 November 1879, p. 557.

128. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1878, p. 217.

129. *Ibid.*, 25 April 1885, p. 653.

130. *Ibid.*, 20 May 1882, p. 615.

131. *Ibid.*, 2 May 1885, p. 712.

132. First three bores were put down by Queensland government at Charleville J. Tolson of *Corinda* and Robert Christison of *Lammermoor.*

133. *Queenslander,* 26 November 1892, p. 1052.

134. *Ibid.*, 17 September 1892.

135. *Ibid.*, 4 November 1892.

136. *Ibid.*, 26 November 1892.

137. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1894.

138. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1892, 22 July 1893.

139. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1892.

140. *Ibid.*, 26 November 1892.

141. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1894, p. 216.

142. N. Corfield, Development of the Cattle Industry, p. 106.

143. Fysh, *Taming the North*, pp. 187-188. The property eventually drifted further and further into debt resulting eventually in foreclosure, p. 220.

144. The instructions were to buy 175 head at £3 but 250 head if they could be obtained at £2 a head. Summary of the Journal of John Ewen Davidson 1865-1868. Typescript in JCU. See entry 23 October 1866.

145. Black, *Pioneers,* p. 62.

146. *Queenslander,* 5 May 1866, p. 8.

147. Owned by Morehead and Young and managed by E.R. Edkins. *Cummins and Campbell Magazine,* Vol. 4, No. 37, May 1930, p. 41. Edkins went to Sydney to purchase steam plant but prior to this had been curing beef. *Queenslander,* 13 October 1866, p. 6.

148. The tallow sold in Sydney for 46s. per cwt and the hides netted an average of 16s. each giving a profit of £5 per head after deducting expenses. *PDT,* 14 July 1866.

149. *Queenslander,* 21 July 1866, p. 8.

150. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1866, p. 8.

151. 6196 boiled in 1867, 6117 in 1868, 34 488 in 1869 and 19 699 in 1870. Reports of Registrar General.

152. *Queenslander,* 1 March 1873, p. 15.

153. *Ibid.*, 14 February 1874, p. 4.

154. Gray, *Reminiscences*, pp. 127, 132, 133, 167.

155. Star River 1866; Cape River 1867; Ravenswood 1869; Gilbert 1869; Mt Wyatt 1869; Etheridge 1870; Charters Towers 1871; Palmer 1873; Hodgkinson 1876; Coen 1878; Woolgar 1880; Croydon 1885. Bolton, *Thousand, Passim.*

156. *Queenslander,* 11 April 1874.

157. *Ibid.*, 17 January 1874.

158. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1873.

159. *Ibid.*, 21 February 1874.

160. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1874, p. 4.

161. 600 bullocks had left *Ravenswood* and *Mt Connell,* 400 from *Havilah,* 500 from *Salisbury Plains,* 300 from *Inkerman,* 220 from *Maryvale,* 500 from *Taldora* besides several small mobs of 80-100 head. *Queenslander,* 6 June 1874, p. 10.

162. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1874, p. 10.

163. *Ibid.*, 17 July 1875, p. 9.

164. 200 fats were sent to the Palmer in 1878. *Queenslander,* 9 November 1878, p. 185.

165. *Ibid.*, 16 March 1878, p. 25.

166. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1880, p. 467.

167. *Ibid.*, 11 January 1879, p. 38.

168. *Inkerman, Leichhardt Downs, Woodstock* and *Jarvisfield,* all properties in the estate of R. Towns, were sold to the North Australian Pastoral Company. It was claimed that the cattle from these stations were required for stocking western country. *Queenslander,* 1 December 1877, p. 29. Partners in the company were W., W. and G. Collins, McIlwraith, Forrest, Ingram and Warner. H.C. Perry, *Pioneering: The Life of R.M. Collins,* Brisbane, 1923, p. 194. (Hereafter *Collins*).

169. *Queenslander,* 10 April 1880, p. 455.

170. *Ibid.*, 20 April 1880.

171. *Ibid.*, 13 March 1880, p. 327.

172. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1880, p. 666.

173. R. Duncan, "Export Trade with the United Kingdom in Refrigerated Beef 1880-1940". *B.A.H.*, Vol. 2, No. 2, August 1962.

174. *Queenslander,* 12 November 1881, p. 634.

175. *Ibid.*, 24 September 1881, p. 408.

176. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1884, p. 226.

177. In the five year period, a total of 20 162 cattle were treated. Bolton, *Thousand,* p. 109, n 21.

178. *Queenslander,* 10 February 1894, p. 271.

179. *Ibid.*, 5 September 1891.

180. *QVP,* 1864, p. 1069.

181. *Queenslander,* 29 January 1887, p. 193.

182. Prominent identity in Queensland pastoral industry: 1878-1883, member for Fassifern in Queensland Legislative Assembly. D. Pike (Ed.) *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne, 1974, p. 436.

183. *Queenslander,* 20 December 1890, p. 1163.

184. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1892, p. 571.

185. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1892, p. 768.

186. Letter to Editor of *Queenslander.* 21 May 1892, p. 980.

187. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1892, 20 April 1895. In fact in 1895 Carpentaria stockowners were exempted from the tax as the ruling prices of stock did not allow any profit and it would have been necessary to pay the levy out of capital.

188. Cotton, *Herds*, p. 119.

189. *QVP*, 1895, Vol. 3, p. 1013.

190. *Queenslander,* 15 September 1894, p. 486.

191. *QVP*, 1897, Vol. 4, p. 987.

192. Diary of J.H.S. Barnes. Entry 1 May 1897, in Barnes Papers, OML.

193. Cotton, *Herds*, p. 117.

194. Reprinted in *Queenslander*, 10 October 1896, p. 677.

195. *Queenslander,* 2 June 1900, p. 1048; Cotton, *Herds,* p. 99; Palmer, *Early.* Note by G. Phillips.

196. *Queenslander*, 2 June 1900, p. 1048. The writer alluded to a significant Boer War campaign. The Relief of Mafeking received extensive coverage even in provincial colonial newspapers. The *North Queensland Register* for instance, described it as "one of the brightest incidents in the history of the Empire". 28 May 1900, p. 14.

## CHAPTER TWO

1. Contemporaries referred to the group as either South Sea Islanders or incorrectly, Polynesians. Because of the pejorative nature of the term kanaka, the immigrants will be referred to as Melanesians throughout this thesis.

2. Gray, *Reminiscences,* p. 59.

3. *Queenslander,* 29 September 1866, p. 4.

4. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1866, p. 6.

5. G. Sutherland, *Pioneering Days: Thrilling Incidents Across the Wilds of Queensland with Sheep to the Northern Territory in the Early Sixties,* Brisbane, 1913, p. 21. (Hereafter *Pioneering Days*).

6. *Queenslander,* 19 August 1871, p. 4.

7. Sinclair, *Process,* p. 49. The shortage of labour in the wool industry in the 1830s resulted in almost the entire supply of shepherds being drawn from the ranks of convicts and ex-convicts. In addition the government ensured that the wool industry's share of convicts was "implicitly maintained by giving preference to new settlers in the assignment of newly arrived convicts".

8. Diary of Joseph Hann and Family, 8 August 1864.

9. *Ibid.*, 19 and 20 April 1866.

10. Summary of the Journal of John Ewen Davidson 1865-1868, 20 September 1866.

11. *Australian Pastoralist,* 10 April 1922 in Newspaper Cutting Book, OML.

12. *Queenslander,* 22 September 1866, pp. 4-5.

13. Historians, for various reasons, have not always acknowledged the Aboriginal enmity to European occupation; in the past decade research in the area has illuminated this facet of settlement. But Reynolds argues that "Aboriginal resistance was one of the manifest realities of colonial life affecting European behaviour and attitudes throughout the second half of the C19th". H. Reynolds, "The Unrecorded Battlefields of Queensland" in H. Reynolds (Ed.) *Race Relations in North Queensland,* Townsville, 1978, p. 23. (Hereafter *Battlefields*).

14. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

15. N.A. Loos, Aboriginal-European Relations in North Queensland, 1861-1897, Ph.D. Thesis, JCU, 1976, p. 143. (Hereafter Aboriginal-European Relations).

16. Gray, *Reminiscences,* p. 78.

17. Loos, Aboriginal-European Relations, p. 158.

18. Gray, *Reminiscences,* p. 77.

19. P. Somer to Col. Sec., 14 October 1869, Q.S.A. COL/A134 69/4272.

20. For an account of the Kalkadoon tribe see R.E. Armstrong, *The Study of an Aboriginal Tribe on the Queensland Frontier,* Brisbane, 1980.

21. Loos, Aboriginal-European Relations, p. 190.

22. Extract from Letters of C.W. Bowly, 6 June 1874. Copy of original held in JCU. (Hereafter Bowly Letters).

23. *Ibid.*, 24 January 1874.

24. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1875.

25. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1875.

26. A summer green succulent occurring naturally in the north. Pig weed and fat hen were other native plants used to counter scurvy. Allingham, *Taming,* p. 76.

27. *Queenslander,* 16 July 1883, p. 9.

28. Dried apples and rice were a rare Sunday treat.

29. Russel Ward (*Legend*, p. 83) outlined how the pastoral economy tended to create nomads and the historian collectively dubbed the workers in the nineteenth century industry as a "nomad tribe" (*passim*) – a phrase used by contemporary observer Anthony Trollope to describe the group of workers.

30. *Queenslander,* 30 June 1883.

31. See Letter to Ed. from "E.P.", Cloncurry, *Queenslander,* 23 July 1883, p. 147. Most properties had stores where employees could purchase required items not supplied as rations. Passers by also made use of station stores and it was a way of disposing of small amounts of meat. However prices were generally high for products other than meat but this was due to high freight charges rather than the squatter blatantly exploiting customers.

32. Ward, *Legend,* p. 226.

33. Bolton, *Thousand*, p. 215. Refuting Ward's assertion, Bolton claimed that many former alluvial miners reacted against the transformation of mining to reefing which used wage labour by taking to the land in the hope that they could maintain their independence as primary producers.

34. Weekly rations per person consisted of a quarter pound of tea, 2 pounds sugar, 8 pounds of flour and generally an unlimited amount of meat.

35. *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland.* Compiled from official records in the Registrar-General's Office.

36. Adams, *Letters*, p. 138.

37. *PDT*, 16 November 1867.

38. Adams, *Letters*, p. 152.

39. *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland.*

40. *PDT*, 16 November 1867.

41. J.B. Stevenson, *Seven Years in the Australian Bush*, Liverpool, 1880, p. 53. (Hereafter *Seven*).

42. Rachel to Boyce, 19 August 1865, Adams, *Letters.*

43. *PDT*, 28 January 1865.

44. From around 1861 until after the turn of the century, British immigrants chose the United States of America and Canada over Australia by an average margin of 7:1 (A.C. Kelley, "International Migration and Economic Growth Australia 1865-1935". *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25, No. 3, September 1965, p. 336). In part this was due to the more advantageous land policy so that British emigrants with a rural background tended to move to those areas rather than to Australian colonies. This meant that there was probably a larger proportion of immigrants in Australia with an urban background and it was the desire of this group generally to maintain this living pattern in their new home.

45. Rachel to Etta, 25 July 1863, Adams, *Letters.*

46. "Teila" Letters to Ed., *PDT*, 18 July 1866.

47. Eden, *Wife*, p. 21.

48. *Queenslander*, 17 June 1866, p. 4.

49. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1866, pp. 4-5.

50. *Ibid.*, 7 September 1867, p. 8.

51. *PDT*, 16 November 1867.

52. *Queenslander*, 12 January 1884, p. 59.

53. *PDT*, 21 October 1865. Neoclassical economic theory suggests that the rational manner in which to employ factors of production such as labour is to equate marginal costs with marginal revenue. Obviously squatters were not employing this strategy.

54. T.A. Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia*, Vol. 3, Melbourne, 1969, p. 1509.

55. *Queenslander*, 7 September 1867, p. 8. At the time the complaint was commonly referred to as "fever and ague". Sufferers appear to have exhibited malarial symptoms but from this distance in history the disease cannot be accurately diagnosed. For this reason I have simply referred to the outbreak as "fever".

56. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1866, p. 8.

57. *PDT*, 30 June 1866. These included Duncan McIntyre, leader of the expedition organised to search for Leichhardt. McIntyre apparently contracted fever while in Burketown but died near his brother's station *Dalgonally*.

58. *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland.*

59. W. H. Corfield, *Reminiscences of Queensland,1862-1899*, Brisbane, 1921, p. 31. (Hereafter *Reminiscences*).

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

61. Ward, *Legend*, p. 184.

62. See for example Steele Rudd, *On Our Selection, Our New Selection, Sandy's Selection, Back at Our Selection.* First published between 1899 and 1906.

63. Ward, *Legend*, p. 182.

64. *Queenslander*, 18 August 1871, p. 4.

65. Letter written to stock and station agent Fenwick and Co. and reprinted in *Queenslander*, 30 November 1867, p. 11.

66. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1868, p. 11.

67. Including a petition from the Bankers and Merchants. *QVP*, 1869, p. 129.

68. *QPD*, 22 December 1870, pp. 293-294. C.A. Bernays, *Queensland Politics during Sixty (1859-1919) Years*, Brisbane, 1919, pp. 468-469. (Hereafter *Politics*).

69. *PDT*, 4 January 1873.

70. J. Walker "Capital Versus Labour in the Queensland Pastoral Industry in the Nineteenth Century". *The History Teacher*, November 1978, p. 16.

71. Robert Towns was the first to import Melanesian labour into Queensland in 1863 to work his Logan River cotton plantation. Squatters soon began to employ them and as the sugar industry developed northern planters found them indispensable. Farnfield, *Frontiersman*, p. 141.

72. *PDT*, 13 July 1867.

73. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1867.

74. Bernays, *Politics*, p. 467.

75. Bolton, *Thousand*, p. 39.

76. *Return Relating to Polynesian Labour, QVP*, 1868, p. 359.

77. Gray, *Reminiscences*, p. 143.

78. *Queenslander*, 4 July 1868, p. 7.

79. *Ibid.*, 6 February 1869, p. 8.

80. W. Landsborough to Col. Sec., 7 April 1870, *QSA*, COL/A172 71/449.

81. *Queenslander*, 20 November 1869, p. 3.

82. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1876, p. 21. In spite of great changes in the colony the wage paid to new recruits did not vary over a 40 year period. Clive Moore believed that "the unfairness of this set wage, unchanged over 40 years, has never been adequately condemned by historians". C.R. Moore, Kanaka Maratta: A History of Melanesian Mackay. Ph.D. Thesis, p. 435. Re-recruiting and time-expired Melanesians negotiated their own wages with employers and the rate varied between £6 and £12.

83. Based on 35s. per week wages plus £18 for rations, the same as allowed for Melanesian rations.

84. *Report of the Select Committee in the General Question of Polynesian Labour. QVP,* 1876, Question 693.

85. Clive Moore argued that the Melanesians had much more freedom to control their own diets than has previously been presumed. "Historians unfamiliar with Islander oral testimony have underestimated Melanesians' ability to supplement their diets with bush foods and animals and vegetables from their own gardens or those of their friends or kin". C. Moore, Kanaka Maratta, p. 501.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 557. He continued however that "they can be blamed for persisting with the system when it had become clear that the death rate was the price. There is a heavy burden of guilt borne by the Queensland government and those it represented".

87. See P.M. Mercer, "Racial Attitudes towards Melanesians in Colonial Queensland", in H. Reynolds (Ed.) *Race Relations in North Queensland,* Townsville, 1978, for an excellent coverage of conservative, moderate and radical reactions to Melanesians.

88. There were conflicting reports whether Melanesians were of most value to the sheep or cattle industry. Eden claimed that Melanesians hated the sight of horses (*Wife*, p. 118) and would therefore have been of little use as stockmen. However Walter Scott lamented the shortage of Melanesian labour because of the fact that they knew their work and seemed happier on a cattle station as they detested sheep. "The excitement of the yard at mustering time is quite a holiday to them", *Queenslander,* 21 October 1871). However most contemporary accounts portray them as shepherds or general station handymen.

89. The most vociferous in this respect was William Chatfield Jnr of *Natal Downs.*

90. A.J. Scott to W.J. Scott, 21 March 1866. A11, Scott Correspondence.

91. *PDT,* 29 August 1866.

92. Bolton, *Thousand,* p. 39.

93. *QVP,* 1874, Vol. 2, p. 413. It was revealed in a memo from the Col. Sec. to Gov. though that the government never contemplated indentured Chinese emigration to Queensland and when requested to appoint agents in China for that purpose it was the practice to always decline. Memo dated 4 May 1875. *QVP,* 1875, Vol. 2, p. 569.

94. See P.P. Courtenay, "The White Man and the Australian Tropics — A Review of Some Opinions and Prejudices of the Pre-War Years", in *Lectures in North Queensland History,* Second Series, Townsville, 1975.

95. *Queenslander,* 8 April 1882, p. 422.

96. *Ibid.*, 29 April 1882, p. 530.

97. Due in part to the experience of ex-miners who preferred at the time to remain unemployed than to become wage earners again.

98. *Queenslander,* 7 October 1871, p. 11.

99. Gray, *Reminiscences,* p. 196.

100. Probably Chatfield of *Natal Downs.*

101. *Queenslander,* 14 October 1876, p. 21.

102. W.J. Scott to A.J. Scott, 22 May 1874. B5 Scott Correspondence.

103. Bowly Letters, 14 November 1874.

104. *Queenslander,* 2 May 1975; 1 August 1874, p. 4; 2 January 1875, p. 4.

105. Rations were not included in the mining wage.

106. *Queenslander,* 14 October 1876, p. 21.

107. *Loc. cit.*

108. *Queenslander,* 27 July 1878, p. 520.

109. *Ibid.,* 22 March 1879, p. 369.

110. *Ibid.,* 31 April 1879, p. 689.

111. *Ibid.,* 23 September 1882, Supplement, p. 1.

112. *Ibid.,* 16 September 1882, Supplement, p. 1. *QSA,* COL/A360/2250; COL/A375 83/6466.

113. *Queenslander,* 7 March 1885, p. 378.

114. *Ibid.,* 25 April 1885, p. 646.

115. *Ibid.,* 7 August 1886, p. 218.

116. *Ibid.,* 15 May 1886, p. 778.

117. *Northern Mining Register,* 2 December 1891, p. 20. (Hereafter *NMR*).

118. *Western Champion,* 2 February 1892.

119. An upsurge in unionism among bushworkers occurred between 1886 and 1889; the Queensland Shearers Union was organised in 1886 and the Queensland Labourers' Union which catered for pastoral workers other than shearers was established in 1888. R. Sullivan, The A.L.F. in Queensland 1889-1914, MA Thesis, Uni. of Q'ld, p. 104.

120. Pastoralists disavowed the "closed shop" principle conceded at *Jondaryan* the previous year. There can be no doubt that 1891 marked a watershed in the history of pastoral labour. In one historian's view the Queensland labour movement has "no legend which surpasses that of 1891, the year in which the powerful bush unions were defeated by determined, well-organised pastoralists in an industrial struggle which raised basic questions about values and the distribution of power and resources in colonial society. For the first time a Queensland government played a decisive role in determining the outcome of an industrial dispute by intervening overtly on the side of the pastoralists". R. Sullivan, "The Pastoral Strikes of 1891 and 1894". Typescript but to appear in D. Murphy (Ed.) The Big Strikes 1889-1965 due to be published in 1982 by Queensland University Press. (Hereafter *Pastoral*). It has often been claimed in the past that the unsuccessful Maritime Strike forced the labour movement into the political arena. See J. Phillip, "1890 – a Turning Point in Labour History". *Historical Studies,* May 1950, pp. 145-154, for an introduction to the debate. However, some time before the Maritime Strike shearers were seeking parliamentary representation to improve their position. Giving details of this, the *Queenslander* stated that: "The shearers of the Western district are firmly persuaded that it is to Parliament they must look for help as well as to the unions, and so the Bushmen's and Working Men's Parliamentary Association has been formed during the past year for the purpose of returning labour representatives to Parliament. Already the association has a membership of between 5 000 and 6 000, with a fund at its disposal of something like £1000. It is proposed to secure as candidates the very best men available, and to defray their expenses to the extent of £600 or £700 a year. This society intends to return its members at the next election, come when it may. It holds so it is alleged, four-fifths of the voting power of the West". (*Queenslander,* 4 January 1890, p. 12). This suggests that the Maritime Strike would have had little influence on the decision of shearers to enter the political arena. R. Sullivan suggests that the resource wastage associated with the strikes "hindered the work of political organisation and in 1892 Hinchcliffe was forced to begin selling advertising space in the *Worker* to ensure its survival as an educative and organising medium". Sullivan, *Pastoral,* p. 27.

121. *Queenslander,* 13 March 1891, p. 501.

122. *Ibid.*, 18 April 1891, p. 727.

123. Sullivan, *Pastoral,* p. 15.

124. *Queenslander,* 30 June 1894, p. 1236.

125. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1894, p. 197.

126. In August, 65 non-union shearers and labourers were dispatched under police protection for *Kynuna* and *Marathon* stations. Fifty men from the union camp at Hughenden tried to persuade them not to go. *Queenslander*, 25 August 1894, p. 374.

## CHAPTER THREE

1. M.W. Cunningham, *The Pioneering of the River Burdekin*, Rockhampton, 1895, p. 3. (Hereafter *Pioneering*).

2. Stevenson, *Seven*, p. 47; Allingham, *Taming*, p. 128; Diary of Joseph Hann and Family, Entries 4 January 1862, 1 October 1863 and 17 August 1864. See Chapter 4, p. 107 for more details.

3. Black, *Pioneers*, p. 62.

4. Adams, *Letters*, p. 124.

5. R. Atkinson, *Northern Pioneers*, Townsville, 1978.

6. Fysh, *Taming the North*, p. 66.

7. Macmillan, *R.H.S.Q.*, p. 458.

8. McGillvray wrote to the Colonial Secretary that he had been in the area for 6 years and had in his employ an Aborigine for 10 years. Letter dated 4 March 1875, COL/A207; 75/989, *QSA*.

9. Rachel to Etta, 8 August 1864, Adams, *Letters*, p. 176.

10. Rachel to Boyce, 23 March 1864, *ibid.*, p. 161.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

12. Burke and Wills starved to death in an area where Aborigines seemingly could collect quantities of food surplus to their needs. G. Blainey, *Triumph of the Nomads*, Melbourne, 1975, pp. 218-222.

13. Diary of R.M. Watson. Typescript copy in JCU courtesy of F. Bauer.

14. *Queenslander*, 12 April 1884, p. 579.

15. F.J. Byerley reported that the four Aborigines taken as guides by Frank Jardine on his trip to Cape York Peninsula could not find their way and the whites proved the better bushmen. Cited in Black, *Pioneers*, p. 62.

16. *Queenslander*, 30 October 1875, p. 18.

17. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1884, p. 219.

18. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1884, p. 259.

19. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1884, p. 579. It is unclear whether he means 500 in the pastoral industry alone or including the 100 employed in the town of Normanton.

20. Letter to Ed. from A.S. Haydon, *Queenslander,* 12 April 1884, p. 599.

21. *Ibid.*, 26 October 1895, p. 792.

22. *Ibid.*, 26 October 1895, p. 792; 2 November 1895.

23. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1895, p. 886.

24. *Loc. cit.*

25. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1895, p. 934.

26. *Ibid.*, 23 November 1895, p. 981.

27. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1895, p. 1030.

28. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1890, p. 119.

29. *Queenslander,* 15 June 1895, p. 1119.

30. In the sheep industry additional labour was required from the beginning of September through to approximately November when shearing was conducted. During the period when it was the practice to wash wool on the property, even more hands were needed for either washing the actual sheep or washing the clip after it had been shorn. In the cattle industry, additional labour was needed at the main mustering time when it was attempted to bring in the whole herd, brand calves, spey selected cows and cut out the required cast for sale. This usually began in January and went through until March by which time, with the wet season nearing completion it would be possible to travel cattle to markets. Additional musters were also held during the year as required.

31. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1876, p. 22.

32. Information supplied to Colonial Secretary regarding the treatment of Aborigines. Written by Cardwell Police Magistrate and dated 16 September 1886. This was in response to a request from Broad Bros. of *Kirrama* to allow a small sum of money for rations for the blacks. COL/A483 86/7578, *QSA.*

33. W.J. Scott to A.J. Scott, 24 April 1880. B9, Scott Correspondence, A.J. Scott to Colonial Secretary, 6 April 1880, COL/A293 80/2828, *QSA.*

34. *Queenslander,* 27 May 1874, p. 5.

35. *Ibid.*, 15 July 1876, p. 22.

36. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1884, p. 579.

37. *Brisbane Courier,* 10 December 1937 from Aboriginal Newspaper Cutting Book held in Oxley Library.

38. Atkinson, *Pioneers,* p. 54.

39. The extra distance to market meant that cattle had less condition on them when they arrived at the saleyards and thus commanded lower prices. The extra distance to market incurred higher droving costs which had to be added to the general costs which were all usually higher in the north.

40. See for example letter from C.W. Bowly, 26 April 1874. This was in keeping with the government's policy in 1861. It was stated that it was not desirable to engage the services of Aborigines at a regular wage but they should be issued with stores in return for services performed. Notation by Clerk of Council to G.E. Dalrymple while in Bowen. COL/A11, *QSA.*

41. Blankets were issued annually on the Queen's birthday to sick and unemployed Aborigines. There were never enough blankets to go around resulting in half blankets being given out. There are many accounts of the blacks' blankets finding their way into hands of Europeans. E.g., *Queenslander,* 9 July 1892, p. 58.

42. *Queenslander,* 13 August 1892, p. 310.

43. Appendix B. *SALC Aborigines Bill,* p. 109.

44. *Ibid.*, Question 746

45. C.J.M. Scallon cited in H. Reynolds, *Aborigines and Settlers,* North Melbourne, 1972, p. 34. (Hereafter *Aborigines and Settlers*).

46. A similar situation was noted in the 1940s in the Northern Territory by C. and R. Berndt who were of the opinion that in the past employers "had taken advantage of the fact that whilst living under bush conditions the possession of personal property of any order was a physical handicap and that because of this, employers had declared it ample reason for limiting the returns they were extended for their labour". F.S. Stevens, *Equal Wages for Aborigines,* Clifton Hill, Vic., 1968, p. 18. It was not possible to view the original report by C. and R. Berndt, A Northern Territory Problem: Aboriginal Labour in a Pastoral Area, as it was private and unpublished.

47. *Queenslander,* 12 April 1884, p. 579.

48. See H. Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier,* Townsville, 1981, pp. 56-57. (Hereafter *Other Side*), for details of Europeans' views of reciprocity and sharing in traditional society and the Aborigines' reaction to Europeans' possessiveness. Other

aspects of paternalism are covered in Chapter 5 of this book.

49. *Queenslander,* 16 May 1884, p. 259. In actual fact it is highly likely that the Aborigines who were paid 30 shillings were not local Aborigines but southern half-castes who were highly valued.

50. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1884, p. 579.

51. *Loc. cit.*

52. See Chapter 2.

53. Under the *Amendment to the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of Sale of Opium Act 1897*, "The Wages of an aborigine or half-caste employed under permit, exclusive of food, accommodation and other necessaries, shall not be less than ten shillings per month if he is employed on board of, or in connection with a ship, vessel or boat or five shillings per month if he is employed elsewhere". *QVP*, 1901, Vol. 1, p. 557.

54. However A. Meston reported in 1900 that west of the Warrego Aboriginal stockmen complained bitterly to him about the unsatisfactory position of their wages which in nearly every case was balanced by their store account. A. Meston, Report on Aborigines West of Warrego, COL/139, *QSA.*

55. Melanesians £41.0.8 per annum and Europeans around £100 per annum. See Chapter 2.

56. One of the most vocal opponents is J.H. Kelly, *Struggle for the North,* Sydney, 1966 and *Report on the Beef Cattle Industry in North Australia,* Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra, 1952.

57. Duncan, *B.A.H.*, p. 111.

58. See Reynolds, *Other Side of the Frontier,* pp. 38-39, for details of experiments carried out by Aborigines with cattle and sheep.

59. Cited in M.M. Bennett, "Note on the Dalleburra Tribe in North Queensland". Bennett, MSS.

60. *Queenslander,* 15 June 1895, p. 1119.

61. "Aborigines in the Gulf Country". *Brisbane Courier.* Aboriginal Newspaper Cutting Book, Oxley Library.

62. Bennett, MSS, p. 404.

63. *Queenslander,* 12 May 1894, p. 886. Part of an account by E.A. Daly which was printed over several weeks in the newspaper about a drover's experiences in taking a mob of cattle a thousand miles to market at the end of the 1880s. There were some 1000 head of cattle in the mob and must have been near to 10 000 cattle on the station at the time.

64. A.C. Grant, *Bush Life in Queensland,* Edinburgh, 1888, p. 314. (Hereafter *Bush Life*).

65. Palmer, *Early*, p. 214.

66. *Queenslander,* 11 January 1890, p. 71.

67. *Ibid.*, 1 November 1879. For a detailed account of Aborigines working as shepherds in the Murchison and Gascoyne districts in Western Australia see Western Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1882, No. 33. Aborigines were employed on south west Queensland sheep stations during shearing seasons to pick up the wool, carry water etc. See correspondence resulting from allegations made by H. Fisher, COL/145 *QSA.*

68. Loos, Aboriginal-European Relations, p. 407.

69. *Queenslander,* 24 September 1898, p. 603.

70. Such as the dirty work in towns which white people generally would not do.

71. Although Aborigines were substitutes for some white workers in the industry, in other respects they were complementary as some white labour was always required to supervise Aboriginal labour. This explains the existence of labour shortages while Aboriginal workers were relatively abundant.

72. Bowly Letters, 14 November 1874.

73. Diary of Joseph Hann and Family, Entry 12 November 1863.

74. *QVP*, 1861, pp. 389-573, Question 48.

75. Reynolds, *Other Side*, pp. 48-49.

76. C. and R. Berndt, *Pioneers and Settlers,* Carlton, Vic., 1978, p. 68. (Hereafter *Pioneers*).

77. Diary of Joseph Hann and Family, Entry 31 January 1870.

78. Bowly Letters, 14 November 1874; Rachel to Etta, 8 August 1864, Adams, *Letters,* p. 176.

79. Grant Family Diaries. FS G1. Held at JCU Library.

80. *Queenslander,* 4 April 1874, p. 5.

81. Corfield, *Reminiscences,* p. 14.

82. Letter to Ed. of *Queensland Times* and discussed in Letter to Ed., *Queenslander,* 4 April 1874, p. 5.

83. "Bondage forced the negro to give his labour grudgingly and badly and his poor work habits retarded those social and economic advances that could have raised the general level of productivity". E.G. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery,* New York, 1965, p. 43.

84. *Queenslander,* 1 April 1886, p. 18.

85. M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics,* Chicago, 1972, p. 33. (Hereafter *Stone Age Economics*).

86. He returned 17 days later. Entries 28 July 1889 to 17 October 1889. Nimmo Diaries.

87. H. Fisher to A. Meston, 4 August 1900, COL/145, *QSA.*

88. *SALC Aborigines Bill,* Question 1082.

89. Unfortunately no firm evidence can be produced to support this notion in North Queensland.

90. J. and P. Read, A View of the Past. Unpublished oral histories, (Hereafter View of the Past). Miriam Ungunmen told Jay Read that if there was a ceremony her father would try to arrange to have it held while he was on leave so that he could attend and take her, p. 217.

91. *Queenslander,* 27 June 1874, p. 5.

92. Letter to Ed., signed "Practical Man", *Queenslander,* 23 September 1882. Other letters bearing the same *nom de plume* dealing with Aborigines correspond in content with letters to the Colonial Secretary which are signed by Frank Beardmore.

93. Fysh, *Taming the North,* p. 95. This was in marked contrast with the occupation of the Northern Territory in the 1880s where stations were staffed initially by members of Queensland tribes brought with them by white squatters. For the local Aborigines, the alien Queensland blacks were synonymous with fear. "Many of the Queensland cattlemen brought their own trackers with them. . . They seemed to have combined European technology and Aboriginal bushcraft with an often

implacable hatred of other Aboriginal people. Even today, the term 'Queensland boy' can bring shivers to some of the old people living on the Eastern side of the territory". J. and P. Read, View of the Past, p. 30.

94. The youth was a native of the Burketown district. M.M.J. Costello, *The Life of John Costello*, Sydney, 1930. p. 175.

95. Stevenson, *Seven Years*, p. 147.

96. "Illiteracy [it was claimed at NAWU Hearing for removal of discriminatory clauses in the Cattle Station Industry (N.T.) Award in 1965] gave rise to problems of management communication and the inability to count was alleged to place severe restrictions on the employee's ability to measure herd sizes and to respond to instructions concerning cattle movements". Stevens, *Equal Wages for Aborigines*, p. 39.

97. I am grateful to Moses Dallachy of "Eventide", Charters Towers, for pointing this out to me. Obviously this was not the only factor involved. Even now, with a vast improvement in black literacy, a negligible number of Aborigines have attained the status of manager on North Queensland cattle stations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

1. *PDT*, 23 January 1867.

2. *Queenslander*, 23 February 1867, p. 8.

3. *Loc. cit.*

4. *PDT*, 27 February 1867.

5. See *PDT*, 13 April 1967, for a copy of reply from Commissioner of Crown Lands to the Bowen Memorialists with a copy of a letter from A.L. McDougall, leader of the group to Colonial Secretary informing him that the system had operated for 30 years in NSW and pointing out the system of keeping the blacks out which he condoned in Kennedy was opposed to the condition of the lease viz. "free access for hunting".

6. N. Loos, "Aborigines and Pioneers at Port Denison", in H. Reynolds (Ed.) *Race Relations in North Queensland,* Townsville, 1978, p. 64.

7. *Lammermoor* was located in the Mitchell pastoral district which adjoined the Burke and Kennedy Pastoral districts. In actual fact, this station could be more accurately classified as North Queensland than many of the South Kennedy runs. See Map.

8. Taking up *Lammermoor* in 1864 Christison was the first white man in the Dalleburra tribal country. Landsborough passed through at the end of March 1862 and although the tribe probably knew of his existence, they may not have actually seen the exploring party at 1862 was a good season and the tribe would have been hunting in areas which were normally without surface water. M.M. Bennett, "Notes on the Dalleburra Tribe of North Queensland". *Journal of the Royal Ant. Institute,* Vol. 57, July-December 1927, in Bennett Manuscript.

9. See N. Loos' Appendix B, Aboriginal-European Relations, for a breakdown of when and where deaths are thought to have occurred on the northern frontiers.

10. M.M. Bennett, *Christison of Lammermoor,* p. 60.

11. *PDT*, 3 August 1867.

12. *Queenslander,* 13 November 1869, p. 9.

13. Loos, Aboriginal-European Relations, p. 388.

14. Undated reports from *Bowen Independent* included in Enid Kerr: F.R. Bode of Bromby Park, (Typescript of paper read to Queensland Women's Historical Society in the Oxley Library). E. Kerr was a granddaughter of F.R. Bode.

15. Letter dated 31 March 1869, COL/A122, 69.1568, *QSA; Cleveland Bay Express* reported that the blacks had been spearing cattle at *Woodstock* in mid 1867. Reprinted in *PDT*, 13 July 1867.

16. *PDT*, 15 May 1869.

17. R. Gray to Col. Sec., 10 September 1870. COL/A148, *QSA; CBE* reported attacks on Gray's station at the time and at *Fairlight* cattle were not only slaughtered and frightened but Melanesians had been brutally beaten. Reprinted in *Queenslander*, 3 September 1870, p. 9.

18. W.J. Scott to A.J. Scott, 22 May 1874, B5, Scott Correspondence.

19. Inspector Lamond to Com. of Police, 30 August 1897, COL/140, *QSA*.

20. Eden, *My Wife and I*, p. 211.

21. Reynolds, *Other Side*, p. 93.

22. Diary of R.M. Watson, p. 27. The explosion was probably the volcanic eruption on Krakatoa in 1883. One of the explosions produced the loudest noise ever heard by man; the sound was heard at a distance of 3 000 miles – well within range of *Gregory Downs*. The error in dating by Watson is probably due to the fact that his diary was written up some years after the event.

23. W.J. Scott to his mother, 29 May 1872, Scott MSS.

24. Journal of John Ewen Davidson, Entry 15 March 1866.

25. Rachel Henning to Boyce, 27 January 1864, Adams, *Letters*, p. 185.

26. Watson Diary, p. 17.

27. Not one of the Watson brothers of *Gregory Downs*.

28. *Queenslander*, 24 July 1880, p. 113.

29. *Ibid.*, 23 October 1880, p. 530.

30. Ten men cut 300 sheets of bark in four days for the Police Inspector at Walsh station.

31. Inspector Brooke to Inspector Fitzgerald, Cooktown, 20 December 1882, COL/A356, 83/1303, *QSA*.

32. This would have resulted from total dispersal of local inhabitants by the Native Police and squatters during the period of Aboriginal resistance.

33. See entries 17 June 1889, 27 December 1889, 27 November 1891, Nimmo Diaries.

34. In the daily diary details were always recorded about the wages of newly employed workers. No such entries appeared with the notation concerning recruitment of Aboriginal labour.

35. F.S. Grant Diaries, 26 October 1889, 18 October 1889, 14 January 1890.

36. Beadle was in the employ of various members of the family from 1887 to his death in 1944.

37. Entry 18 October 1889, F.S. Grant Diary.

38. It should not be interpreted that the Aborigines had become so proficient that the white workers could be dispensed with. Given the depressed conditions of the early 1890s, the owners of *Woodleigh* may not have been able to afford to engage white employees.

39. *Northern Miner*, 5 January 1886. R. Anning and Thomas Marks were brought to trial for abducting Minnie from *Lolworth* station where she had been taken from *Cargoon* by an Aborigine. The manager of *Lolworth* admitted that he knew nothing of the alleged assault but felt bound to protect the Aboriginal woman as she was "the lubra of the blackboy in [his] employ".

40. Now Cape Pallarenda.

41. Diary of Joseph Hann and Family, 15 January 1870, 16 January 1870 and 18 January 1870.

42. Stevenson, *Seven Years in the Australian Bush*, p. 47.

43. W. Chatfield to Attorney General, 6 January 1869, COL/A121, 69/943, *QSA*.

44. *Loc. cit.*

45. W. Landsborough to Attorney General, 19 July 1868, COL/A115, 68/4031, *QSA*.

46. Michael Bird Hall to Colonial Secretary, 10 October 1870, COL/A150, 70/3098, *QSA*. The Attorney General replied to both Chatfield and Landsborough that if evidence of forcible abduction of Aborigines could be obtained and that the object was to use the children for labour, the offenders could be committed for trial under Slave Act 5 Geo 4 c.113 Section 29 and 10.

47. W.E. Roth to Police Commissioner, 6 June 1898, COL/139, *QSA*.

48. Reynolds, *Aborigines and Settlers*, p. 34.

49. *PDT*, 3 August 1867.

50. A. Meston, *Report on Aborigines West of Warrego*, COL/139, *QSA*.

51. *Queenslander*, 16 June 1883, p. 927; 26 May 1883, p. 830.

52. *Ibid.*, 31 March 1894, p. 598.

53. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, p. 112.

54. Fysh, *Taming the North*, p. 125.

55. The two Aborigines were charged with the killing of the station owner, Perry. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, Question 8.

56. *Queenslander*, 31 March 1894, p. 598.

57. W.J. Scott to his mother, 29 May 1872, B2, Scott MSS.

58. Indeed Meston may have misinterpreted the submissive nature of the group on which he reported. The area was in the grip of a severe drought; Aborigines would have been reluctant to run away when bush food sources were minimal.

59. Generally when reports of mistreatment of Aborigines were received by the police, they were investigated and sometimes quite thoroughly. Invariably however, the squatter's "good" name was vindicated as a result of the inquiry with the allegation being attributed to a disgruntled ex-employee or perhaps a unionist bent on marring the name of a squatter. It may have been accurate in some cases but the infrequency of convictions against Europeans raises doubts about the credibility of the investigations. Europeans investigating Europeans seemed to lack objectivity in inter-racial matters.

60. Whites knew they could have their employer brought to trial for assault. Most blacks did not know this. In any event, if they did, the courts had a history of bias in favour of whites.

61. *Queenslander*, 13 September 1890, p. 528.

62. *Ibid.*, 2 January 1897, p. 22.

63. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1897, p. 414. This was probably Frank Hann, formerly of *Lawn Hill* station.

64. Bowly Letters, 8 August 1874.

65. *Queenslander*, 3 November 1877, p. 24.

66. Bowly Letters, 26 April 1874. Wheelbarrow was the name given to the dray bringing stores to the station.

67. *QVP*, 1901, Vol. 4, p. 1332.

68. *Report on Aborigines of Queensland, QVP*, 1896, Vol. 4, pp. 723-737.

69. Cited in *Annual Report of Northern Protector of Aborigines of 1900. QVP*, 1901, Vol. 4, p. 1333.

70. *Queenslander*, 23 September 1882, p. 403.

71. Aborigines did not normally smoke the narcotic but drank water-soaked opium.

72. F. Beardmore to Col. Sec., 30 July 1886, COL/A476, *QSA*.

73. *Queenslander*, 28 August 1886, p. 338.

74. F. Beardmore to Col. Sec., 30 July 1886, COL/A476, *QSA*.

75. *Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Bill. QPD*, 1897, 15 November 1897, pp. 1538-1549.

76. R.L. Evans, European-Aboriginal Relations in Queensland 1880-1900: A Chapter of Contact. B.A. Hons Thesis, Uni. of Q'ld, 1965, p. 56.

77. *Queenslander*, 28 August 1886, p. 338.

78. See Nimmo Diaries, Entries 29 September 1891 and 20 October 1891.

79. *Northern Miner*, 5 January 1886.

80. *Queenslander*, 18 January 1890, p. 119.

81. Established in the early 1860s.

82. *Queenslander*, 18 May 1895, p. 933.

83. Improvements were valued by the Dividing Commissioner for the purpose of resumption of part of the consolidation under the 1897 Lands Act. The value of the station buildings were as follows: New Head station house £720, detached kitchen £100, Overseers Cottage £100, Iron Store, Mens kitchen £270, Cart Shed Meat House £100, New Hut and Saddle Room £100, Blacks hut iron £50. *Canobie*, Run File LAN/AF 13, *QSA*.

84. Nimmo Diaries, 24 July 1890 to 19 August 1890. Value of the building would be

approximately £15 based on the wages of Europeans. Little building material had to be purchased.

85. The actions of owners of *Oak Park* at the end of 1880 was probably typical. When two blackboys on the property were sent to strip bark on a distant part of the station, the bookkeeper was dispatched to take bread to them. Entries 10 July 1889, 13 July 1889, Nimmo Diaries.

86. *Queenslander*, 12 April 1884. While they may have consumed food from the same source, it is likely that the Aborigines received the more inferior parts of food e.g. least choice cuts of meat or stalest bread.

87. See Chapter 2.

88. C.M. Tatz, "The Relationship Between Aboriginal Health and Employment, Wages and Training", in I.G. Sharp and C.M. Tatz (Eds) *Aborigines in the Economy*, Brisbane, 1966, p. 58, points out that imbalance of diet is malnutrition; absence of diet is starvation.

89. Grant, *Bush Life in Queensland*, p. 289.

90. Adams, *Letters*, p. 157. In this case the white aristocracy was an Irish family of six including a lame and infirm father, a daughter of 16 who did the washing, a boy of 15 or 16, another of 12 and two little girls; two shepherds and a bullock driver in addition to the owner and his two spinster sisters.

91. When Kennedy went to *Devoncourt* at the end of the 1880s there were about 500 blacks on the place – most Kalkadoons. He allowed them to camp on good water and when native food ran low he supplied them with rations – many young men found employment on the property as station hands. Fysh, *Taming the North*, p. 210.

92. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, pp. 113-114.

93. De Salis brothers to Col. Sec., 6 May 1890, COL/A618, 90/6542, *QSA*.

94. Col. Sec. to De Salis brothers, 18 June 1890, COL/G57, *QSA*.

95. E.R. Gribble, *A Despised Race. The Vanishing Aboriginals of Australia*, Sydney, 1933, p. 28. The actual wearing of wet clothing did not cause colds. It may have caused rheumatic pains in the joints and probably did lower their resistance to European introduced diseases such as influenza for which they had a low level of immunity anyway. This was exacerbated by the sedentary lifestyle which brought Aborigines into closer proximity with each other than had been the case in their traditional life. This favoured the spread of those diseases which are contracted by the inhaling of infected droplets.

96. Cited in R. Sumner, "Among Cannibals in Carl Lumholtz in North Queensland". *Journal of Australian Studies,* No. 1, June 1977, p. 89.

97. M. Green to Inspector Lamond, Normanton, 8 June 1899, POL/14B/15, 58/1899, *QSA.*

98. European influence preceded their physical advance along the frontier of settlement. According to Kamien "In some areas the major devastation of Aboriginal society had occurred years before they first came into contact with what they probably regarded as some malevolent ghostly white ancestral figures". M. Kamien, "Aboriginal Health Care Between Givers and Receivers – a cultural clash", *Current Affairs Bulletin,* July 1981. For a description of how Aborigines internalised epidemics into their own tradition see Reynolds, *Other Side*, p. 47.

99. T.A. Brodie of *Donors Hill* wrote that "our only medicines were Holloways pills and ointment and painkiller when in stock. They were supposed to be all that was necessary for the ills we were to be troubled with. Quinine or Peruvian bark, when to be had at all was worth its weight in gold". *Australian Pastoralist,* 10 April 1922, Cutting Book in JOL.

100. It was however a two-way exchange as Aborigines provided simple remedies for Europeans in need of medical assistance. See E. Pownall, *Australian Pioneer Women,* Adelaide, 1975, pp. 28-30, for instance of this in Queensland.

101. Constable R. Reside to Inspector Brannelly, Longreach, 10 October 1898, COL/140, *QSA.*

102. F.R. Bode of Bromby Park. Typescript of paper read to Queensland Women's Historical Society byEnid Kerr, p. 7.

103. "In a normal year the Aboriginals in many parts of the continent ate a variety of plant foods such as no present green grocer or fruiter in an Australian city could hope to display. . . It is probable that in most regions of Australia the people in a normal year gained at least half of their energy from plant foods. . . In 1800 Aborigines were probably much better off than the poorest one tenth of European population. In the eastern half of Europe they probably lived in more comfort than nine tenths of the population". G. Blainey, *Triumph of the Nomads,* pp. 157,168, 225.

104. A. Gordon, late manager *Headingly* station to Home Secretary, 1 November 1899, COL/145, *QSA.*

105. A. Meston, Report on Aborigines West of Warrego, p. 7, COL/139 *QSA.*

106. W.C. Hume to Home Secretary, 13 October 1898, COL/140, *QSA.*

107. R. Reside to Inspector Brannelly, Longreach, COL/140, *QSA*. Inspector Brannelly believed that the Boulia Sub District was unique and that Hume's statement on prostitution was generally "highly coloured and overdrawn". Inspector Brannelly to Commissioner of Police, 3 February 1899, COL/140, *QSA*. However in view of all the other reports there is nothing to suggest that Boulia was unique.

108. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, p. 113.

109. *Loc. cit.* The females may not have been suffering from syphilis. Many contemporaries mistook yaws for syphilis. For example the explorer Charles Sturt recorded that "syphilis raged amongst them with fearful violence, men had lost their noses and all the glandular parts were considerably affected". However one researcher in the field believes that this description was closer to that of yaws than of syphilis. Kamien, *Aboriginal Health*, p. 16. Once Aborigines had been infected with yaws (a pre-European disease) they seem to have developed a cross immunity to syphilis.

110. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, p. 113.

111. A. Gordon to Home Secretary, 1 November 1899, COL/145, *QSA*. Letter to Editor, *Queenslander*, 2 December 1899, p. 1121.

112. *Queenslander*, 19 November 1898, p. 984.

113. Diary of R.M. Watson, pp. 18-19.

114. *PDT*, 3 August 1867. According to Charles Eden, on *Mt McConnell* in the late 1860s a married couple called Kitty and Dick were employed. They had obviously been introduced to the area. However their marriage was annulled and Dick took as a wife, a woman whom he caught in the bush. Eden, *My Wife and I*, p. 108.

115. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, Questions 35 and 37.

116. *Queenslander*, 22 May 1880, p. 657.

117. W.C. Hume to Home Secretary, 13 October 1898, COL/140, *QSA*.

118. *SALC Aborigines Bill*, Question 39.

119. *Queenslander*, 3 November 1883, p. 717.

120. *Loc. cit.*

121. *Queenslander*, 24 March 1894, p. 551.

122. *Loc. cit.*

123. *SALC Aborigines Bill,* p. 112. Like other contemporaries Foelsche gives the impression that the wearing of men's clothing was in some way immoral. In reality, trousers were more practical for both men and women spending long hours on horseback.

124. Fysh, *Taming the North,* p. 66.

125. *Queenslander,* 3 November 1883, p. 717.

126. *Ibid.*, 26 January 1884, p. 133.

127. *Queenslander,* 24 March 1894, p. 551. Ann McGrath suggests that "men were better able to influence the type of work they were asked to perform than women, not least because of the resistance they offered employers, which sometimes went as far as outright physical violence". A. McGrath, "Aboriginal Women Workers in the N.T., 1911-1939". *Hecate*, Vol. 4, No. 2, July 1978, p. 8. (Hereafter *Aboriginal Women Workers*).

128. Palmer, *Early Days*, pp. 216-217.

129. See for example letter to Ed., *Queenslander,* 19 November 1898, p. 984.

130. Sexual function was probably still as important but was driven underground.

131. *Queenslander,* 24 September 1898, p. 603.

132. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1886, p. 585.

133. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1890, p. 119.

134. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1899, p. 216.

135. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1890, p. 119.

136. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1886, p. 585.

137. See P.M. Kaberry, *Aboriginal Women: Sacred and Profane,* London, 1939, p. 53.

138. A Normanton correspondent wrote to the *Queenslander* that he knew one black woman who gave the station manager's child her breast when she was away from the house and its mother. *Queenslander,* 26 May 1900, p. 980.

139. "The Aboriginal Black", M.L. MSS 1893, Carton No. 4, cited in Loos, Aboriginal-European Relations, p. 403.

140. Letter 9, C.W. Bowly Letter, 15 April 1874.

141. Eden, *My Wife and I,* p. 103.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

143. Bennett MSS.

144. In traditional life, she argued, Aboriginal women "probably had a greater measure of independence – economically, domestically and personally, than their European-Australian counterparts did (and do?)". C. Berndt, "Aboriginal Women and the Notion of 'The Marginal Man' ", in R.M. and C.H. Berndt (Eds) *Aborigines of the West. Their Past and Their Present.* University of Western Australia Press, 1979, p. 37. Isobel White detected that those writers who stress Aboriginal women's equality or near equality are themselves women while male writers tend to find that women have markedly inferior status. I. White, "Aboriginal Women's Status: A Paradox Resolved", in F. Gale (Ed.) *Women's Role in Aboriginal Society,* Canberra, 1970, p. 21.
Martin Whyte used a cross-cultural survey to study more objectively the status of women relative to men in hunting societies. He found that this type of organisation exhibited more egalitarian relations between the sexes than did other societies. M. Whyte, *Women in Preindustrial Societies,* 1978, p. 28.

145. McGrath, *Aboriginal Women Workers,* p. 8.

## CHAPTER FIVE

1. For some analysists there are political motives associated with defining the nature of the modes of production. This has been outlined by Laclau who wrote that: "Those who maintain that the Latin American Societies are historically constituted as feudal in character and have remained so ever since, wish to emphasise that they are closed, traditional, resistant to change, and unintegrated into the market economy. If this is the case, then these societies have still not yet reached a capitalist stage and are, indeed on the eve of a bourgeois-democratic revolution which will stimulate capitalist development and break with feudal stagnation. Socialists should therefore seek an alliance with the national bourgeoisie and form a united front with it against oligarchy and imperialism. The advocates of the opposite thesis claim that Latin America has been capitalist from its inception, since it was fully incorporated into the world market in the colonial period. The present backwardness of Latin American societies is precisely the outcome of the dependent character of this incorporation and they are in consequence fully capitalist. It is therefore meaningless to postulate a future stage of capitalist development. It is, on the contrary, necessary to fight directly for socialism. . .". E. Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America". *New Left Review,* No. 67, May-June, 1971, pp. 19-20.

2. P.J. O'Brien, "A Critique of Latin America Theories of Dependency", in I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and D. Booth (Eds) *Beyond the Sociology of Development,* London, 1975, p. 12.

3. A.G. Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America,* New York, 1967.

4. Dualists argue that "the pattern of external domination produced a structure of dualism in underdeveloped countries such that there exists, on the one hand, a modern partly industrialized urban sector and, on the other a traditionalized and economically backward peasant sector. These two opposing sectors are said to be poorly articulated and it is this lack of integration which constitutes a major obstacle to socio-economic development". N. Long, "Structural Dependency, Modes of Production and Economic Brokerage in Rural Peru", in I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and D. Booth (Eds) *Beyond the Sociology of Development,* London, 1975, p. 254.

5. A.G. Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment and Revolution,* p. 225.

6. Laclau, *New Left Review,* p. 30.

7. Aiden Foster-Carter, "Can We Articulate 'Articulation'?" in J. Clammer (Ed.) *The New Economic Anthropology,* 1978, p. 218.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

10. W.J. Jonas, "Samir Amin: Accumulation on a World Scale" in R. Peet (Ed.) *An Introduction to Marxist Theories of Underdevelopment,* Canberra, 1980.

11. Long, *Structural Dependency,* p. 273.

12. *Loc. cit.*

13. H. Wolpe, "The Theory of Internal Colonialism: the South African Case", in I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and D. Booth (Eds) *Beyond the Sociology of Development,* London, 1975, p. 241.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

15. Laclau, *New Left Review,* p. 30.

16. T. Barnett, "The Gezira Scheme: Production of Cotton and the Reproduction of Underdevelopment", in I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and D. Booth (Eds) *Beyond the Sociology of Development,* London, 1975, p. 184.

17. M. Hartwig, "Capitalism and Aborigines: The Theory of Internal Colonialism and its Rivals", in E.L. Wheelwright and K. Buckley (Eds) *Essays in the Political Economy of Australia,* Vol. 3, Sydney, 1978, p. 36.

18. *PDT,* 16 May 1866.

19. *Queenslander,* 16 February 1884, p. 259.

20. *Loc. cit.*

21. Aiden Foster-Carter, "Can We Articulate 'Articulation'?", p. 223.

22. *PDT.*, 25 September 1880.

23. Gray, *Reminiscences,* p. 147.

24. H. Reynolds and N. Loos, "Aboriginal Resistance in Queensland". *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol. 22, No. 2, 1976, p. 216.

25. N. Kirkman, Chapter 6, Aboriginal-European Contact (on the Palmer). B.A. Hons Thesis in progress.

26. J. Wegner, "The Aborigines of the Etheridge Shire, 1860-1940: A Descriptive Study", in H. Reynods (Ed.) *Race Relations in North Queensland,* Townsville, 1978, p. 152.

27. Reynolds, *Other Side,* pp. 146-147.

28. *Queenslander,* 12 April 1884, p. 579.

29. See Chapter 4

30. *Queenslander,* 7 December 1889, p. 1062.

31. Bennett, *Christison,* p. 153.

32. R. Evans, K. Saunders and K. Cronin, *Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination,* Sydney, 1975, p. 114.

33. E.P. Thompson, "Time Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present,* No. 38, pp. 56-97.

34. I. Illich, "Shadow Work". *Social Alternatives,* Vol. 2, No. 1, 1981, p. 38.

35. *Report of the Commissioner of Aborigines of Queensland, QVP,* 1874, Vol. 2, p. 439.

36. J. McLaren, *My Crowded Solitude,* Melbourne, 1926, p. 37.

37. M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics.* Chicago, 1972, pp. 34-35.

38. See H. Reynolds, "Racial Thought in Early Colonial Australia". *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol. 20, No. 1, April, 1974, pp. 45-53 for a survey of these attitudes.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

40. Bennett, MSS, p. 408.

41. *SALC Aborigines Bill,* Question 2025.

42. A.P. Elkin, *Citizenship for Aborigines,* Sydney, 1944, p. 27.

43. *Queenslander,* 26 June, 1886, p. 1019.

44. "I have had a lifelong experience on stations in contact with wild blacks. I have dodged their spears and have had my cattle killed by them, but I have also on the other hand, had my life saved by them and had years of faithful service from them, as hundreds of others in Queensland have". *Queenslander,* 29 May 1897, p. 1179.

45. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1897, p. 1179.

46. C. and R. Berndt, *Pioneers and Settlers,* p. 20.

47. See Chapter 3,

48. J. and P. Read, *View of the Past,* p. 194.

49. *Queenslander,* 27 June 1874, p. 5.

50. See Chapter 3,

51. Cotton, *Big Herds,* p. 126.

52. See Chapter 3,

53. J.R. Mandle, *The Plantation Economy: Population and Economic Change in Guyana 1838-1960*, Philadelphia, 1973, p. 10.

54. Domar's thesis is that the joint presence of scarce labour and abundant land is likely to produce highly coercive forms of labour control, provided the governments make appropriate political decisions. E.V. Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis". *Journal of Economic History,* Vol. 30, 1970, pp. 18-32.

55. E.R. Wolfe points out that "wherever the plantation has arisen, or wherever it was imported from the outside, it always destroyed antecedent cultural norms and imposed its own dictates, sometimes by persuasion, sometimes by compulsion, yet always in conflict with the cultural definitions of the affected population". Cited in Mandle, *Plantation Economy*, p. 9.

56. However well into the twentieth century Europeans continued to use violence with Aboriginal employees. One station owner threatened to shoot Rowley Cameron for not doing his work and actually put a bullet through his hat. Black Oral History Collection, JCU History Department, Tape 25A, Side B.

57. H. Blyton to Sgt Hughenden to Sub-Inspector of Police, Charters Towers, 14 September 1900, COL/142, *QSA.*

58. Cited in Reynolds, *Aborigines and Settlers,* p. 47.

59. "The struggle against Pacific Island labour illustrated a persistent phenomenon of the labour movement as it developed in Queensland: brotherhood solidarity and the right to work were the exclusive preserve of a homogeneous group of white, predominantly British workers". D. Hunt, "Exclusivism and Unionism: Europeans in the Queensland Sugar Industry 1900-1910", in A. Curthoys and A. Markus (Eds) *Who Are Our Enemies?* Neutral Bay, NSW, 1978, p. 80.

60. Sinclair, *Process of Economic Development,* p. 2.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

## APPENDIX A

### ESTIMATE OF COST OF FORMING A CATTLE STATION – 1873

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 000 head of cattle at £4.5.0 each | 8 500 † |
| Expense of droving including 40 horses, 2 drays, harness, camp furniture | 2 000 †† |
| Percentage of losses 4% and 40 used for rations – 1 880 delivered | |
| Stockyard | 200 |
| Small horse paddock | 120 |
| Superintendent's house kitchen | 200 |
| Stockmen's hut | 60 |
| Bullock dray | 150 |
| Stores etc. for shop for men | 60 |
| Tools | 50 |
| 6 months' rations | 150 |
| Cooking utensils | 10 |
| Furniture | 20 |
| House linen | 10 |
| Horse shoes | 5 |
| Extra saddlery | 25 |
| Meat house | 10 |
| Garden fenced and dug | 15 |
| Sundries | 100 |
| | £11 675 |

Source: B4, W.J. Scott. *Valley of Lagoons,* Scott Bros. Correspondence, 1862-1898 in JCU Library on Microfilm.

† This item was subject to considerable fluctuations depending on the state of the store cattle market.

††An alternative would have been to hire a contract drover – in late 1880s the rate for this was 1s. per head per 100 miles for all cattle delivered – as a rule drovers were allowed 3% for losses but anything over this had to be paid for by the drover unless the cattle died from a disease. Out of the shilling the drover had to pay all hands and furnish rations, drays, tents and horses. *Queenslander,* 14 April 1894, p. 693.

## A TYPICAL OUTSIDE STATION ORDER IN 1888

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 tons flour | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 ton C. Salt | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 22 Raw Sugar | 12 | 17 | 5 |
| 4 Rice | 3 | 8 | 0 |
| 6½ Chests of Tea | 22 | 10 | 0 |
| 28 lb Coffee | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| 1 carton Jam | 1 | 15 | 0 |
| 2 cartons Pickles | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 2 cartons Golden Syrup | 3 | 12 | 0 |
| 1 carton Bottled Fruit | 1 | 9 | 0 |
| 2 cartons Kerosene | 2 | 8 | 0 |
| 1 carton Vestas | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| 6 Curry Powder | | 9 | 0 |
| 2 doz. Mustard | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| 4 Boxes Soap | 4 | 10 | 0 |
| 1 box Raisins | 1 | 18 | 8 |
| 1 box Currants | 3 | 14 | 1 |
| 1 keg Dried Apples | 1 | 19 | 8 |
| 1 Box Candles | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 Tartaric Acid | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| 40 Carb. Soda | | 13 | 4 |
| 2 doz. tins Pepper | | 10 | 0 |
| 2 packets Cloves | | 5 | 0 |
| 2 Boxes Tobacco | 16 | 0 | 8 |
| 1 dozen Pipes | 1 | 9 | 6 |
| 14 lbs Sago | | 7 | 0 |
| 1 Nutmeg | | 4 | 0 |
| 7 Spice | | 15 | 9 |
| 7 Tins S. Soap | | 7 | 0 |
| 1 doz. Pocket Knives | | 18 | 0 |
| 3 Castrators | | 12 | 0 |
| 4 doz. H. Chains | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 prs Spurs | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 Sets D Billeys | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| 6 Buckets | | 18 | 0 |
| 6 Axes | 2 | 8 | 0 |
| 6 Tomahawks | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 dozen Axe Handles | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| 1 dozen Tomahawk Handles | | 7 | 0 |
| ½ dozen Jack Shays | | 12 | 0 |
| 2 dozen Pint Pannikins | | 12 | 0 |
| 1 dozen ½ pint Pannikins | | 4 | 0 |
| ½ cwt Nails | | 14 | 0 |
| 12 packets C. Rivets | 1 | 10 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Steel | | | 6 6 |
| 3 flat Files 14 inch | | | 10 6 |
| 3½ Round Files | | | 10 6 |
| 3 Round Files | | | 10 6 |
| 6 H.S. Files 7 inch | | | 5 0 |
| 6 H.S. Files 4½ inch | | | 3 6 |
| ½ dozen Sail Needles | | | 1 0 |
| ½ dozen Needles | | | 9 |
| 4 L. Pinchers | | | 4 0 |
| 2 prs C. Nails | | | 2 0 |
| 2 prs Am Nails | | | 2 6 |
| 1 pr Fin Nails | | | 1 6 |
| 1 Gauge L. Cutter | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| ½ pint Spirit of Salts | | | 2 0 |
| 14 Solder | | | 18 8 |
| 100 L. Cartridges | | | 17 6 |
| 2 Boxes Cartridges 450 | | | 15 0 |
| 4 packets Gun Powder | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 packets Shot | | | 4 0 |
| 1 tin R. Lead | | | 11 8 |
| 1 tin W. Lead | | | 11 8 |
| 4 tins Paint (Blue) | | | 8 0 |
| 2 gallons Turps | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| 1 drum Boiled Oil | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 1 drum S. Tar | | | 17 6 |
| Curved Iron Tanks | | | |
| Flat Iron Tanks | 4 | 17 | 6 |
| 2 H. Rasps | | | 8 0 |
| 85 sets Horse Shoes | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| 2 F. Knives | | | 3 0 |
| 2 R. Stones | | | 7 0 |
| 2 sides H. Leather | 1 | 10 | 8 |
| 1 side Bridle Leather | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| 1 side Bay Leather | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| 1 dozen Basils | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| 1 dozen Balls Hemp | | | 7 0 |
| 3 dozen ½ inch Buckles | | | 6 0 |
| 3 dozen 1 inch Buckles | | | 9 0 |
| 2 dozen 1 inch G. Buckles | | | 2 0 |
| 2 dozen Saddle straps | | | 16 0 |
| 1 Dandy Brush Set | | | 7 0 |
| 1 Curry Comb | | | 1 6 |
| 5 Packets Note Paper | | | 12 6 |
| 5 Quires Foolscap | | | 6 0 |
| 1 quire Blotting paper | | | 2 0 |
| 3 packets envelopes – office | | | 2 3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 500 letter envelopes | | 4 | 6 |
| 2 Sealing Wax | | 8 | 0 |
| 2 Balls Twine | | 1 | 6 |
| 3 bottles Ink B.B. | | 10 | 6 |
| 6 Bottles Red Ink | | 1 | 6 |
| 1 Copying Press | 2 | 15 | 0 |
| 1 Letter Book | | 5 | 6 |
| 3 Memo Books | | 1 | 0 |
| 2 Counter Books | | 5 | 0 |
| 1 dozen boxes Pens | | 10 | 0 |
| 2 dozen P. Killer | 1 | 16 | 0 |
| 1 dozen Chlorodyne | 1 | 16 | 0 |
| 2 dozen Cockle Pills | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 dozen Holloway Pills | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 dozen Holloway Ointment | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 1 dozen Combs | | 7 | 6 |
| 1 dozen Mirrors | | 15 | 0 |
| 1 dozen B. Fever Mixture | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 2 dozen Eye Lotion | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 dozen St. Tac Oil | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 boxes Epsom Salts | | 7 | 0 |
| | £197 | 1 | 6 |

Source: Burns Philp & Co. Ltd. Charters Towers Branch Records

## SOME PROPOSALS AND INITIATIVES OF NORTH QUEENSLAND PASTORALISTS TO DEAL WITH MARKETING PROBLEMS, 1889-1896

| | |
|---|---|
| June 1889 | A group of NQ pastoralists formed NQ Meat Export Co. utilizing the plant of the old boiling down works at Alligator Creek.[1] |
| January 1890 | Meeting in Normanton to form a meat extract works to relieve the Burke district of stock.[2] |
| February 1890 | J.H. Grant of *Woodleigh* Station suggested that a freezing works was needed at Cairns because sooner or later the bulk of the tablelands would be under sheep.[3] |
| May 1890 | A. Kennedy of *Devoncourt* convened a meeting in Cloncurry regarding the formation of a meat extract and chilling works there.[4] |
| June 1890 | Meeting of 70 squatters and representatives discuss meat freezing works in Townsville.[5] |
| July 1890 | A committee of Normanton people decided to canvas shareholders in QME (floated in Brisbane in 1890) rather than try to form their own works.[6] |
| August 1891 | Meeting of stockowners in Bowen to consider a freezing works scheme possibly on the old Poole Island site.[7] |
| April 1892 | QME begins freezing in Townsville.[8] |
| June 1892 | Torrens Creek boiling-down works begins operating.[9] |
| June 1892 | Dalgonally boiling-down works begins operating at Normanton.[10] |
| August 1892 | Prospectus issued for Herbert River Meat Export Co. – purpose of company being to export salt meat to Europe and eastern states.[11] |
| January 1893 | Meeting in Townsville to consider formation of salt and tinned meat company and suggested that proposed Herbert River Co. could merge with this.[12] |
| March 1893 | Bowen freezing works proposed.[13] |
| November 1893 | Squatters in Cooktown resolved to form a boiling-down and meat export company.[14] |
| March 1893 | Arrangements made to double the capacity of Carpentaria Meat Co. formed the previous year in Burketown.[15] |

| | |
|---|---|
| January 1894 | Meeting of pastoralists in Cloncurry decided that the only works of direct benefit to the district had to be located in the Gulf.[16] |
| May 1894 | Meeting of pastoralists and townspeople to consider the advisability of establishing a meat freezing and chilling works at Hughenden.[17] |
| July 1894 | Meeting of pastoralists held at *Valley of Lagoons* to put forward the advantages of Cardwell as meat works site.[18] |
| November 1894 | Meeting of pastoralists decided to form a boiling-down and meat extract works in Mareeba.[19] |
| April 1895 | Cardwell boiling-down works begins operation.[20] |
| November 1895 | Winding up of Mareeba Meat Co.[21]<br>Formation of Barron Meat Co. Ltd.[22] |
| May 1896 | Bowen freezing works begins operation.[23] |

1. *Queenslander,* 22 June 1889, p. 1200.
2. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1890, p. 144.
3. Letter to *Wild River Times* reprinted in *Queenslander*, 1 March 1890, p. 390.
4. *Ibid.*, 3 May 1890, p. 864.
5. *Ibid.*, 14 June 1890, p. 1152.
6. *Ibid*
7. *Ibid.*, 8 August 1891, p. 266.
8. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1892, p. 582.
9. *Ibid.*, 9 July 1892, p. 69.
10. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1892, p. 1152.
11. *Ibid.*, 27 August 1892, p. 387.
12. *Ibid.*, 14 January 1893, p. 92.
13. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1893, p. 500.
14. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1893, p. 916.
15. *Ibid.*, 25 March 1893, p. 529.
16. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1894, p. 55.
17. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1894, p. 921.
18. *Ibid.*, 28 July 1894, p. 151.
19. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1894, p. 1045.
20. *Ibid.*, 30 March 1895, p. 581.
21. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1895, p. 868.
22. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1895, p. 919.
23. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1896, p. 1099.

## APPENDIX D

### STATEMENT OF DISPOSAL OF 389 COWS AT TOWNSVILLE 25 NOVEMBER 1895 – FROZEN AND SHIPPED TO LONDON

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Proceeds** | | |
| Frozen Beef | | |
| 639 forequarters | | 497. 6. 0 |
| 691 hindquarters | | 1 100.16. 4 |
| 8 pieces | | 8. 8. 0 |
| Tallow | | 138. 0.10 |
| Hides | | 233.18. 0 |
| | Total | £1 978. 9.10 |
| **Charges** | | |
| Slaughtering, freezing, bags, railage, harbour dues and insurance | | 628. 2. 1 |
| Freight and lighterage | | 617. 0. 4 |
| *London* | | |
| Cartage Tolls | | 40.17. 3 |
| Storage | | 732.14. 0 |
| Commission | | 32. 1. 8 |
| | | £2 050.15. 4 |

Loss of £72.5.6 or 3s. 9d. each

Source: *QVP*, 1896, Vol. 4

## QUEENSLAND POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION FIGURES, 1860-1867

| | *Queensland Population* | *Immigration (excess of emigration)* |
|---|---|---|
| As at 31/12/ 1860 | 28 056 | . . . |
| 1861 | 34 367 | . . . |
| 1862 | 45 077 | 9 805 |
| 1863 | 61 640 | 14 394 |
| 1864 | 74 036 | 10 959 |
| 1865 | 87 804 | 11 969 |
| 1866 | 96 201 | 8 396 |
| 1867 | 99 849 | 917 |

Source: *QVP*, 1868, pp. 100-101.

## APPENDIX F

### STOCK HOLDINGS IN QUEENSLAND 1860-1904

| *Year* | *Cattle* | *Sheep* |
|---|---|---|
| 1860 | 432 890 | 3 166 802 |
| 1861 | 560 196 | 4 093 381 |
| 1862 | 637 296 | 4 553 353 |
| 1863 | 880 392 | 5 672 400 |
| 1864 | 882 073 | 5 665 334 |
| 1865 | 848 346 | 6 594 966 |
| 1866 | 919 414 | 7 278 778 |
| 1867 | 940 354 | 8 665 757 |
| 1868 | 968 279 | 8 921 784 |
| 1869 | 994 600 | 8 646 243 |
| 1870 | 1 076 630 | 8 163 818 |
| 1871 | 1 168 235 | 7 403 334 |
| 1872 | 1 200 992 | 6 687 907 |
| 1873 | 1 343 093 | 7 268 946 |
| 1874 | 1 610 105 | 7 180 792 |
| 1875 | 1 812 576 | 7 227 774 |
| 1876 | 2 079 979 | 7 315 074 |
| 1877 | 2 299 582 | 6 272 766 |
| 1878 | 2 469 555 | 5 631 634 |
| 1879 | 2 805 984 | 6 083 034 |
| 1880 | 3 162 752 | 6 935 967 |
| 1881 | 3 618 513 | 8 292 883 |
| 1882 | 4 321 807 | 12 042 893 |
| 1883 | 4 246 141 | 11 507 475 |
| 1884 | 4 266 172 | 9 308 911 |
| 1885 | 4 162 652 | 8 994 322 |
| 1886 | 4 071 563 | 9 690 445 |
| 1887 | 4 473 716 | 12 926 158 |
| 1888 | 4 654 932 | 13 444 005 |
| 1889 | 4 872 416 | 14 470 095 |
| 1890 | 5 358 264 | 18 007 234 |
| 1891 | 6 192 759 | 20 289 633 |
| 1892 | 6 591 416 | 21 708 310 |
| 1893 | 6 693 200 | 18 697 015 |
| 1894 | 7 012 997 | 19 587 691 |
| 1895 | 6 822 401 | 19 856 959 |
| 1896 | 6 507 377 | 19 593 696 |
| 1897 | 6 089 013 | 17 978 883 |
| 1898 | 5 571 292 | 17 552 608 |
| 1899 | 5 053 836 | 15 226 479 |
| 1900 | 4 078 191 | 10 339 183 |
| 1901 | 3 772 707 | 10 030 971 |
| 1902 | 2 543 471 | 7 213 985 |
| 1903 | 2 481 717 | 8 392 044 |
| 1904 | 2 722 340 | 10 843 470 |

Source: *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland* compiled from official records in the Registrar-General's Office.

## NORTHERN DIVISION STOCK HOLDINGS 1880-1903†

| *Year* | *Cattle* | *Sheep* |
|---|---|---|
| 1880 | 579 722 | 181 532 |
| 1881 | 666 170 | 298 265 |
| 1882 | 907 589 | 432 962 |
| 1883 | 982 689 | 477 246 |
| 1884 | 1 170 645 | 609 487 |
| 1885 | 1 247 687 | 592 184 |
| 1886 | 1 215 103 | 688 104 |
| 1887 | 1 302 122 | 857 068 |
| 1888 | 1 455 963 | 964 537 |
| 1889 | 1 531 482 | 1 036 989 |
| 1890 | 1 696 369 | 1 270 440 |
| 1891 | 1 942 781 | 1 524 014 |
| 1892 | 2 092 334 | 1 642 766 |
| 1893 | 2 159 756 | 1 527 475 |
| 1894 | 2 375 000 | 1 504 648 |
| 1895 | 2 198 030 | 1 610 052 |
| 1896 | 1 950 117 | 1 706 298 |
| 1897 | 1 882 056 | 1 784 666 |
| 1898 | 1 674 877 | 1 857 811 |
| 1899 | 1 527 079 | 2 242 015 |
| 1900 | 1 547 391 | 2 023 259 |
| 1901 | 1 462 168 | 2 039 535 |
| 1902 | 1 256 491 | 1 821 292 |
| 1903 | 1 228 844 | 1 659 422 |

Source: *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland*

†The Northern Division comprises the following Police Districts:
Ayr, Bowen, Cairns, Cape River, Cardwell, Charters Towers, Burke, Camooweal, Cloncurry, Cook, Douglas, Etheridge, Gilbert, Herberton, Hughenden, Ingham, Mackay, Mourilyan, Norman, Croydon, Palmer, Ravenswood, Somerset, Thornborough, Townsville.

## APPENDIX H

### CATTLE IN THE COOK, BURKE AND KENNEDY PASTORAL DISTRICTS 1871-1880

| *District* | *1871* | *1872* | *1873* | *1874* | *1875* | *1876* | *1877* | *1878* | *1879* | *1880* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burke | 24 592 | 3 300 | 49 506 | 30 949 | 65 264 | 96 123 | 119 697 | 125 373 | 170 936 | 216 960 |
| Cook | 3 922 | 11 542 | 300 | 1 062 | 4 342 | 5 594 | 7 797 | 17 334 | 22 532 | 19 792 |
| Kennedy | 144 312 | 149 515 | 161 100 | 177 561 | 185 059 | 255 599 | 294 216 | 315 362 | 345 133 | 389 903 |
| Total | 172 826 | 164 357 | 210 906 | 209 572 | 254 665 | 357 316 | 421 710 | 458 069 | 538 601 | 626 655 |

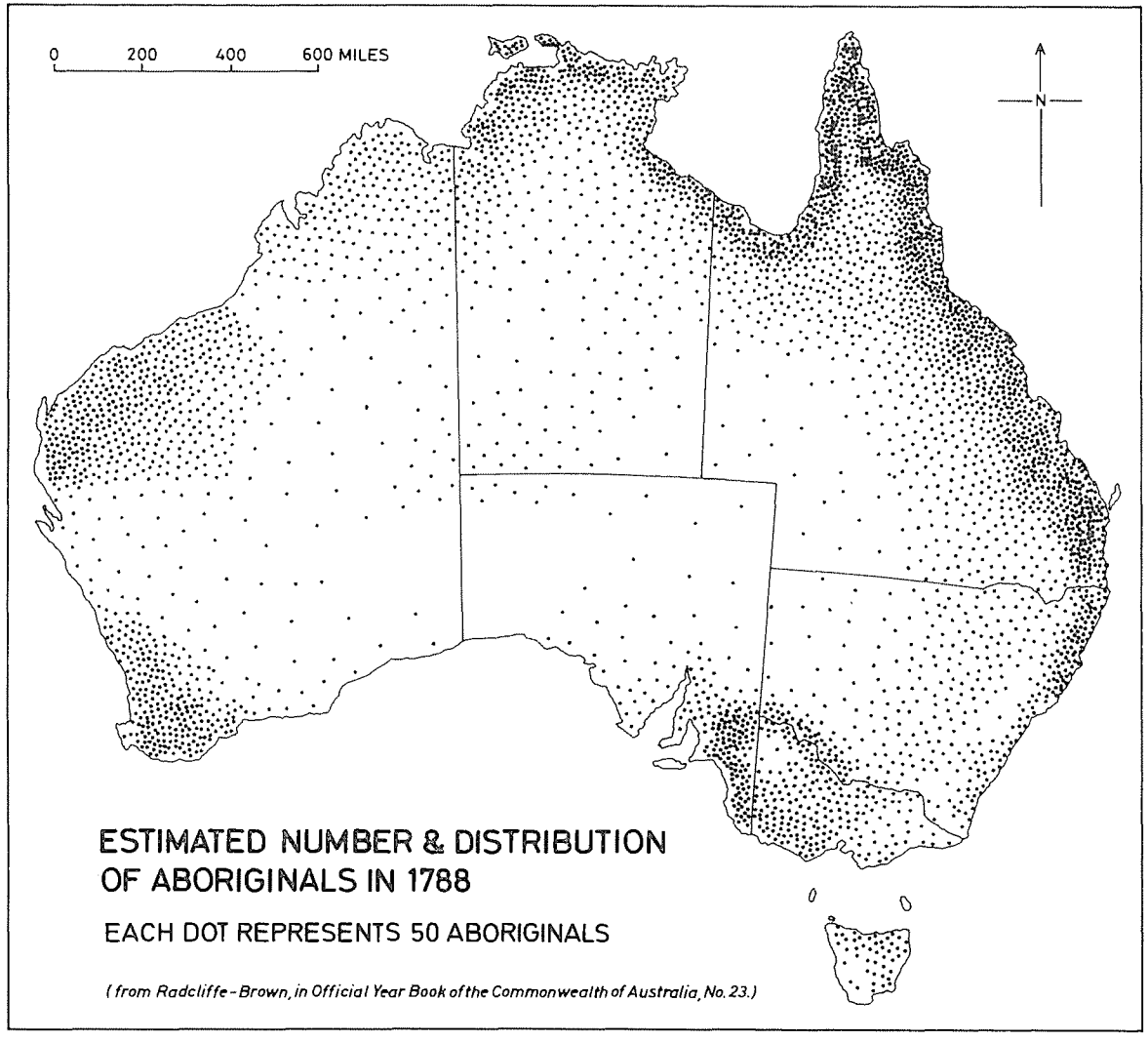
Source: *QVP*, 1881, Vol. 2, p. 970.

## APPENDIX 1

### SHEEP IN THE COOK, BURKE AND KENNEDY PASTORAL DISTRICTS 1873-1882

| *District* | *1873* | *1874* | *1875* | *1876* | *1877* | *1878* | *1879* | *1880* | *1881* | *1882* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burke | 17 450 | 22 142 | 18 923 | 14 000 | 33 940 | 24 255 | 116 908 | 133 712 | 246 841 | 328 172 |
| Cook | 2 600 | | | | | | | 221 | | 21 |
| Kennedy | 174 894 | 186 154 | 272 296 | 268 955 | 113 161 | 97 551 | 28 671 | 25 676 | 167 333 | 53 362 |
| Total | 194 944 | 208 296 | 291 219 | 282 955 | 147 101 | 121 806 | 145 579 | 159 609 | 414 174 | 381 555 |

Source: *QVP*, 1883, p. 753.


0 200 400 600 MILES
N
ESTIMATED NUMBER & DISTRIBUTION
OF ABORIGINALS IN 1788
EACH DOT REPRESENTS 50 ABORIGINALS
( from Radcliffe-Brown, in Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No. 23.)

# APPENDIX J

## ABORIGINAL POPULATION AND WORKFORCE ESTIMATES

The size of the nineteenth century Aboriginal population has never been accurately determined. In spite of the many attempts at estimating the number of blacks living in Australia before white contact, Radcliffe-Brown's 1930 figure of 300 000 remains the most realistic estimate to date. For Queensland as a whole he calculated that the colony could not have contained less than 100 000 Aborigines and probably had more.[1] As it can be seen from the map, a relatively larger proportion of this number was located in North Queensland. However, in the early 1950s the American anthropologist, J.B. Birdsell found that there was a high degree of correlation between rainfall and density indicating that the Australian Aborigines were subject to rigorous environmental determinism of their densities.[2] He argued that a simple exponential relationship existed between the mean annual rainfall and the size of tribal territory. The size of his average tribe was assumed to be 500. On the basis of this he concluded that:

$$Y = 615.00\ X^{-0.98980}$$

where Y is the size of tribal territory and X the mean annual rainfall.

He further refined his formula by taking into account ecological factors such as the availability of marine food and unearned surface water[3] along with cultural factors such as advanced political organisation and the incidence of circumsion and sub-circumsion. He was thus able to rewrite his formula:

$$D = \frac{0.0703037}{X^{-1.58451}}$$

where D is the density and X the mean annual rainfall

In view of this it should be theoretically possible to calculate the Aboriginal pre-contact population from rainfall figures. For instance the population density of an area with a mean annual rainfall of 30 inches would be 15.3997 and for the same size territory where the rainfall was only 10 inches a year the density would be 2.7009.

However, during the period of frontier conflict between Aborigines and Europeans, the population was significantly reduced. According to G.F. Brigman, half the members of four tribes located within a radius of 50 miles of Port Mackay were either shot down by police or died from disease in the 1860s. Similarly, James Cassady reported that the Halifax tribe which occupied a tract of country fronting the shore of the bay for 50 miles and extending 15 miles inland, was reduced from 500 to approximately 200 between 1865 and 1880. The decrease, he believed, was due mostly to massacres by settlers and native police.[4] After black resistance was subdued the Aboriginal population continued to decline due to opium, alcohol, venereal disease and other European introduced diseases. Dr W.E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, normally quite meticulous in his research, estimated that in 1901 the Aboriginal population in the area north of 22 degrees latitude was about 16 800.[5] Of course, not all were available for the pastoral industry as Aboriginal labour was used widely in the sea industries, in agriculture and for rough and

menial work around towns. In the 1870s however, there was more than an ample supply of untrained workers for the pastoral industry.

* * * * *

The Aboriginal workforce in the pastoral industry can also only be estimated. It has been indicated in Chapter 3 that this can be approximated by calculating the workforce needed to handle the North Queensland livestock at a particular point in time. The difference between this figure and the number of pastoral workers listed in the census should thus give an approximation of the Aboriginal employees who were not included in the statistical surveys in the nineteenth century. It would be remiss of me not to illuminate some of the difficulties in such an approach. Firstly, occupational classifications were not particularly discrete and those engaged in station improvements were normally counted as pastoral workers. There is no way of estimating the size of this group but the problem can be overcome by choosing years when station improvements were at a minimum. Such a year was 1886. So was 1871, but at that time the use of local Aborigines was only in its infancy in the northern industry. Two years which are unsuitable are 1881 and 1891 because of the level of improvements – the converting of properties to sheep in the former and sinking of artesian bores in the latter year. Some improvements were carried out in 1876 but not a significantly high level, so this year can also be used along with 1886. A further difficulty arises because of the fact that population and stock statistical areas do not exactly correspond. Fortunately, in 1876 the boundaries of census districts, Bowen, Burke, Cardwell, Cook, Etheridge, Gilberton, Kennedy North, Kennedy South, Palmer, Somerset and Townsville correspond closely to the Burke, Cook and Kennedy pastoral districts for which stock statistics are available in 1876. As the northern population spread, there were further changes in electoral census boundaries. In 1886 Bowen, Burke, Cairns, Cardwell, Cloncurry, Cook, Etheridge, Herberton, Hughenden, Kennedy, Palmer, Townsville and Woothakata census districts roughly corresponded with the pastoral districts of Cook, Burke and North Kennedy. Stock statistics for the various Petty Session districts comprising the Northern Division of the colony fit fairly closely to these boundaries in 1886. Other difficulties arise because of differences in management ability and sizes of stations.

In 1876 the census classification "Pastoral Employees" was made up of shepherds, hutkeepers, bushmen, boundary riders, fencers, ditchers, drovers, shearers, washers, cooks, men-in-charge of wash-pools and others[6] and totalled 566 people in North Queensland.[7] The stock in the corresponding period consisted of 357,316 head of cattle and 282,955 sheep.[8] Approximately 357 stockmen[9] and 142 shepherds[10] would be required for stock management. From *Pugh's Almanac* it is estimated that there were in the vicinity of 157 stations in the northern area in 1876.[11] Allowing for one general handyman, one bookkeeper/storekeeper and one cook per station[12] the labour requirements are increased by 471. The estimated total workforce to cater for the number of sheep and cattle in 1876 is 970, the deficit being 404. This latter figure indicates the probable size of the Aboriginal workforce and in 1876 represented 41 per cent of the employees in the industry.

The situation was a little different in 1886 as shepherds were no longer used due to the introduction of fencing. A typical sheep station in the area at the time would probably

have employed a manager, overseer, bookkeeper, three boundary riders, a cook, a "general useful", a laundryman, married couple, three maintenance men, a horse driver and his assistant[13] – a total of 14 workers excluding the manager and overseer who were counted separately in the 1886 census. With 20 such sheep stations in the area[14] the labour requirements would amount to 280 people. On the cattle stations, 1 215 stockmen would be required to work 1 215 103 head of cattle.[15] Estimating that there were at least 200 "larger" cattle stations[16] a total of 600 support employees[17] would also be needed. The total of the likely labour force for the northern stock in 1886 would be 2 095. From the census figures that year, it can be seen that there were 1 091 "outdoor station labourers and indoor or outstation servants". The deficit was 1 004 which can be considered the Aboriginal labour component – or approximately 48 per cent of the total labour requirements. However, taking into account the fact that by 1886 northern Aborigines were employed almost exclusively with cattle rather than sheep, black workers contributed 55 per cent of the labour required in that industry.

These figures of 404 in 1876 and 1 004 in 1886 can be considered absolute minimum figures for a number of reasons. Although the stock figures are official, they were nevertheless supplied by the operators of the stations. Given that assessment had to be paid on each head of cattle in excess of 50, it was in the interest of station owners to underestimate the number of sheep and cattle on their properties. Evidence can be produced to show that this was done. Squatters could successfully evade taxes in this manner because it was normal practice to only estimate holdings anyway.[18] Bang tail musters were the only accurate means of counting cattle and these were rarely carried out.[19] Secondly, although improvements were not being generally carried out, there was some maintenance by itinerant bush carpenters, saddlers, etc. These would have been included in the pastoral workforce figures but it is impossible to even guess at the number involved. Thirdly, it has been assumed throughout that the productivity of white and black employees was equal. Given the forced nature of Aboriginal labour, it would be expected that black labour was less productive. For these reasons then, the number of workers actually engaged in stock management is likely to have been greater than I have estimated. This being so, the Aboriginal component would have been larger.

## APPENDIX J

### NORTH QUEENSLAND PASTORAL WORKFORCE 1876 AND 1886

| *Year* | *No. of Sheep and Cattle* | *Likely Labour Required* | *Census Figure* | *Probable Aboriginal Component* | *Percentage of Total Required Workforce* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1876 | 282 955 sheep<br>357 316 cattle | 357 stockmen<br>142 shepherds<br>471 support employees<br>970 | 566 | 404 | 41.6 |
| 1886 | 688 104 sheep<br>1 215 103 cattle | 280 employees of sheep stations<br>1 215 stockmen<br>600 support employees on cattle stations<br>2 095 | 1 091 | 1 004 | 47.92 |

1. *Commonwealth Year Book*, No. 23, 1930, pp. 687-695.

2. J.B. Birdwell, "Some Environmental and Cultural Factors Influencing the Structuring of Australian Aboriginal Populations". *American Naturalist*, Vol. LXXXVII, No. 834, 1953, pp. 171-207.

3. Unearned surface water is that which falls in one area but is carried via rivers to another location.

4. Cited in Radcliffe-Brown Report, *Commonwealth Year Book*, 1930, p. 694.

5. This figure was compiled from the blanket return figures. A total of 5,597 blankets were distributed—but only to those not in employment and even then only to the sick, the very young and very old. Roth writes that "it is a very fair estimate to reckon that for every one in this category, there would be two who were not". *Queensland Official Year Book*, 1901, p. 413.

6. According to the Census, employers were deemed to be squatters, graziers, station managers, overseers or superintendents.

7. *QVP*, 1877, Vol. 2, p. 421.

8. *QVP*, 1881, Vol. 2, pp. 969-970.

9. The contemporary figures for efficient management suggested between 800 and 1 500. I have chosen the figure of 1 000 to take account of smaller stations.

10. At this time, sheep were still being shepherded in North Queensland and the figure is based on flock sizes of 2 000 sheep.

11. *Pugh's Almanac*, 1877, pp. 312-327.

12. Some smaller stations may not have had employees filling all these positions, but this would be compensated for by the fact that on the larger stations extra positions would have been held.

13. This information has been taken from records for *Kynuna* station compiled in 1916. Scottish Australian Records, SAK31/2, SAK/9 held in JCU.

14. Calculated from the *Brands Assessment Return, QVP*, 1890, Vol. 3, p. 938.

15. Based on 1 stockman per 1 000 head of cattle as in 1876.

16. Estimated from *Pugh's Almanac Country Directory* and *Brands Assessment Returns, QVP*, 1890, Vol. 3, p. 938. By 1886 with the introduction of grazing farms and grazing selections there were many more small properties than had been the case in

1876, particularly in the Cook and Kennedy pastoral districts. These selections and farms were generally worked by the owner with the possible assistance of an Aboriginal employee or two. No account has been taken of this group in the calculation.

17. Allowing one bookkeeper/storekeeper, one gardener and one cook for each of the 200 stations.

18. This was done by adding the annual brandings to the estimated total at the beginning of the period, subtracting sales during the year and then allowing a certain percentage for deaths. Under normal conditions this was usually 5 per cent.

19. Usually only done when stations changed hands if at all.

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## STATION IDENTIFICATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Afton Downs | 29 |
| Avon Downs | 74 |
| Beames Brook | 5 |
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| Cambridge Downs | 24 |
| Cameron Downs | 30 |
| Canobie | 9 |
| Cargoon | 38 |
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| Wongalee | 35 |
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| Woodleigh | 60 |
| Wooroora | 59 |
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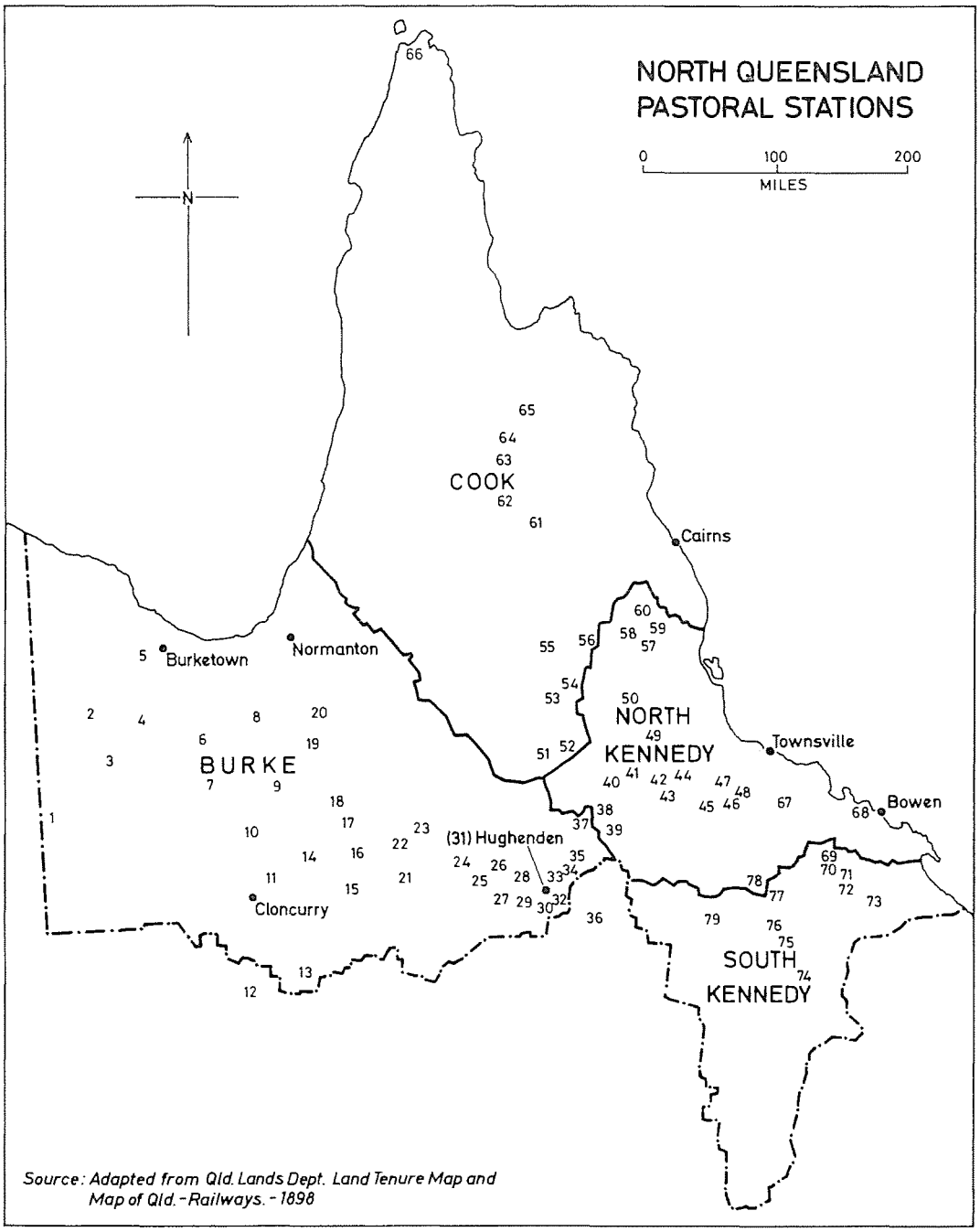
NORTH QUEENSLAND
PASTORAL STATIONS
0
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MILES
N
COOK
BURKE
NORTH
KENNEDY
SOUTH
KENNEDY
Cairns
Townsville
Bowen
Burketown
Normanton
Cloncurry
(31) Hughenden
Source: Adapted from Qld. Lands Dept. Land Tenure Map and
Map of Qld. - Railways. - 1898