Lectures on North Queensland History

History Department

James Cook University of North Queensland

1974
Table of Contents

I Problems of Early Queensland, 1859-70
   Jean Famfield
   Page 9

II Agricultural Development on the Wet Coast of North Queensland, 1880-1970
   P.P. Courtenay
   Page 19

III Queensland Sugar Industry from 1860 to 1900
   C.R. Moore
   Page 29

IV Pioneer Homesteads of North Queensland
   Ray Sumner
   Page 47

V The Moving Frontier: Queensland and the Torres Strait
   Jean Famfield
   Page 63

VI The North Queensland Goldfields
   L.J. Colwell
   Page 73

VII The Desertion of Gilberton
   R.B. Brown
   Page 83

VIII Pacific Islanders in Colonial Queensland, 1863-1906
   Patricia Mercer
   Page 101

IX The Chinese Community in Far North Queensland
   Cathie May
   Page 121

X Aboriginal Material Culture in the Herbert/Burdekin District: a Cultural Crossroads?
   Helen Brayshaw
   Page 139

XI Settlers and Aborigines on the Pastoral Frontier
   H. Reynolds
   Page 153
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Aboriginal Resistance on the Mining, Rainforest and Fishing Frontiers</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N.A. Loos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>Townsville during World War I</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Douman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>Forces in North Queensland Politics, 1914-1929</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D.W. Hunt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>Townsville during World War II</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I.N. Moles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

In 1972 the History Department offered as a first year course Australian History, which had previously been available only to second year and Honours students. In 1973 and again in 1974 a substantial part of the course was devoted to North Queensland, an experiment which has proved so popular that it will be continued in future years.

For this section of the course the starting point is G.C. Bolton's admirable regional history, *A Thousand Miles Away* (Canberra 1970), but it is also possible to utilise the research interests of student and staff members of this and other departments, thus enabling undergraduates to share in the interest and excitement of extending the boundaries of knowledge.

Most of this research has not yet appeared in published form, some may not be published in a form readily accessible to students, and some participants will not be available to lecture in future years. Accordingly it was decided to publish the 1974 lectures on North Queensland, primarily for the use of students in future years, but the interest aroused by some lectures which were opened to the public leads to the hope that some copies will be bought and enjoyed by ordinary readers.

The lectures were not designed to cover a defined period or to constitute a coherent sequence: they represent what was available from research students and staff in the university in 1974. In fairness it should be emphasised that lectures arose out of research at various stages of completion: some are, in effect, progress reports on projects still at an early stage, some are the finished product of sustained research over many years. Similarly the contributors range in seniority and experience from Honours students in their final year to senior members of the permanent academic staff. All lectures, I believe, have something new and interesting to say both to undergraduates and to interested members of the public.

The History Department is very grateful to those members of other departments whose generous contribution to the series greatly extends its range of interest.

B.J. Dalton.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustrations and Maps</th>
<th>Facing page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Johnstone District</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Johnstone District</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Total land under cultivation</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Cattle</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Johnstone District</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Total area under sugar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Area under bananas</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Johnstone District</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural areas 1893</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Johnstone District</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural land use 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. i. Slab hut at Wambiana</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Mud hut near Hughenden</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. i. Pisé house at Alice Downs</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Store at Lammermoor</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Inkerman</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Wall and roof materials of occupied private dwellings</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stone hut at Tuaburra</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Groundplans of typical North Queensland houses</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Groundplan of house at Mount Cornish</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. i. Corrugated iron house at Kynuna</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Corrugated iron house at Garfield</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ready-to-erect houses</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Torres Strait boundary lines</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Loading Chinese-grown bananas at Geraldton</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Chinese Temple (&quot;Joss House&quot;) in Cairns</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Business establishments and land use in Chinatown, Cairns, ca 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>The Herbert/Burdekin District of North Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Two Aborigines with rain forest sword and shields, Cardwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>i. Swords and shields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Nullas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>i. Canoe with single outrigger, Cairns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Bark canoe, Port Denison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Rock Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Mt. Claro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Fanning River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>North Queensland, showing principal goldfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Distribution of Tropical Rainforest in North East Queensland prior to European Occupation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 December 1859 was a memorable day for the colonists of the northern districts of N.S.W. This was Separation Day when the new colony of Queensland was finally proclaimed and the first governor, Sir George Bowen was sworn in. The ceremony took place on the balcony of the governor's temporary residence, a rented house not part of the deanery of St. John's Cathedral. Some thousands of people watched the ceremony from the area below. Some were from Brisbane itself, which comprised at the time four settlements: North Brisbane, South Brisbane, Kangaroo Point and Fortitude Valley, separated from each other by grassy paddocks or the unbridged river. Others, were squatters who had ridden in from the Darling Downs, and farmers from the Moreton Bay district who had driven their families in by cart. The Ipswich people had come down the river in sailing boats and gaily decorated steamers. One enthusiastic local poet described the new colony as 'Daughter of the Sun'.

Separation was the culmination of a struggle for independence by the northern colonists which had lasted for nearly eight years. General indignation and frustration at neglect by a Sydney-based government had spurred the northerners to petition the Crown for freedom from what the Moreton Bay Courier described as "their paralizing chains". The long delay had been caused by determined opposition from the government of N.S.W., and the vacillating policies of the Imperial government.

Now Queensland had at last been created a new colony covering a vast area from Point Danger in the south, to Cape York in the north. As it turned out, although people did not anticipate it at the time, it was the last of the Australian colonies. On Separation Day there were approximately 25,000 white settlers in the whole of Queensland: a little more than a third of the present population of Townsville. Plus an indeterminate number of Aborigines, reputed to be very numerous in the north and implacably hostile to white settlement in their lands.

The first census in Queensland of 1861 enumerated a white population of 30,059 for the whole colony. The demographic pattern of white
settlement was uneven. Most people lived in the south-east corner in the Moreton Bay and Darling Downs area, with sporadic settlement as far as Rockhampton (founded 1857). North of that there were a few adventurous squatters but much of the country was unexplored. Navigators and explorers had filled in some of the map but much was still unknown. Plans for successful economic development would need much more detailed information.

Communications in the 'settled districts' were bushtracks only. The difficulties the squatters experienced in conveying their wool to Brisbane for shipment were vividly described in evidence they gave to a Select Committee on Internal Communication in 1860. The track, for example, from the Logan district where there were numerous stations was "very bad indeed. No road has been surveyed, and every dray takes its own path." There were no dray tracks at all in the 'unsettled' districts. Even in Brisbane's Queen's Street there were weeds and tree stumps. A day or two's rain would reduce the streets of Brisbane or Toowoomba to a morass of mud. People used the 'liquid highway' as much as they could, as Governor Bowen described the Brisbane river. The colony was also ill-equipped for sea-transport along the vast coastline. At Separation the northern colonists owned no ocean-going vessels for Sydney had dominated the maritime trade of New South Wales. The statistics of Queensland for 1860, the first year of separation, underlined the fact that the colony was almost entirely dependent on the wool-clip, to the extent that 93% of exports came from the pastoral industry.

The new colony certainly had its problems. Some were abundantly obvious: too few people and too little capital to develop such a vast area, with total inadequacy of communications. Others were not so clear in the first year or two but soon became apparent: the vagaries of what at first appeared a perfect climate - droughts alternating with floods; new problems of a tropical environment north of the Tropic of Capricorn; the political and sociological difficulties of providing a coloured labour force for tropical agriculture; and finally the persistent and often ferocious resistance of the Aborigines to expansion of the white frontier. Little wonder that critics of the
new colony in New South Wales and London prophesied its early collapse. It was so obviously not a viable proposition.

In 1859, one might have been inclined to agree with them. Queensland's start appears decidedly shaky, compared with the other colonies pioneered with convicts and Imperial government finance or by organized private enterprise and capital. But looking back on the era we can see some inbuilt advantages for Queensland, apart from the optimistic enthusiasm of the early colonists and the splendours of the climate. (Propaganda about the delights of the 'Sunshine State' was quite as vigorous in the 1860's, as in tourist promotion of the 1970's).

The timing of the creation of Queensland is important. With Victorian economic optimism and the liberal doctrine of equality of opportunity in their hey-day, the climate of opinion was favourable to economic progress and development. Queensland's communications might be primitive initially but the colony was born into the era of the steamship, the railway and the electric telegraph; advantages of a technological age. Within its first ten years the colony had a telegraph system linking Brisbane with the southern capitals and the Gulf of Carpentaria. It had constructed its first railways and bridged the Brisbane river. In 1867 it inaugurated its own steamship service through Torres Strait to Batavia to link with the P. & O. mail service to Singapore. At an earlier age these achievements would have been impossible.

Capital for the development of what seemed the very promising resources of the new colony were readily available. Again the time was propitious. Victoria growing rich from the recent gold rushes could offer investment capital and entrepreneurial skills. Indeed in the 1870's and 1880's the development of Queensland, in the sugar industry especially, depended heavily on Victorian capital. British capital, of which there was a large accumulation by the 1860's was available for colonial government loans and private expansion in the wool industry. The wool industry experienced a boom until 1866, which was followed by a slump.

Queensland had a fortunate beginning politically. It started with democratic self-government with a constitution similar to that granted to N.S.W. in 1855. Therefore the Queensland Parliament and people were
spared the fierce controversies concerning responsible government which had beset N.S.W. and Victoria in the 1850's. The Queenslanders inherited liberal democracy from other people's efforts. Government could concentrate on problems of development. The Queensland Legislature was able also to learn to some extent from mistakes by Victoria and N.S.W. in such controversial matters as land legislation and state-aid to religion. All in all, these advantages which stemmed from being last in time of the Australian colonies helped the Queenslanders to overcome their difficulties and confound those who prophesied doom for the new colony.

Coalition ministries, comprising a combination of progressive conservatives and liberals carried on government in the early years. Radicalism was not strong in a colony which was predominantly pastoral and as yet had no gold-diggers. The political controversies which did take place were between pastoralists and liberals, who advocated small farming and closer land settlement. The obvious need for economic development and the desire for material prosperity united the colonists and majority of politicians until such time as the community became more complex. Clash of interests then began to show itself in political conflict.

The most outstanding political influence in early Queensland was a brilliant young scholar from England, Robert Herbert. He had been appointed colonial secretary by the Secretary of State and accompanied Bowen to Queensland. Elected for the constituency of Leichhardt in the first elections, he then retained his position as colonial secretary and became first premier of Queensland. He maintained an unbroken coalition ministry for seven years until he resigned to return to England. He was Governor Bowen's right-hand-man in parliament. Bowen, behind the scenes, played a much greater part in administration than modern governors. It is often difficult to separate the influence of Bowen and Herbert on government policy of the time as they worked in close consultation.

Although they were temperamentally poles apart, Bowen ebullient and Herbert very reserved they generally agreed on the needs of Queensland. They regarded the colony as 'a great property' to be developed along good sound business lines for the benefit of the colonists and posterity.
They thought practical legislation for development much more important than political experimentation. The fact that most of the colonists agreed with this view, was one of the reasons Herbert was able to maintain a secure parliamentary majority for so long. His administration in Queensland was consistently pragmatic. He was unmoved by doctrinaire arguments and sectional enthusiasms. He calculated that stable government even at the cost of compromise was essential for economic development. Therefore he did not hesitate to invite his most gifted liberal opponents Arthur McAlister, and Charles Lilley into his ministry. Other considerations which account for a coalition ministry long-lived for that era were his great personal charm of manner, an ability to work very hard and lack of combination among opponents to his government.

The new government and colony had many problems to solve as I have already indicated. One wonders if Bowen and his first ministry drew up a list and allocated their priorities in early 1860. On the first list would have been the necessity to diversify the economy by encouraging agriculture; attracting more migrants; exploration of the north; providing more ports of access for the long coastline; the erection of public buildings. The first parliament was housed in the renovated old convict barracks; the governor lived in a rented house; there was no bridge over the Brisbane river etc. etc. If they had made another list in 1864 they would have added providing a coloured labour force for tropical agriculture, the difficulties of the northern pastoralists in a tropical environment, lighting and beaconing the coast, and how to deal with Aboriginal warfare on the frontiers of settlement. With all this there was the continuing problem of how to finance all these developmental projects. The government adopted an ambitious loan policy for developmental projects. This seemed safe enough in the buoyant economic climate of the early 1860's. But in reality the colony was over-extended and suffered badly from the slump of 1866-1867 on the other side of the world, which caused the failure of a London banking organization on which the Queensland government were relying for loan capital.

There is obviously not time here to examine all the problems which faced the early Queenslanders and their government. Each one would be a
thesis on its own. I intend to examine three problems briefly. (i) The disposal of crown land; (ii) The diversification of the economy; (iii) Immigration policy. They are inter-related and really three aspects of the same problem: how to ensure the economic viability of the new colony and justify the separation of the northern districts from New South Wales. The documents of the period show that Herbert's government gave top priority to these issues. Their solutions were experimental and not always successful.

The land legislation passed in 1860 was aimed at making use of the land to encourage immigration and agriculture without too much disturbance of the pastoral interest on which Queensland depended for the time being. There were some interesting new features in the four Queensland Land Acts passed in 1860, while the governments of N.S.W. and Victoria were still wrangling over the controversial subject. One of the most significant innovations was the legislation for Agricultural Reserves, a system of government controlled selection which obviated the conflicts of the free selection system of N.S.W. 100,000 acres of land were set aside for agriculture 'on the shores of navigable waters of Moreton Bay, Wide Bay, Port Curtis and Keppel Bay'. Large areas of land were also reserved within five miles of towns with a population of more than 500 people. As new areas were explored and settled such as Bowen and Cardwell, town reserves and agricultural reserves were declared. This legislation went a long way to save Queensland from the struggle between squatters and selectors which bedevilled land usage in N.S.W. This only developed to some extent on the Darling Downs, a squatter stronghold before separation. The system of Agricultural Reserves was attractive to migrants.

Included in the land legislation was a novel 'land-order' system also devised to attract migrants. The idea is attributed to the Rev. Dunmore Lang who took great interest in the northern districts, their separation and potentiality for closer settlement and small farming. The 'land-order' system worked in this way. Any migrant (man or woman), from Britain or a European country, who paid his own passage was to receive a 'land-order' worth £15. With this he could select immediately 15 acres of land on an agricultural reserve. After 2 years residence
he was entitled to a further land order of £12. Every 2 children in a family, under 14 and over 4, were entitled to land orders. The family could also lease land adjacent to their farm at 6 cents per acre. In theory the scheme was attractive but was frequently defeated by the frailties of human nature, lack of capital and lack of farming expertise especially in the alien and fickle Queensland climate. Land orders soon became a form of currency in Queensland, which needy migrants sold to maintain themselves for their first few years in the colony.

Herbert, against considerable opposition from left wing liberals and right wing pastoralists resisted a cheaper land policy. His government retained the sale price of £1 an acre to off-set the dangers of speculation in a new colony with land its most important asset. To encourage the exploration of the inland northern tropics and to put the land to some immediate use land legislation offered attractive terms to squatters in unsettled areas. Yearly licences at a nominal charge and long-leases after stocking. This resulted in a minor pastoral rush to the north with the district of Kennedy being declared in 1861 and Burke and Cook in 1864. Ports of access for the squatters were also established in the same boom period. Bowen in 1861, Townsville and Cardwell in 1864. A government bounty on the growing of cotton was also included in the new land laws.

The colonists were confident in 1861 that cotton was to be the crop which would diversify the economy, encourage small farming and produce an agricultural staple equal to wool. We have become so accustomed to thinking in terms of Darling Downs cereals and north Queensland sugar that is is hard for us to realize that the early colonists for the first five years thought in terms of cotton. Cotton wool and sheep's wool made such a neat picture for the theorists, particularly its main promoter the Rev. Dunmore Lang. Cotton could be the basis of a small-farming protestant society which would defeat the Pope and Negro Slavery at one and the same time. By the date of separation there was considerable experimentation as far north as Rockhampton. Soon after his arrival, Bowen informed the Secretary of State, "The subject of Cotton engrosses at the present moment a large share of the attention of the press, and of the public generally in this Colony."
JEAN FARNFIELD

It only needed the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 to make the future of cotton as Queensland's second staple seem assured. The northern blockade cut off England's greatest industry from the supply of raw cotton. There would be a market for raw cotton in the mother-country comparable to that for wool. Excellent reports on the quality of Queensland cotton had already been received from London and Manchester. The Queenslanders might be excused for their over-optimism in the circumstances. By 1864 they had to acknowledge their disappointment. Their hopes were dashed by the treachery of the lovely Queensland climate, the hard-headedness of Manchester businessmen and their own lack of expertise. Cotton needed a dependable climate which the drought of 1862 followed by floods in 1864 showed them they had not got. English capital was not available for cotton as it had been for wool. Manchester businessmen wanted cheap raw cotton. Queensland meant heavy freight rates and relatively expensive labour. Cotton growing was labour-intense, unlike wool growing. They preferred to rely temporarily on Egyptian and Indian grown cotton and wait for the end of the civil war in America.

Cotton had great significance in the future development of Queensland agriculture in spite of its failure as a major export staple. With cotton came the first South Sea Islanders, or Kanakas. Robert Towns, trying to solve his personal labour problems, first brought New Hebrideans to Queensland in 1863 for work on his cotton plantation in the Logan district. He found them 'industrious, tractable and inoffensive'. So did countless sugar-planters in the years to come.

Queenslanders soon forgot their disappointments over cotton as experimenters in tropical agricultural turned their attention to sugar-cane growing. Sugar-cane appeared a hardier and more promising crop than cotton. A cheap easy solution to the labour problem was provided by the kanakas. There was an expanding home market for sugar and developmental capital available from Victoria. The government decided to encourage sugar-cane growing by making land available under the Sugar and Coffee regulations of 1864. Applications for blocks of land totalled 87 from September 1864 to May 1866. They varied from islands in Moreton Bay to the Don River area near Bowen. Mackay and the Pioneer river were
the most favoured localities.

Queensland was urgently in need of more people at a time when the southern colonies, immediately after the gold rushes were cutting down on their assisted migration programmes. But competition for immigrants from Britain was very fierce. Britain had entered a much more prosperous era and people were not so anxious to leave as they had been in the 1830's and 1840's. America offered cheap land and a shorter sea journey. Then there were Canada and South Africa both much nearer England than Australia. The fame and wealth of Melbourne and opportunities of Sydney were attractive to prospective Australian migrants.

Queensland had much to compete with. The government initiated a vigorous immigration policy. In 1861 they appointed Henry Jordan as Queensland immigration agent. He opened an office in London, wrote pamphlets on Queensland and toured the country towns of Britain soliciting migrants. The 'land order' system was the main attraction for free migrants. The government paid the passages of assisted migrants such as domestic servants and unskilled labourers. They contracted with the famous Blackall shipping line to put on some fast sailing clippers to bring migrants direct to Brisbane. Squatters from N.S.W. and Victoria were attracted to the unsettled districts by the liberal terms of the new land laws.

The boom period of early Queensland came to an end in 1866, through circumstances over which the Queenslanders had no control. There was an economic collapse in London with the crash of the great financial house of Overend and Gurney, which handled many colonial loans. There was widespread unemployment in England. Riots and disturbances in London, where the rioters tore down the railings in Hyde Park and the Life Guards were called out to restore order.

Queensland was particularly vulnerable on the periphery of the empire. The optimism of the boom period had tempted Queenslanders both in the public and private sector to rely too heavily on the London loan market. With the financial crash, which affected Australian banks, the business of the colony almost came to a standstill and there was much hardship and unemployment. The immigration office in London was closed, public
works were curtailed and many northern squatters went bankrupt.

But the slump was not forever. The London money market had recovered by 1868 and by 1870 Queensland was on the way to economic recovery greatly assisted by discoveries of gold in the north. In 1871 Richard Daintree was appointed Queensland government Agent in London to publicise the colony and encourage migrants, a sure sign that Queensland was again ready to resume its economic development; this time in gold mining, sugar-cane growing and cattle-grazing.
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE WET COAST
OF NORTH QUEENSLAND, 1880-1970

Associate Professor P.P. Courtenay

The Natural Environment

The area with which this paper is concerned lies north from Clump Point for approximately 80 kms (50 miles) and extends about 32 kms (20 miles) inland.* It is, on average, the wettest part of the entire Australian coast with a mean annual rainfall of over 2500 mms (100 inches) and includes, in the Tully and Babinda districts, small localities which have mean annual totals in excess of 3750 mms (150 inches). The area is backed by high mountains which, from Mt. Marquette in the Walter Hill Range to the Centre Peak of Bellenden Ker, reach to between 600 and 750 metres (2000-2500 feet) with the peak of Bartle Frere soaring to 1627 metres (5287 feet). These ranges, which in fact form the edge of the tablelands, have been heavily dissected by the very many streams that drain from them, of which the North and South Johnstone Rivers, and Liverpool Creek are by far the biggest.

Particularly significant in the agricultural history of the area are two distinct soil types which have proved more productive than most other north Queensland soils. These are, first, soils derived from a grey, fine grained, olivine basalt, probably Pleistocene in age, which originated as lava flows both on the tableland and on the coastal plain. This basalt has weathered to form a deep red friable earth overlying strongly structured deep sub-soils which is particularly well developed in the Nerada district, in the country between the North and South Johnstone

* A note on metrication. Australia officially adopted the metric system to replace imperial units of measurement in 1974. This change produces many problems when an historical article, such as this, frequently quotes statistics especially of area and values which are really only meaningful when stated in the units that applied at the time to which they refer. The practice that has been adopted here is to give metric units first, with imperial in brackets, for 'continuing' values such as rainfall, altitude or distance and to reverse the procedure for measurements that were only ever made in the imperial units. Values have been left in the currency relevant to the period since long term inflation makes any direct conversion pointless.
Rivers* and between the South Johnstone and Mena Creek. A small isolated patch of this soil occurs behind Clump Point. The second important soil type is associated with the alluvial plains and terrace systems of the major rivers, such as the North and South Johnstone, Mena Creek, Liverpool Creek and Maria Creek, and with the low levee banks and relic channel cut-offs of numerous minor streams. This recent alluvial material produces a deep friable yellow or yellowish red loam. These two types of soil, occupying low lying and generally flat but well drained country, possessed a high natural fertility and, once the abundant rain forest cover was cleared, were highly suited to cultivation.

The Plantation Phase, 1880-1901

The district was first settled by Europeans in 1880, following the discovery of Mourilyan Harbour and the Johnstone River by Moresby in 1872, and Dalrymple's enthusiastic report of the agricultural prospects of the district in 1873. Cedar cutters were shipping timber from the Johnstone River district in the later 1870s, but the taking up of fifteen blocks of land, each of 1280 acres (520 hectares) by T.H. Fitzgerald and Company in 1880 for the purpose of growing sugar cane marks the beginning of permanent settlement and agriculture. The first major development of the Queensland sugar industry occurred in the early 1860s when world sugar prices were reviving for the first time since the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and the withdrawal in 1846 of protection for colonial sugar on the British market. Cane plantations had been established as far north as the Lower Herbert by 1872 with the main centre of the industry at Mackay. A serious outbreak of a cane disease in 1874 and 1875 put many planters out of business, of whom T.H. Fitzgerald, an early pioneer of the Mackay district, was attracted by the prospects of recovering his fortunes in the newly opened Johnstone River area. With financial support from the Brisbane Sisters of Mercy, Fitzgerald made application for all the original selections in 1880, which were located on river frontages in the vicinity of the present town area of Innisfail. The first crushing,

* The flow of the lava down the valley of a 'parent' Johnstone River was responsible for the later creation of the two arms of the present Johnstone river system which converge at the site of Innisfail.
FIG.1: JOHNSTONE DISTRICT

SOILS

- VOLCANIC
- ALLUVIAL

KM.
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE WET COAST OF NORTH QUEENSLAND, 1880-1970

producing forty tons of sugar, took place at the Innisfail mill* between November 1881 and January 1882.

Kanaka labour accompanied the first settlers in 1880 and their numbers increased during the following decade as forest clearance and cane planting spread from the initial nuclei around Junction Point and Flying Fish Point. Chinese also moved into the Johnstone district in the 1880s and helped many estates clear land for sugar. The early expansion of sugar growing in the Johnstone district was soon to be affected by the general depression of the sugar industry in the '80s, however, and acreages increased only slowly from 2399 (970 ha) in 1885, to 4363 (1766 ha) in 1890 and 6534 (2645 ha) in 1900 (see Figure 3A). During this period an alternative crop, bananas, assumed considerable importance.

From 1883 onwards the dumping of large quantities of state subsidized beet sugar by European producers on the open British market was affecting the production of cane sugar in all producing areas of the British Empire whose competitive position in their major market was considerably reduced. Germany alone dumped 760,000 tons of beet sugar on the British and United States Markets in 1886. In 1885 the price obtained for cane sugar fell from about £30 per ton to £20 per ton, and production in the Johnstone district was further hit by floods and drought in the late 1880s. The Pacific Islanders' Act of 1885, to end the recruiting of kanakas by 1890, depressed the prospects of the industry even more.

The development of the Johnstone district sugar industry had been much assisted by Chinese who had moved to the coast from the declining mineral fields of the interior, especially from the Palmer in the early 1880s, and many of whom took up clearing leases, either from the Crown or from private land-owners, on which they grew bananas. Bananas had

* Innisfail was the name of Fitzgerald's first sugar estate, but was not used for the town until 1910. The first township of the Johnstone River district was laid out in 1881 on an area of land reserved for the purpose at the junction of the North and South Johnstone Rivers and was known as Junction Point. In that year it had a population of 16. In 1883 its name was changed to Geraldton in honour of Fitzgerald, and it was not renamed Innisfail until 1910 to avoid further confusion with the West Australian Geraldton.
been grown on a small scale, in addition to other tropical fruits such as mangoes, citrus, pineapples and coconuts, in the small isolated settlements of the Bingil Bay district in the 1880s and were a preferred crop because of their rapid growth and consequent cash return. The major expansion of banana growing was, however, on the alluvial lands of the Johnstone River, Liverpool and Maria Creeks and the Tully River as the precursor to sugar. The low sugar prices of the 1880s made sugar cane only marginally profitable and many land-holders leased portions of their selections to Chinese settlers for clearing and banana growing. Holdings of between 80 and 120 acres (32 and 48 ha) were leased, first on the flats between the North Johnstone and Maria Creek and then, soon after 1900, on the banks of the Tully. The Chinese lease-holders cleared the land of its timber cover and planted bananas which, when harvested, were carried by junk down the Johnstone, Liverpool and Maria or by punt down the Tully to small steamers which shipped the fruit south. On the expiry of the leases, the selectors resumed the land for sugar and, when further uncleared selections remained, leased new areas to the Chinese growers.

As a result of this sequence of timber clearance, banana growing and sugar planting, the area under bananas had exceeded 3500 acres (1420 ha) by 1903, though the maximum production (6,745,980 bunches) was recorded in 1896,* (see figure 3B).

The Royal Commission of 1889 that had been appointed by the Queensland government to report on the sugar industry, and which resulted in a temporary suspension of the law on the recruitment of South Sea labour, also looked into the problem of the banana industry. The Commission recognized that moving bananas to the coast, and then shipping the fruit south in a marketable condition were the industry's major difficulties and recommended transport improvements. The Australian United Steam Navigation Co., which had the monopoly of the coasting trade, however, could make few suggestions for ameliorating the shipment of the perishable cargo.

* It is interesting to note that very similar methods of land clearance and development were taking place on the other side of the world, in Brazil, at about the same time, only in that case it was coffee that was expanding and it was Italians rather than Chinese who were serving as the lessees.
FIG. 2: JOHNSTONE DISTRICT

(A) TOTAL LAND UNDER CULTIVATION

(B) CATTLE

- UNDIFFERENTIATED
- BEEF
- DAIRY
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE WET COAST OF NORTH QUEENSLAND, 1880-1970

1901 - 1945

The anticipation of the end of kanaka recruitment, despite the temporary reprieve following the Royal Commission's report, encouraged the re-organization of the district's sugar industry on the basis of large central mills the first of which were opened at Mourilyan in 1882 and Goondi in 1885. Federation in 1901, which was followed by the protection of Queensland sugar in the Commonwealth and the special government bounties for 'white' labour sugar, accompanied by the worldwide improvement in sugar prices, consequent upon the abolition by the Brussels Convention of 1902 of the European bounty system that had supported beet sugar production, both contributed to a new profitability for cane growing in the Johnstone district as elsewhere in Queensland. The fact that economics of scale are less important in cane cultivation than they are in raw sugar production (crushing) was of major importance in making economically possible the sub-division of the large sugar estates into small farms of between 80 and 100 acres for European settlers, which were assigned to a small number of large central mills for crushing. In 1915 the Babinda Mill was opened and in 1916 the South Johnstone Mill was ready for its first crushing of cane from the South Johnstone and Liverpool Creek districts. Former banana lands at Cowley were assigned to the Mourilyan Mill and a long tramline constructed. The increasing profitability of sugar growing brought about a drastic decline in banana production after 1905 which was adversely affected also by growing competition in southern markets from the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales and finally by the abandonment of the steamer service during the First World War. By 1919 there were only 51 acres (20 ha) under bananas, and 3717 bunches of fruit produced.

The opening of the South Johnstone mill was followed by a considerable expansion of cane growing made possible especially by a steady influx of Italian cane cutters some of whom had come to own farms by the end of the First World War. This expansion continued throughout the early and middle 1920s and the area under cane in the Johnstone district had reached 30,000 acres (12,145 ha) by the end of the decade, with cultivation as far south as Maadi. Similar expansion was taking place to the south...
where, in 1926, the Tully Co-operative Mill made possible the settlement of 300 farmers on country which previously had been a cattle run. Expansion was checked in 1929 by the introduction of the Peak Year Scheme and the depression years of the early 1930s were a period of reduced sugar acreages and, although mill peaks were increased in 1940 to make it possible for Australia to fulfill her export quota under the International Sugar Agreement, the following years of the Second World War were a further period of contraction for the industry.

**The Post-War Period**

The years since the end of the Second World War, despite considerable fluctuations in the world sugar market, have been periods of general expansion for the industry in the Johnstone district. A major increase in the area devoted to sugar from 31,170 acres (12,620 ha) in 1945 to 60,970 (24,684 ha) in 1969, can be divided into two periods - that of the late 1940s and early 1950s and that of the mid and late 1960s, separated by a period of little change between 1955 and 1963. More impressive even than the expansion of the area of sugar cane in the Johnstone district between 1945 and 1969 has been the increase in the volume of cane grown which, thanks to new varieties, better cultivation methods and the use of fertilizers, expanded by 224% whilst the area for crushing increased by only 102%. This represents an increased average yield of cane from 19.8 tons per acre (48.3 metric tons per ha) in 1945 to 31.7 tons per acre (77.3 m. tons per ha) in 1969.

Cane now occupies nearly all the low lying country with suitable soils in the district. Only in the Granadilla area of South Maria Creek valley is there a small tongue of alluvial soils currently still in use for grazing. Some small areas of the basalt soils that are under bananas or grazing could probably also be utilized for sugar, but generally speaking these are geographically marginal to the principal cane lands. In 1970-71, 742 of the 884 agricultural holdings in the Shire were growing sugar cane. These were not all solely under cane, however, since there has developed a tendency in recent years for a small number of cattle to be run on some sugar farms.

Small numbers of cattle were recorded in the Johnstone district in
1885 when, in common with the early cattle industry in Far North Queensland as a whole, they were reared to satisfy the local demand. Numbers increased quite considerably during the first fifteen years of the twentieth century and then levelled off until the establishment of the Queerah export meatworks at Cairns in 1934. The stimulation of beef exports from the Far North Queensland region as a whole was reflected by a steep rise in cattle numbers in the Johnstone district especially after 1932. The years during and immediately after the Second World War were a period of some decline for the local cattle industry but the opening of the United States market in the late 1950s was followed by what has probably been the most rapid expansion of any one primary industry in the Shire since it has been settled.

The high rainfall experienced on the wet tropical coast allows a far more intensive form of cattle management than is possible in the more remote lower rainfall regions of North Queensland. Holdings devoted solely to cattle are concentrated on the hillier fringes of the settled parts of the district, especially in the Palmerston and Utchee areas, on the northern slopes of the Basilisk Range and in the Granadilla area. Cattle are run on sugar properties especially when holdings lie on the flanks of higher ground which is either unsuitable for mechanical harvesting or has not been assigned for sugar. Cattle and cane integrate well, since the labour demand for the grazing segment of a joint enterprise occurs in the wet season when the labour requirements of cane farming are at their minimum. The opinion has been expressed that, with some assistance at periods of peak activity, a farmer can successfully operate a joint cattle/cane holding. In a situation in which a land-holder's ability to increase his area under sugar, if his holding includes unused suitable land, is restricted because of the assignment system, the running of a few dozen head of beef cattle is one of the few ways in which he can expand his activities.

In addition to the very considerable increase in both the area under sugar cane and the volume of cane produced since the end of the Second World War, a major change in the industry of very great importance to the district has been increased mechanization. Although the successful
use of cane cutting machine was reported in the southern United States as early as 1930, mechanization of field operations in the Queensland sugar industry dates from the years following the Second World War when acute labour shortages hastened the introduction first of mechanical loading and then of mechanical cutting. A large seasonal work force had always been required in the northern mill areas (Mossman to Ingham) and shortages of experienced labour were more frequent than elsewhere. In consequence, mechanization progressed especially fast in the north. The almost complete replacement of the manual harvesting labour force by mechanization has not resulted in any major decrease in the amount of employment provided by the industry since the changeover to mechanical harvesting took place in a period of increasing cane production. Mechanization has, nevertheless, brought a considerable change in the nature of the employment, and consequently of the labour force. Before mechanization, the harvest labour force included a large proportion of itinerants, most workers were men in their twenties and early thirties with a smaller proportion older than 35 years and very few under 21. There was much wastage of skilled labour, with the core of experienced cutters each season at times only 50 per cent or less of the total. Since the widespread adoption of mechanized harvesting more young men (under 21) than previously are accepting harvest work, local sources now provide the bulk of the labour required and the industry no longer has to rely on the recruitment of itinerant labour. As a result of these changes a more stable and experienced work force is available for the annual harvest, and local employment has benefited from the wider range of less manually arduous jobs available for local men.

Since 1950 banana growing has shown a sustained though gradual increase in importance and locally in the Mission Beach-Bingil Bay district is the mainstay of farming. The recent revival of the banana industry dates from the later 1940s when special rail transport facilities were introduced by the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing (C.O.D.), and has been strongly assisted by the improvement in the road links between this coastal area and the railhead at El Arish. A more scientific approach to banana growing, both to improve quality and to reduce production costs, accompanied the revival of the industry which also attracted a group of growers from the
JOHNSTONE SHIRE - AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

NON-AGRICULTURAL USES

- URBAN LAND
- Land Primarily Under Natural Vegetation Cover
- STATE FOREST AND RECREATION RESERVE
- OTHER VACANT LAND
- VACANT CROWN LAND
- MILITARY USE
- MANGROVES

AGRICULTURAL USES

- TEA
- BANANAS
- SUGAR CANE
- GRAZING-DAIRYING
- GRAZING-FATTENING
- EXPERIMENT FARM, POULTRY, PINEAPPLE

FIG. 5. JOHNSTONE DISTRICT - AGRICULTURAL LAND USE 1971
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE WET COAST OF NORTH QUEENSLAND, 1880-1970

New South Wales Northern Rivers' banana district.

It is clear from this brief review of the agricultural development of the Johnstone district that this part of the North Queensland coast has cleared and settled its agricultural lands, built up a substantial population (so that the Johnstone shire now has the highest average rural population density of any local government area in Queensland) and developed its townships predominantly on the basis of the sugar industry. At the present time this industry, directly or indirectly, supports about 85 per cent of the district's population. Despite the desirability of economic diversification, and amongst other activities the tourist industry has good prospects, the general prosperity of the Johnstone district rests as firmly on the sugar industry in the 1970s as did Fitzgerald's hopes for personal fortune in the 1880s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The sugar cane industry is of particular interest to Queenslanders as the bulk of Australia's sugar is grown in this state. Today the cultivation of sugar cane is one of the most highly mechanised agricultural industries and is still of paramount importance to the economy of North Queensland. In the period under discussion no single Australian industry received as much attention from the State legislature as sugar growing. Nor was any other agricultural industry subjected to the same amount of political scrutiny and political chicanery as the sugar industry in the nineteenth century.

There are four preliminary points that I would like to make, points that will be further expanded in the course of this lecture. Firstly the sugar industry weathered the early years of Queensland's land legislation as the laws were altered to allow more selection by small farmers of small capital means, as opposed to the pastoral squatters and the large plantation owners of the early period. Secondly the industry was in the forefront of moves to gain government support for co-operative milling and growing organizations; organizations that have since developed in other industries and are commonplace to us today. Thirdly the industry bore the brunt of racial and racist legislation excluding Pacific Island labourers and Asian labourers, culminating in the White Australia policy adopted by the Commonwealth Government at the start of this century. Fourthly the original structure of the industry was vastly different from that which we have today. This transition, this transformation took place in the period under discussion, making it an important era for the industry. With these points in mind I shall go on to talk about the early legislation affecting the industry and to draw a general picture of plantation and small farming life in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Sugar cane had been grown in the Moreton Bay district long before Queensland became a separate colony. In most cases it was its potentialities as a fence rather than a means of producing sugar that made it popular. The earliest records of sugar production in Queensland go back
to 1836, but not until the 1860s was sugar considered in any way a commercial proposition. John Buhot and Captain Lewis Hope are credited with the first commercial operations in the Brisbane area. But even as the first cane growers in New South Wales had found that the crop prospered best in the northern rivers districts and in what is now southern Queensland, eventually the crop found its climatic home in North Queensland around Mackay, on the Burdekin and in the Far North. The only area surviving in the south is on the Mary and Burnett Rivers. During this lecture I have used the Mackay district for detailed examples of plantations and small farms in the industry. The Mackay area was typical of the Queensland industry as a whole and was the largest sugar district in the state.

Turning firstly to land legislation affecting the industry. The inducements offered by the 1864 Sugar and Coffee Regulations and the lack of restrictions upon importation of Pacific Island labourers, attracted the first cane growers to the industry. Under the regulations, cane planters were able to lease unoccupied crown land within ten miles of the coast or equidistant along any navigable river. These regulations later became incorporated in the 1868 Crown Lands Alienation Act which was an extremely important act for agricultural industries in Queensland. Sugar growing progressed rapidly until the late 1860s and although it was checked by a disease called 'rust' in 1874-75 it rebounded with a new lease of prosperity until a high point in the early years of its growth was achieved at the beginning of the 1880s. The legislation of the 1860s was the basis for the formation of the sugar industry until the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1884. In the intervening decades a system of plantation agriculture developed, climaxing in the 1880s. In the following two decades until the turn of the century, after many years of depression and doubt as to the future of the industry, it emerged again as a strong and successful industry with new farming patterns. The plantations previously operating with their own mills, gave way to small farmers sending their production to communally owned central mills, and without the coloured labour that had been so essential in earlier decades.
The plantation era, then, began in the 1860s with the first commercial growth of sugar cane and the manufacture of sugar. By the end of 1867 there were nearly 2,000 acres under cane and six mills had been erected in Queensland, between them manufacturing the not very magnificent figure of 168 tons of sugar. Sugar growing progressed rapidly from the 1860s and the planters worked their way northward, taking up land on the fertile coastal regions in the north of Queensland. By 1869 there were 10 mills operating in Queensland, by 1870 there had been a tremendous growth and there were 28 mills operating in the state. By the early 1880s, when the era was at its peak, the Mackay district alone had 26 functioning mills. Also we must not forget the accompanying alcohol distilleries and the foundries to produce machinery for the mills, which must be considered in any study of the quick fire growth of the sugar industry in Queensland.

Plantation agriculture meant farming on a large scale, plantations usually included several hundred acres with only part of the area under cultivation. The plantation owners were usually well-to-do Englishmen or men from the other British sugar growing colonies; from the West Indies in particular. Often from rather aristocratic backgrounds the planters lived in a style unknown to others in North Queensland. Perhaps not the Grecian pillared and Georgian houses of the sugar planters of the southern United States, but decidedly comfortable rambling homes. The plantation owners themselves were typical of the heyday of the early sugar industry. They enjoyed the boom years just as they participated in the subsequent depression. The Honourable Harold Finch-Hatton spent some time in Queensland in the late 1870s and early 1880s. His description of plantation life runs rather like a modern day tourist brochure.

On both banks of the Pioneer [the river at Mackay], at intervals of a few miles, are the residences of the planters, and certainly the lines have fallen to them in pleasant places. Their houses as a rule, are extremely comfortable, and very well furnished, and the gardens of many of them are paradises of beauty. In good times, they make tremendous profits, and their occupation chiefly consists in watching other people work, in the intervals of which they recline in a shady verandah with a pipe and a novel, and drink rum-swizzles. Most of them keep a manager, so that they can always get away for a run down south, or a kangaroo hunt up the country. They are very hospitable and keep their houses always open to strangers visiting the place, and to their friends in the country, who come uninvited, and are welcome to stay as long as they please.
So long it would seem as you are a member of the English aristocracy as was the Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton.

In 1883 Mackay, the leading sugar growing area in the state, had thirty-one major plantations, and twenty-six mills of varying vintage and design. An example of a typical compact plantation of the period was Palmyra, owned by Hugh McCreedy, who by 1883 had twenty-three years cane growing experience, the last nineteen in Queensland. With a total area of 626 acres, he had about 350 acres under cane. His mill machinery was imported from Glasgow for £4,073, and with buildings and erection at Mackay, cost a total of £8,499.

The mill was considered to be very complete when it began operations in 1882. For the next six years it returned six and a half per cent interest on the original capital outlay, which was some £20,000. The average amount expended on wages was almost £5,500, of which only £450 was paid for Islanders' wages, the whole of the balance being paid as white men's wages, and indirectly for white labour. In addition to his own cane, McCreedy accepted as much cane as possible from surrounding small farmers, at rates in proportion to the sugar content of the cane, rather than in proportion to the weight of the cane, as was done by most other plantations. The cane after cutting, was delivered by carts to the mill, where it was fed through the rollers at the rate of five to six tons per hour. The plantation employed an average of sixty Islanders and fifteen white men per year. Experiments with white labour in the fields had all failed, and McCreedy saw no future for the industry unless an adequate supply of cheap labour was available in the future.

In the opposite extreme of plantation size were the plantations belonging to the Melbourne-Mackay Sugar Company. The company operated the lands of six plantations, Peri, Alexandra, Te Kowai, the Palms, Branscombe and Nebia, as one big enterprise. The various estates were managed separately, but all were under the general control of John Ewen Davidson, as one of the principal shareholders and Managing Director. The total area of these estates was 8,242 acres, over 4,000 of which were under cultivation. By 1884 two mills did the crushing for all the properties, as the obsolete nature of the other mills' machinery
made it uneconomic to operate. This meant that with machinery valued at £74,000 on the estates, only £45,000 worth was in operation.

The yearly total Labour and Ration expenses for the company came to the amazing figure of £66,600. A tremendous amount really when you consider that a white ploughman earned at that time about £66 a year, and a Pacific Islander from £6 to £10 a year. At various times J.E. Davidson had Europeans, Islanders, Malays, and Chinese in employment. He considered the Islanders and Malays the most suitable for field work.

The bulk of the labour employed by both planters and the small farmers was made up of Pacific Islanders and other non-white peoples, ranging from Chinese, Japanese and Malays to Indians and Singhalese. However the overwhelming percentage of the sugar labourers were Pacific Islanders. Often descriptions from sources contemporary to the period are dichotomous in their attitude to the Kanaka or Islander. They vary from lilting descriptions of their dark faces, brilliant smiles, and woolly heads, to those of the rabid anti-coloured labour groups who saw only evil in their immigration to Queensland.

The first Pacific Island labourers, the Melanesian people of the South Pacific, called the Kanakas by the early plantation whites, came to Queensland in 1863 when Robert Towns brought New Hebrideans to work on his cotton plantation on the Logan River. Early attempts to import Indian Coolie labour had failed and the Islanders seemed an acceptable substitute. With the end of the American Civil War and for some other reasons cotton soon ceased to be Queensland's major tropical crop. Sugar cane took its place and developed using the legacy of cotton, the Kanaka labourers, the Melanesians. Over the next few decades many legislative acts were passed that affected the Islanders: from the 1868 Act, the first to try to govern the many abuses in recruiting from the Islands and the treatment of the Islanders in Queensland, through a series of acts culminating in the 1885 Exclusion Act which was later postponed by the Extension Act of 1892. The future of coloured labour was debated until the final deportation of most of the remaining Islanders in the first years of the Commonwealth Parliament.

The mortality rate among the Islanders was higher than among
Europeans. Estimates varied from place to place, but in Mackay in 1883 Islander deaths from sickness and accidents appear to be about fifty out of every thousand, while an equivalent rate for British settlers was about fifteen to twenty in every thousand.

I would like to quote to you now from a book written by a rather aristocratic Englishman of the period, mentioning the health of the Islanders and afterwards I would like to explain some of the attitudes arising from this. "They are strong sturdy men as a rule, capable of doing a good day's work, but their constitutions seem to be perfectly incapable of standing against any sort of illness. Directly a kanaka gets ill he lies down and apparently very often dies for no reason at all except pure funk and the lack of wish to get well." Now quaint as this may seem to us today, it shows a very basic lack of understanding by the Europeans of the problems of the Islanders in Queensland. They were given a very different kind of food to eat from that which they consumed on their native islands, they were obviously not used to the long and strenuous hours of work and working conditions on the plantations. They had a lack of immunity to what we would think of as very common European diseases, and separation from men of their own island, separation say when they were put into a hospital, left them very scared and very bewildered men. But it is hardly necessary to suggest that they died of pure funk and lack of the wish to get well.

There were many reports in the period from inspectors of Pacific Island labourers on the conditions on the plantations. In one tabled in the Queensland Parliament in 1880, after visiting plantations in the Mackay and Maryborough districts, the inspector had this to say about the quarters.

In this matter I find a considerable difference between the various plantations. Some of them show excellent buildings of wood with iron roofs, well ventilated, floors with wood, with sometimes one, sometimes two rows of "bunks" or sleeping-places raised a couple of feet from the floor, the double bunks being built one over the other. Others again provide wooden buildings (slabs or Hobart Town palings), without any provision for ventilation, with thatched roofs and earthen floors. The sleeping places arranged in one or two tiers, and one or two fires permitted (on the floor, for there are no fireplaces) in each hut. This latter concession is much prized by the labourers, who, indeed, can only be compelled by great pressure to forego the
luxury. The fires serve not only to keep them warm, but help, by
the smoke with which they fill the room, to keep the mosquitoes
out. Yet another class of building is met with, namely, a good-
sized hut some 20 x 12 by 15 feet high, built of "trash" throughout -
walls and roofs - which is fastened on to a stout framework of
timber erected by the white carpenter on the place, the thatch
being put on by the labourers. In this style of hut the floor is
of bare earth; bunks are erected in some cases of timber, and in
others of bagging on a frame; and it is not uncommon to find two
fires on the floor. A doorway, closed by a door made of boards,
is provided in one side, of size usual in huts built for white
labourers, but beyond this no attempt is made to secure ventilation;
consequently, as no escape is provided for smoke, the roof, and for
some distance down the walls on the inside, is stained with soot,
which becomes deeper with the age of the hut."

Speaking of the food he had this to say,

And here I may be permitted, in justice to the planters of Queensland,
to express my entire satisfaction, so far as I have seen, with the
quality, and judging from the general appearance of the boys, which
I take to be the true criterion, of the quantity supplied them.

A great diversity, however, is found in this matter on the
different plantations.

The dietary scale, as you, Sir, are aware, provides that one
pound of meat shall be supplied to each labourer every day. In
some cases this is given at the midday meal; in others, again, in
the evening only, the argument in support of this course being
that the meat dinner is too heavy for the boys, particularly in
summer-time....The meat supplied is always fresh or so little
salted as to be not more than "corned", and by this latter I mean
that it has been not more than two or three days in salt....Along
with this a ration of sweet potatoes is served out, which helps to
make up an ample meal. Rice is made on most the Mackay plantations
an important part of the dietary scale, and with molasses, of which
there is no stint, for the labourers are at liberty to help them-
selves from the mill....This generally forms with bread the evening
meal, and with a pint of tea seems all that is necessary.

Speaking of the clothing provided he said

I found that the winter clothing had been served out to the Islanders
in the majority of cases early in May, and in all before the end of
that month. This consists of a pair of moleskin trousers of fair
quality, and "blue shirt" of serge which is decidedly good.

The blankets issued, though of fair quality, are coarse in
texture, and not so good as I should like to see served out; and I
may venture to suggest that the planters be permitted to buy the
registered Government blanket at, say, cost price with freight
added; such blankets to be marked on receipt with the name of the
plantation, and to remain the property of the purchaser. At the
expiration of his term of service each Islander should receive from
the planter a pair of the common sort of blankets.

I make this suggestion, because there can be no doubt that the
Kanakas frequently traffic away their blankets in the warm season; and - as is found with the aborigines - not infrequently for liquor. He turned next to medical problems.

On many of the plantations which I visited an arrangement has been made with some professional man, whereby by payment of a certain sum per head of the labourers on the estate he is engaged on summons, to proceed thereto and prescribe for the sick. In ordinary cases one visit with the medicines administered might be found sufficient... [Hospitalisation] is always found to be a difficult matter to carry out, for the South Sea Islander cannot bear being cooped up in a house when he feels himself sick, but prefers to steal away alone to where he can get plenty of water to drink and remain undisturbed.

Now that presents quite a reasonable picture of the Islanders life on the plantations. In contrast we have the report of R.B. Sheridan, who is 1876 was Assistant Immigration Officer at Maryborough.

I have very grave and serious misgivings as to the kind treatment Polynesians employed on plantations, stations, etc., receive from their employers. I am led to this conclusion by the fact that even in the short period since my appointment, three complaints of ill-treatment have been made to me; in two of the instances alluded to, I am quite certain - although I cannot by white witnesses' evidence prove - that Polynesians were whipped on different sugar plantations. I saw the marks of the blows cut through the skin in one instance; therefore I respectfully suggest that some regulations be made for taking the evidence of South Sea Islanders, otherwise many offences against them must remain unpunished.

That there is not any regular system of medical treatment of the Polynesians on the different plantations, nor is the cause of death in every case satisfactorily account for; whilst as to burial, I am led to believe that the interment of a South Sea Islander in nowise differs from the burial of a dog or any other carrion. As I am informed, a hole or grave is made in the most convenient place; the body - as soon as possible after it has ceased to breathe - is rolled in the blanket in which it died, and put in its shallow last resting-place without further care or ceremony.

Sheridan's report prompted quite a deal of mixed opinion and a lot of defamatory allegations were made concerning his report, but I would say there is a great deal of truth in what he said. The operation of the plantation mills was a dangerous one for the Islanders, men not used to machinery and moving parts, and they often came to gruesome ends in the machinery.

Many of the mills had been established ten to fifteen years earlier and their machinery was old-fashioned and out of date. The Melbourne-
Mackay Sugar Company closed down 3 of its 5 mills, one of them which had just been built at the cost of £8,000 and had never crushed, giving ample evidence that economics of scale were beginning to operate in the industry. The prevailing feeling was that unless you operated on a large scale, and concentrated on the most economic use of your resources, you might as well leave the industry. It was the large companies that managed to survive the eighties, while the smaller plantations with old mills, went under in the approaching depression.

The majority of the plantation mills did not employ an engineer or chemist, and the supervision of the whole milling process was left to an unqualified sugar boiler. In the sugar industry rule-of-thumb had to give way to chemistry, economics, engineering and agricultural science if the mills were going to be a financial success, but in the 1880s, few plantation owners heeded this advice. The 1880s was also the age of rail as the transport medium of the future. The planters realised, that if their future railway was put to proper use, it would considerably lessen the transport problems in the sugar industry. By this stage the plantations had mainly adopted the use of tramways, usually drawn by horses and quite often with portable lines. The transport of the cane to the mill was becoming a much easier process.

Summing up the plantation era we can see several major points emerging from it. Sugar cane was grown on very large estates; estates with their own mills; estates run by coloured labour - Pacific Islanders, Javanese, and Singhalese. This cheap labour force was labour extensive not labour intensive, a very wasteful form of labour. The planters themselves had a very aristocratic lifestyle and in the main had an English background. They were pillars of local organizations and societies and were the most influential political and social figures in North Queensland at the time. But we must turn from the plantations and the planters to the era of the small farmers. It is interesting to try to recreate a picture of life as a small farmer at the end of the last century.

In the early 1880s the majority of the male population was working in agricultural pursuits. They and their families lived in modest
surroundings and, in keeping with the times, had a low degree of education. This lack of education among the small farmers not only meant that they could do little in the way of reading agricultural literature or trying chemical soil analysis to improve the quality of their cane, but also that the modern day researcher has been left with a paucity of records when trying to investigate their way of life. The plantation owners and managers usually were well educated Englishmen, who wrote letters to everyone from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the local newspapers, and are well remembered for their aristocratic lifestyle. Information is as easy to discover about them as it is hard to discover about the average small farmer.

In the 1880s about one-quarter of the small farmers were Australian born, and most others were from Great Britain. The majority of the immigrants were English and in the mother country they had been farm labourers, domestic servants or general labourers, from rural counties like Devon and Somerset. By the 1890s the percentage of the population born in Australia had increased in proportion to those from England and Wales, and the majority of them were from Queensland and New South Wales.

Many small farmers were lured into sugar production in the boom years of the early eighties. Under the 1876 Land Act, a number of small farmers, often former employees of the planters, had taken up homestead selections in the surrounding district. They originally concentrated on growing maize, English and sweet potatoes, arrowroot, tobacco, wine grapes and tropical fruit. The maize, potatoes and arrowroot were often sold locally to the plantations as food for the Islanders, or otherwise in the township or in the south. However, when the farmers turned to cane cultivation, they found that they were seriously dependent on the plantation owner's goodwill in having their cane milled. The large grower-millers usually refused to enter into definite contracts with the small producers, just fitting the small man's cane in after their own had been given priority. The aloof aristocratic attitudes of many of the planters did little to endear them to the small farmers, and some considered that the small cane farmers would not last in the industry. It was this type of uncooperative attitude that eventually drove the small farmers to look
to the government and co-operative central mills for their future.

The dissatisfaction of small farmers all over Queensland, in having to depend on the good graces of plantation owners for their livelihoods finally came to a head in Mackay. In rebellion, a group of small farmers decided to build their own mill, and asked the Queensland government - then led by Sir S.W. Griffith, to help finance it.

Griffith accepted their proposal that his government should provide the capital for the purchase of a mill, and the farmers provided security in return in the form of the deeds to their land. When they had managed to pay back the loan money, control of the mill returned to all of them cooperatively and of the farm land to each of them individually. Thus in 1885, the pattern was set for the modern day Central Mill - small farming conditions.

Griffith's action had several motivations.

1. In the same year, 1885, Griffith had legislation passed that in the next few years would exclude further migration of Pacific Island labourers into Queensland. This would have been uppermost in his mind in giving the small farmers ideas a trial.

2. Griffith, and his contemporaries had a vision for the future of Queensland; a vision of a Queensland peopled by small farmers, yeoman farmers in the liberal tradition, men of small capital means, farming their own land with the aid of their families and not labouring for others.

3. In the previous year 1884, land legislation had been passed to facilitate the settlement of small farmers as opposed to the big homestead purchases of the past.

So with the exclusion of Pacific Island labour, with Griffith's ideal of the self sufficient yeoman farmer, and with accompanying land legislation, the ideas proposed to him for central mill legislation, seemed very successfully to fit the circumstances of the 1880s. Not that Queensland's central mill legislation was terribly adventurous and innovatory, as it had been adopted by West Indian colonies and other sugar producing areas overseas. Basically the central mill pattern meant that instead of plantations owned by one man or by a company, controlling large areas of
land and crushing their cane in their own mill, the central mills were financed by the government and owned by the small farmers themselves, each man and his family farming some 40-100 acres.

The first central mill legislation was passed in 1885 and the first two mills to be built under this legislation were at Mackay; North Eton and Racecourse. The legislation was to have been the answer to the farmers' problems but for every problem solved, the legislation created another. What is easy to legislate for as a principle is not necessarily easy to implement as a practical farming and milling endeavour.

The cost of the first central mills was out of all proportion to the amount of cane which was undertaken to be grown by the farmers. The mills were scandalously managed. Often no records were kept and other rather haphazard business techniques were applied. Another major point was that no allowance had been made to build tramways to get the farmers' cane to the mills, and these tramways were necessary for the economic operation of the mills. Tramways had been introduced onto the plantation estates and should have been integral parts of the central mill plan, but unfortunately no funds were allowed for them.

These were some of the problems confronted by the farmers under the first central mill act. Many of the problems of the 1885 Act were sorted out in the 1893 Act, the next important central milling legislation in Queensland. In 1893 Sugar Works Guarantee Act marked a new era in the industry. It had not been sought by farmers already engaged in the production of sugar, to bolster up a tottering industry as had the 1885 Central Mill Legislation. There had been a return to prosperity by the 1890s and the Act enabled those, debarred for various reasons, to embark in an agricultural industry which was now on the way to success.

In the 1890s, with the assurance of a limited continuation of Pacific Island labour, the advent of the 1885 and 1893 central mill legislation, and the easier land laws pertaining to small agricultural farms, many small crop farmers ventured back to sugar and many white immigrant labourers looked for a future in cane. Most of the cane farms varied from fifty to one hundred or so acres, the smaller selections under the Land Act being mostly market gardens or small crop farms. Many cane
farmers initially took only a small parcel of land, but subsequently added to it by leasing adjoining blocks. As an example I'll take the first farmer to lease land from C.S.R. at Homebush in Mackay. In 1894 he had selected 150 acres of freehold land, all suitable for sugar growing. He had previously been head ploughman on Homebush estate, and as the first Homebush farmer he had the pick of the land. He and his family lived in a two-room weather-board and iron house with a corrugated iron roof, and a detached kitchen built of wood slabs and an iron roof. He also had a four stall stable, a chaff house and a dray shed, Kanaka quarters, and had completed and installed a twenty foot bricked well. He had several horses and a number of cattle, and had managed to partly fence his stockyard and put fencing around his entire property. With the help of his sons, one white labourer and four Islanders, he had taken twenty-two tons to the acre off twenty-one acres the previous year, and in 1894-5 had received twenty-three tons to the acre off ratoon cane. His cane was cut green as was the usual policy in that period, not burnt, and from it he expected to harvest a total of 900 tons. After ploughing out fifteen acres of old cane he intended to plant some twenty-five more that year.

Not all the small farms in the 1890s were as new as this. Another owned by a man at the north side of Mackay had some 410 acres of freehold, of which 310 had been scrub, but he had subsequently cleared all but thirty-five of these. This man was one of the longest established small farmers on the north side of the Pioneer River and had grown his first cane crop over twenty years previously. Originally he had sent his cane to Miclere Mill, then to Foulden, and latterly to Farleigh which was only about one mile away. Although in the past he had grown up to 180 acres, in 1894-5 he had taken off only sixty acres, and was in the process of planting some fifteen acres more. He was noted as an experimental farmer, and introduced many varieties of cane on his land, trying to obtain richer sugar yielding canes, but not necessarily heavier varieties. Over the previous seven years he had averaged twenty tons of stick cane to the acre from his plant and ratoon cane. On the cane farm he employed six white men and twelve Islanders, and engaged in a butchery business.
as an auxiliary enterprise. His home was constructed of weather-board and palm, ceiled, with a verandah and a detached kitchen.

The newer farmers were not so well established as these, and for the first few years many selectors lived in one or two room palm trunk and thatched roof houses. For most, the early years meant back-breaking work clearing away the scrub from their land and getting paddocks ploughed and ready for planting. Often they were not able to have their land ready for cane for two to three years after they first moved onto the selection, and they existed with the help of the house's vegetable garden, and by doing odd jobs as contract labourers.

Today we have only to look at the thickest areas of scrub vegetation within the sugar regions to realize that it was a tremendous task for someone to move onto a selection of so many dozens of acres, to clear it and get it ready to plant the first crop, with only hand labour available.

One of the major complaints received by the 1897 Royal Commission on Land Settlement, was over the continuous residence clause in the Land Act. Some small farmers had to leave their selections to work as labourers on neighbouring farms and plantations. At crushing time they were often away from their selections for up to three months at a time, and this meant that single men in particular could not comply with the residence conditions of their leases.

Thinking again of the Pacific Islanders, but in a later period than the plantation era that we discussed them in earlier, the labour question still bedevilled the sugar industry. When the Pacific Island Labourers Extension Act was passed in 1892, those in the industry realised that it was only a short term relief. The rise of labour and the coming of Federation meant that during the 1890s Queensland's labour problem became part of an Australia-wide controversy, and was no longer just the concern of those in the State. The concept of a White Australia conflicted with the wishes of the majority of the sugar growers, as it had yet to be proven that the north's sugar industry could survive without coloured labour.

While the sugar production of the various districts increased dramatically in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the
supply of non-white labour did not increase proportionally. The number of Islanders was reasonably stable from 1881 to 1891, the two census years of the period, but showed sign of decrease by the end of the century. Some attempt was made to compensate the loss by use of Indian, Singhalese, Chinese, Malay and Japanese labour, mainly on the plantations, but the numbers available in no way matched the increased production.

Opinion on the importation of Islanders varied just as much in the 1890s as it had in the preceding decades. Michael Davitt, an Irish politician who visited Queensland, said that the economic necessity of the Islanders to the industry was farcical, and their retention on any grounds was "a piece of disgusting capitalistic hypocrisy."

It is interesting to note the extent to which the small farmers were just as dependent on non-white labour for their existence as the plantation owners. Usually when one thinks of Pacific island labourers, they are equated with the plantations. It is enlightening to realise just how important they were to the small farmers. In the 1890s, the small farmers in Mackay employed over 1,200 labourers: only 500 were white, the majority being Pacific Islanders. The plantations together employed just over 1,800 labourers, 540 being white and over 1,000 Pacific Islanders, and approximately 200-300 Chinese, Malays, Japanese and Javanese. Although the plantations were the largest employers in the district, the small farmers could not have continued without their 'Kanaka' labour.

It is very rare to find a neutral observer of the position among the partisan opinions of the sugar growers, the politicians, and others with a definite interest in the industry. Dr. Walter Maxwell, in his report to the Commonwealth Parliament, gave the first real analysis of the relative costs of employing white labour instead of Islanders. Dr. Maxwell, Director of Sugar Experimentation in Hawaii, had been invited by the Queensland Government to report on the problems of the industry. He later returned to Australia to become the first Director of Bureau of Sugar Experimentation Stations.

Apart from the more obvious monetary cost Maxwell tried to assess the actual and relative economic values of both types of labour. He took
C.R. MOORE

into account each group's skill or competence to perform the work, their personal endurance of the work, their stability in attendance, and the rate of the wage in relation to their performance of the work. The Islanders he found, worked longer hours, lost fewer days through sickness in spite of a higher sickness rate in their first year in the colony, and cost only half as much to employ as the white labourers. They could be relied on to work regularly, and were not as transient and unpredictable as the white labour. These figures have been challenged by more recent researchers but I think they show a reasonable indication of the value of Pacific Island labour. Though this labour at the end of the century was no longer as cheap as it had been in the past, the employer still received a greater value for his money in employing Islanders as opposed to Europeans.

Other forms of coloured labour were also on their way out. The attempts to use Malays, Japanese, and Javanese were not continued, and their numbers declined alongside those of the Islanders. Some Aborigines had been employed in the cane fields during the 1870s and 1880s but no attempt was made to utilize them as an alternative labour force in the 1890s when the numbers of the imported Asiatic and Pacific Island labourers began to decline.

Early opinions that even the strongest white men could only endure a few years working under the tropical sun before "their premature decay and physical wreck", were voiced with great gusto by the advocates of continued importation of cheap coloured labour. But now, over a century and many healthy generations later, the possibility of white men working in the tropics seems beyond doubt. Providing that the white small farmer adapted himself to his surroundings, as regards diet and sensible clothing, there never was any reason why he could not work in the fields. But in the period when coloured labour was being phased out of the sugar industry, white labourers could get more lucrative employment in the mining industry, and many of them disliked taking on the same work as Pacific Islanders and Asians. When they did take jobs as field workers it was usually only until they could afford to take up their own selection, or as a stop-gap measure until their own farms could fully support them.
The Islanders were barred from all types of work but tropical agriculture, and could not usually purchase land. Their contracts, either for one or three years, meant that they were permanently available for the work, and if any among them had the ambitions of the white labourers to own their own farms, the law forbade them. The purely economic reasons why both the small farmers and the planters in Mackay wanted to keep their cheap labour was obvious.

Many of the small farmers who grieved the loss of cheap labour were operating on a larger scale than was necessary. In trying to produce as much as possible from their land, they had to employ extra labour. The initial clearing of the land did need extra hands, but after that, most small farmers with the help of their sons, and employing contract cane cutters in the crushing, could make an adequate living. The farmers had to adjust the amount of cane they produced to the amount of labour at their disposal.

Between the age of cheap black labour, and the age of agricultural machinery after the 1920s, cane farmers managed to continue this small scale farming. But in 1900, when small farmers had been just as much weaned on cheap labour as had the plantation owners, they were finding it difficult to adjust to the inevitable. Under the Commonwealth Government, with an embargo on foreign sugar and a bounty system on Australian "white" sugar, and the fading allurements of the northern mining fields, the transition away from Pacific and Asian labour to that provided by Europeans, became feasible.

Thus we have in mind a picture of the transition from the plantation and its associated way of life, to the small farm. The small farmers had only limited acreages and sent their cane to co-operative mills, using labour intensive white labour usually from their own family. This yeoman class had earlier held low social importance alongside the Planters, but they increasingly became the leaders of the various districts in the twentieth century.

In the past historical analysis of the Queensland sugar industry, the major structural and technological changes that faced sugar production in the last two decades of the nineteenth century have not been emphasized.
Rather, the change from plantations to central mills has been presented as being caused by the withdrawal of 'Kanaka' labour and the competition received from the government-subsidized European sugar beet. The place of Pacific Islanders in creating an economically viable industry in the first two decades of sugar production in Queensland, can never be over-emphasized. But it does not necessarily follow that their removal was the most important reason for the transformation of the industry in the 1880s and 1890s.

The Queensland change from plantation agriculture to the small farmer central milling system was in line with international developments in milling technology and scientific analysis, and the adoption of economies of scale in all facets of sugar production. Large plantations with extensive labour forces and out-dated mill machinery could no longer operate economically. Only labour intensive small farmers, with the help of their families, and as part-owners of technically advanced mills, were able to make a satisfactory living out of sugar production.
PIONEER HOMESTEADS OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

Ms. Ray Sumner

The history and development of housing on the Northern pastoral properties is in many aspects essentially the same as that in the cities. In fact many successful graziers maintained a city house as well, in Charters Towers or a southern city. Of more significance in the total history of tropical domestic architecture, however, was the scope for originality both in materials and in design, occasioned by necessity and by poor communication. In the coastal cities building materials were readily available from the south by ship and a basic design soon evolved which resisted variation for over half a century. While the isolation of the pastoral properties insulated them from the vagaries of prevailing 'fashion' even in housing, there was also no pressure on the land to encourage demolition and re-development with higher density type housing so prevalent in the older parts of most cities. Therefore it is possible to find some of the huts and houses of pioneer builders still standing today and virtually unchanged in appearance since their erection.

Temporary Shelters

In the 1850's a number of pastoralist explorers moved north, sometimes with their flocks, to take up new grazing runs. These included such well known families as the Allingham's, Cunninghams, J.M. Black and J.G. Macdonald. The camps moved to a new spot almost every night, and the climate was so mild that a blanket was usually the only shelter needed. It provided warmth on a cool night, or was draped over a tree in a tent shape on a wet night. The relative mildness of the northern climate has proved one of the outstanding features throughout the whole history of buildings in North Queensland, even to the present day. When Rachel Henning, fresh from England, travelled to "Exmoor" with her brother, she wrote about the delights of camping in the open air.¹

Even after a run was taken up, the main concern was not infrequently the construction of yards and provision of sufficient water for stock. The construction of a dwelling was relegated to second place, particularly when there were no women, and a few sheets of bark or perhaps a tent served as shelter. Only in areas where there was some threat of native attack did settlers hurriedly erect a solid hut such as Robert Christison's at "Lammermoor", a solid wooden house with barred window openings and loopholes for rifles in the walls. In his case this was more to protect his tools from theft but in the areas of Cape York Peninsula and also in the central west fierce battles between settlers and blacks were common.

Apart from this negative influence, there were rare occasions when Europeans actually used native-style shelters. One such was the Danish naturalist, Carl Lumholtz, who sheltered during storms in the rainforests near Cardwell in a circular leafy hut. Rain also forced the Jardines to shelter in a paper-bark humpy on their trip to Cape York.

**Slab Huts and Houses**

When the time came to construct the first permanent houses, the early settlers had no choice but to use materials readily to hand. The logical and inevitable choice was slab. Trees were felled and iron wedges driven into the resulting logs to split off usable lengths. The slabs were around 10 cm thick and the maximum length around 1.5 m, but more commonly less than 1 m. The building of slab huts had been common since the early days of New South Wales and Victoria and the early settlers in the north were usually familiar with such materials. Where long straight pieces of timber could be split off, they were erected vertically, fitting into a chiselled groove in a base plate or sleeper, and held in position with horizontal wall-plates. This provided a firm solid structure. Lucy Gray

---


of "Glendower" wrote a contemporary account of such a house in the 1860's:

It consists of three rooms in a row all opening into the verandah, before and behind, which answers for halls and passage. Between the top of the walls and the roof there (is) about two feet open, which has the advantage of letting in plenty of air and the disadvantage of making it impossible to shut out cats etc, the partitions between the rooms being the same height as the walls leaves the whole length of roof open from end to end and that a person at one end has the benefit of conversation going on at the other. Wooden shutters shut out the light or let it in as you may dispose of them. Such things as glazed windows being unknown in these parts. The walls are made of thick slabs of wood placed up and down and kept in place by thick horizontal beams called "wall plates" see sketch. All of a comfortable reddish brown but quite rough simply adzed. The chimneys like the rest are wood and wide enough to leave standing room on the hearths when there is a large fire.6

More often, local timbers in North Queensland provided only quite short lengths of slab, so the more common style of construction consisted of short horizontal lengths fitted into slotted vertical supports spaced regularly around the house. This was a relatively easy method of construction and was widespread, although few of these houses remain today. One well-preserved hut stands on a high bank of the Campaspe River at "Wambiana" (Fig. 1). Other examples of skilled slab homesteads are at "Peak Downs" and "Retro".

At "Hughenden", Robert Gray had "a substantial house, built of horizontal slabs, many of which I dressed and put in myself, the frames having been erected by the overseer and a carpenter".7

The following table, based on Queensland census figures for the district of Kennedy, shows the predominance of slab housing in North Queensland's early days.

| Brick & Weather- | Slab or | Tents | Population |
| Stone board | Inferior | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1861 | - | - | 35 | 86 |
| 1864 | - | 8 | 89 | 82 | 1086 |


RAY SUMNER

In subsequent censuses, a single classification of "wood" was used, which prevents differentiation between various types of construction. A typical slab homestead of 1871 was that at "Lyndhurst":

The station building was a four-roomed house, built of slabs of long timber and the roof covered with bark. It had a ground floor and a verandah in front, which was used by the menfolk to keep their riding saddles under. The windows were just rough wooden shutters and the doors rough slabs with no locks...The kitchen was away from the house some little distance.8

The chief defect of slab walls was that they were not weatherproof. The gaps between roughly shaped pieces were sometimes filled with mud and often old tents were used to line inside walls and to form a ceiling. This could then be papered as well. Some walls were oiled to a dark sheen, as at "Peak Downs".

One advantage of slab construction, which only became apparent later, was that the house could be dismantled and re-assembled in another location, perhaps decided after floods or merely a more scenic site. Although the use of slab was determined by the non-availability of other materials together with the lack of skilled tradesmen, these early slab houses nevertheless seemed to have the essential charm which results from the honest expression of native materials in their natural setting.

In many cases the term "log hut" was used to describe buildings in slab. The true log hut of North American frontier, consisting of whole or half logs intricately fitted together, was rare in Northern Australia. These houses demanded not only skilled workmanship but more importantly, the native eucalypts did not provide regular, straight timber required for such a method of construction. An early history of Townsville records that the first substantial structure in the area was a log hut at Comerford's lagoon9, but this almost certainly means a slab building. A rare example of a log hut was Christison's first house at "Lammermoor", which was made of gidgee wood and was eventually demolished about 1930.

Fig. 1. Slab hut at Wambiana, re-erected at present site around 1890. The glazed window is a more recent addition.

Fig. 2. Mud hut near Hughenden, now abandoned construction: a single layer of hand-made brick, heavily plastered with a mixture of mud and straw: painted on inside walls.
In a clearing Christison pegged out a rectangle, and dug pits at
the corners and in the middle of the east and west walls, where
there would be doorways...Upright in the pits he set stout gid­
yeah posts in couples, with a space between the posts, and round
them rammed down earth and stones to make a solid bed. For the
walls he laid logs horizontally with the ends fitted in the space
between the couples of uprights, and he lashed the uprights above
strongly together with fencing wire."10

This house had a thatched roof and even a ceiling of coir-matting,
but when he built a larger house in the 1870's, Christison used slab
construction with an iron roof. Another rare log hut structure was
"the primitive homestead" occupied by the Costello family at "Valley of
Springs" in 1885:

The head station then consisted of three rough, detached huts, each
of one room made of Pandanus trunks roofed with paperbark, and
having earthen flooring and greenhide doors, besides a bough
kitchen.11

Mud Huts and Houses

Just as the term "log hut" covered a number of building types, so
too was the name "mud hut" applied to three different forms.

Where soils have over 50% clay content, sun-dried mud bricks can be
made. They are then laid with mortar of mud and straw. The walls of
such huts were usually plastered over with a mud mixture and sometimes
whitewashed or painted inside. The remains of such a hut stand on the
north bank of the Flinders River near Hughenden (Fig. 2). In other
countries the name adobe is given to construction of sun-dried mud brick,
but the term seems to have been unknown in Australia, and this form of
construction was rare.

A second construction method is seen in the pisé house. Where soils
are half sand and half clay, a rammed earth construction can be adopted.
A length of timber mould or formwork is used to contain the walls in
sections. It is then raised and a new section added until walls are
sufficiently high. A simplified building method was favoured in inland
Australia.


A fairly solid foundation is prepared. The mud, as near real red clay as possible, must be thoroughly mixed, but no straw is required. Layers of about a foot are placed all round the building and wet bagging used to keep it from drying too quickly until another layer can be put on. Wood is used only in windows and door frames and wall plates. When the wall is up, it is levelled off and gone over with a wet rag as if for scrubbing. It is let dry for a few days, depending on the time of the year.

The next step is important. Soak boiling or near boiling fat or a paint oil as far into the mud as possible...If the oil penetrates three quarters of an inch into the mud inside and out the wall will be a good one.12

Pisé homesteads were predominant in the inland parts of Australia, particularly the Queensland Channel Country and northern South Australia. One excellent example stands at "Alice Downs" not far from Blackall. The walls originally whitewashed have been painted white and wide verandahs protect the walls from the weather (Fig. 3).

In a third kind of "mud hut" construction, the walls are really of stone, either rubble or random flags, held in a matrix of mud. The "Mud Hut" outstation of "Bowen Downs", later to become "Mt Cornish" was built of split flagstones held together with mud, situated on an open plain to prevent native attacks. "Lammermoor" buildings also were known as mud huts, while today there is a Mut Hut hotel at Richmond.

When mud, or stone, was used rather than slab, the obvious explanation lies in the shortage of timber in the arid interior. While this is undoubtedly true of areas where pisé was used, there are other influences contributing to the choice. A familiarity with stone cottages in Scotland may have led to Christison's use of rubble at "Lammermoor" (Fig. 4), or to the stone used for the shepherd's hut at "Tuaburra". Experience in India probably determined Col. Saddler's choice at Hughenden.

**Pitsawn Timber**

As an alternative to slab or mud, early homesteads were sometimes made of pitsawn timber. Because of the time involved, this was usually a second house, the first being a tent or bark shelter or perhaps a slab hut. The Fulford family lived ten years in the slab house at "Lyndhurst"

---

Fig. 3. Pisé house at Alice Downs

Fig. 4. Store at Lammermoor. Rubble stone held with mud, later painted red.
Fig. 5. Inkerman, built in 1870 of pitsawn timber. Old telegraph repeater station at far end of verandah.
PIONEER HOMESTEADS OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

before moving to a new house of "timber, sawn on the station, and very comfortable". The second homestead at "Mt Cornish" was built of thick pitsawn timbers. An early photograph of a station house at "Hermit Park" (now part of Townsville) shows a settler with native servants in front of a comfortable pitsawn house.

To construct the sawpit, a hole was excavated, about 1.5 metres deep and as long as the local timber. A log was laid across the pit and two men operated a saw, one standing on top to keep the cut straight (the top-notch), the other below in the pit. This procedure enabled production of regular weatherboards from which a straight, neat and weatherproof house could be built with greater ease than was previously possible.

In the Springsure area, many houses of pitsawn timber may be seen, such as at "Minerva". A particularly interesting house of pitsawn timber is the old "Inkerman" homestead, built for J.G. Macdonald in 1870. Here the weatherboards were erected vertically and small battens nailed between each board to ensure a completely weathertight structure (Fig. 5). This is similar to the "board and batten" style used in American houses around 1850, but is the only known Australian example.

Roofing Materials

In the Queensland census of 1864, roofing material of private dwellings was recorded. Forty per cent of Queensland houses had shingled roofs, but in North Queensland only 14 per cent of the roofs were of shingle. Not only was a suitable supply of hardwood a prerequisite, but the splitting and laying of shingles required specialized skills and tools. Roofing material was not recorded again until the 1921 census when wooden roofs represented less than 1% of North Queensland houses (Fig. 6).

The most commonly used roofing material in the early days of northern settlement was bark. Sheets stripped from suitable trees were laid in overlapping lengths and held in place by a framework of bearers, or laced saplings. In 1864 some 60% of northern houses had bark roofs. Table 2 gives figures for Kennedy district.
Table 2. Residences in Kennedy district, 1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walls</th>
<th>Roofs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weatherboard</td>
<td>Shingled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slab or inferior</td>
<td>Bark or inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tents</td>
<td>Tents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amongst the "inferior" roofs were several of thatch. Where local grasses were suitable, a skilled man sometimes chose to thatch his roof. William Hann did so at "Maryvale", as did Christison at "Lammermoor". All these organic roofs had several inherent defects: they were not waterproof; they caught fire easily; they deteriorated quickly or were blown away in strong winds; they harboured snakes or rodents; and if rainwater was collected from such a roof it was brownish and contained impurities. Consequently when a better material became available, it was rapidly employed. An interesting roof is found at "Peak Downs" where, some time before 1920, an iron roof was built above the original shingle roof to give an umbrella effect. But the new iron roofing replaced older materials almost universally. Perhaps the only real difficulty arose in attaching sheets to the meagre bush timber supports, as at "Tuaburra" (Fig. 7).

Technological Advances

A number of developments in other countries were introduced into Australia and served to develop a different style of house from the tent or the slab hut with its bark roof of the 1860's and 70's. The mechanization of timber milling in Australia began with the introduction of the steam-driven circular saw in 1846. Accurate, machined lengths of timber to fixed dimensions became available at a fraction of their previous cost. In England machinery was invented to produce wire-drawn nails, again at a fraction of the cost of old hand-made nails. These two developments revolutionized the building industry. Timbers could be quickly fixed by nails, instead of the time consuming mortice and tenon joints. The skilled craftsman in wood was no longer in demand.

FIG. 6. WALL AND ROOF MATERIALS OF OCCUPIED PRIVATE DWELLINGS
Fig. 7. Stone hut at Tuaburra, originally an outstation of "Bowen Downs".
In 1833 a system of construction was invented which became known as the "balloon frame", a frame of light timber sheathed in weatherboard. The development of the American west, and the gold rushes in particular, led to the widespread adoption of this type of construction. It was imported to Australia during the gold rushes, and here it became even simpler and lighter, using mainly softwoods imported from America.

A further product of the Industrial Revolution, which reached Australia about the time of the gold rushes was corrugated galvanized iron sheeting. This came as ballast in ships loaded with eager gold-seekers, and its superior qualities of lightness, strength, durability, and weathertightness were readily appreciated.

From these ideas developed overseas, and from largely imported materials, there developed a distinctive Australian house-form: the timber framed, weatherboard, verandahed house with an iron roof.

The North Queensland House

In 1876, the Queensland Statistician reported that:

in the agricultural districts an increasing number of the farming class are getting out of the slab-hut style of cottage, and constructing their dwellings of sawn timber, many of them neatly built, and in some cases well painted.

The dominant material in Queensland was always timber, although it was used to a lesser extent in the north where the temporary nature of many residences favoured lighter and cheaper materials, canvas and later iron (see Fig. 6). Timber was favoured initially because of its availability either as trees or milled. A second important factor was its ease of use compared with brick or stone. While local availability made timber relatively cheap to purchase, its lightness made it easier and cheaper to transport. Using balloon-framing techniques, a large house could be constructed from a small quantity of timber. However, even in cases where cost was not a consideration "some of the most costly and commodious residences in the colony were constructed of sawn timber". When properly

16. ibid.
protected from 'white ants' or termites, timber proved a durable material. By the latter part of the century, it was realized that the low heat transference of a thin wooden wall could lead to decided advantages over the thicker and more solid walls with high heat capacity:

in a climate like this in summer time both (brick and stone) houses absorb the heat from the sun during the day-time and continue warm almost through the night, making the interior uncomfortable to the inhabitants, while the wooden house, if warmed at all, soon cools after the sun goes down."17

Basically there developed two styles of domestic architecture in wood. In the frontier areas of Queensland, as in the United States, dwellings often grew ingenuously, in the open-ended style of vernacular architecture. A flexible ground plan enabled enlargement of the original house, or hut, whenever new social or economic conditions made it desirable. To the original house were added sprawling and asymmetrical appendages, sometimes connected by covered walk-ways or 'landings'. The resultant whole was a naive architecture, not without charm, such as described by Anthony Trollope in 1873.

These houses, - stations as they are called,- are built after a very simple and appropriate fashion. There is not often any upper storey. Every room is on the ground floor. There is always a verandah, running the length of the house, and not unfrequently continued round the ends. The rooms all open out upon the verandah and generally have no communication with each other. The kitchen is invariably a separate building, usually attached to the house by a covered way. When first building his residence the squatter probably has had need for but small accommodation, and has constructed his house with perhaps three rooms. Children have come, and guests, and increased demands, and increased house-room has been wanted. Another little house has therefore been joined on to the first, and then perhaps a third added. I have seen an establishment consisting of seven such little houses.18

This Australian practice contrasted with the traditional European farmhouse which was planned as an integrated cubical unit from the start. The second design however, which is the house regarded as typical of Queensland architecture generally, was nearer to this idea. It consisted

of a square box of three or four rooms divided by a central hallway. This was surrounded by verandahs on all sides although the rear verandah was often partially enclosed by two additional rooms to form a dining-living area. A steep pyramid roof of iron covered the house while a small rear section contained the kitchen and perhaps servant's room. This one basic design persisted in North Queensland for the first sixty years of settlement: from J.M. Black's house, built in 1864 on Melton Hill, the first substantial house in Townsville, to houses built in the 1920's (Fig. 8). It has been said that these houses "had a distinctive character that was the closest that Australia has ever come to producing an indigenous style".\(^{19}\)

A number of changes occurred over the period. The earliest houses had a balustrade in a crossed pattern, some more intricate than others. By the 1920's the majority of verandahs had simple barred balustrading. The earliest roofs were not a perfect pyramid, having a small hip at the top, and the verandah section may have been at a lower pitch than the main house. Later roofs rose to a peak and were often topped by a decorative metal ventilator. When modern plumbing came to the country, the bathroom was often built into a room at the corner of a rear verandah. Where these rooms were not part of the original design there arose a distinctive room shape, with a triangular corner left off to provide a narrow passage less than 1 m wide. The other corner then became an office in many cases.

When early huts were built at ground level, the timbers were subject to rapid deterioration mainly through termite (white ant) attack. The earth floor was also unpopular and a timber floor was often laid some time after the original construction. By the 1870's, houses were raised some 20 cm above the ground on wooden piles (stumps). During the next two decades, the height above ground was increased to one metre, largely to facilitate inspection for termites. The "typical" northern house which sits on wooden piles over two metres high was not widespread until the

\(^{19}\) Freeland, J.M. op.cit., p.209.
RAY SUMNER

1920's, although it was seen earlier in some regions, such as the low-lying Burdekin delta.

**Masonry**

On several properties stone was chosen as a building material, when a second and better house was erected. This was dependent initially on a local supply of workable stone, which accounts for the absence of stone houses in Charters Towers. One of the earlier and smaller stone homesteads was at "Cambridge Downs", a skilfully built two-roomed house of horizontally laid split sandstone with an adjoining kitchen section of handmade brick.

For many settlers the solidity and permanence of stone must have represented a reassurance of traditional culture in a foreign environment. There were also some people of humbler origin to whom stone conveyed an air of social respectability. Whatever the reason, there arose in the 1880's a number of fine stone homesteads. They are splendid examples of vernacular architecture and were obviously built by skilled stonemasons, variously believed to be German, Italian or Chinese. These houses are colonial Georgian in design, long and symmetrical about a central doorway, and usually in an ashlar pattern of freestone blocks as large as 60 x 45 x 50 cm. The stone was cut in pits with large saws and sometimes chiselled in decorative patterns. Examples are "Manfred Downs" which includes a cellar, "Elderslie" built in 1880, "Rockwood" with the date 1882 carved in the lintel, "Woodstock" near Winton, and a particularly colourful example at "Kensington Downs" made from bright red indurated laterite, with corner stones of dark grey sandstone.

The dependence of these large stone houses on economic conditions is demonstrated by "Mt Comlsh" (Fig. 9) where two extremely large stone rooms flanking an imposing entrance hall were built onto the original homestead of pit-sawn boards, the whole presenting an unfinished and rather incongruous effect, although unified by the very wide verandahs later added on three sides.

**Clay Brick**

Although commercial buildings and hotels were often constructed in brick, there were very few houses of brick in the early towns, and virtually none on the pastoral properties. Brick is an expensive material
FIG. 8. TYPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND HOUSES
FIG. 9. HOUSE AT MOUNT CORNISH
initially, more so because skilled labour is needed, and the only known form of construction was cavity walls. Transport was also an expense to consider, and the early bricks were said to have been of poor quality. Therefore it is surprising to see the store at "Mt Cornish", a fine example of skilled brick manufacture and construction.

**Corrugated Galvanized Iron**

After iron had shown its remarkable benefits as a roofing material, it was no time before woolsheds, stores, and finally whole houses were constructed of this material. Iron-walled houses had been shipped to Victoria during the gold rushes, but the North Queensland iron houses were a local development.

While the material was undoubtedly economical as well as waterproof and fireproof, its usage has been widely condemned, largely because of its thermal properties. However in buildings which were unoccupied during the day, the only real objection seems to be an aesthetic one, as the heat was quickly dissipated at night, and an iron house was then actually cooler than one of stone.

Although iron housing was commonly only small huts or men's quarters, there are some examples of its use on a wider scale. A house at "Kynuna" conforms closely to the early typical house surrounded by verandahs described above (Fig. 10), while at "Garfield" a fanciful residence of iron even includes two castellated towers at either corner of the front (Fig. 11).

**Prefabrication**

In the days when British administrators and civil servants were posted to remote parts of the Empire, there developed a practice of shipping a prefabricated house to one's destination, as a means of ensuring reasonable accommodation upon arrival in a primitive land.

Thus the first house in Australia was a prefabricated structure of timber and canvas brought by Governor Phillip with the first fleet. By 1820 there were prefabricated houses in Brisbane. The labour shortage during the southern gold rushes also encouraged some use of prefabricated housing there, but the idea lapsed in Queensland until the early part of this century when an enterprising Brisbane firm of timber merchants
offered "pre-cut" houses to non-metropolitan areas. The Newstead range of "Ready-to-Erect" houses was developed as a commercial venture. Houses were said to cover "the Entire Field from a 'homely' little cottage to a Mansion". The company did quite good business, offering smaller homes of one basic design to town dwellers on small lots (Cleveland, Fassifern, Moreton, Burnett, prices around £200) and larger homes to country people (Maranoa, Barcoo, Toombul, prices around £400, again the basic plan but with more verandahs) (Fig. 12).

Local hardwoods from the company's own lands were used for framing and flooring, and an imported hemlock known as "Pacific pine", for walling. The numbered pieces were transported by rail from Brisbane and many of these houses may still be found in the north.

However the venture had failed by 1930, and it remained till the late 1960's before prefabrication was again introduced in the north, to cater for the needs of remote areas.

**Houses from Charters Towers**

No account of North Queensland housing would be complete without recording a unique group of buildings which were bought after the decline of the Ravenswood - Charters Towers goldfields. Not only houses, but hotels, hospitals, and even churches were purchased for a minimal amount, dismantled, and transported to a new location where they were re-assembled, not always to the original plan. These houses may be found from Townsville to Collinsville and as far west as Kynuna.

Basically the Townsville houses were "miners cottages", four small rooms with a front verandah, but the homesteads are larger typical houses described previously. The present house at "Wambiana" was shifted from the town, as were several around Hughenden, including "Glenmoan" where two "miners cottages" were rebuilt into a spacious homestead.

The early homesteads generally employed quite a large staff, but changes in social and economic conditions have necessitated a reduction in numbers. Most of the larger old properties have also been greatly reduced in area through resumption and subdivision. In almost every household, telephones are now installed, while electricity and even television are reaching increasingly remote areas. To some people, the
Fig. 10. Corrugated iron house at Kynuna.

Fig. 11. Corrugated iron house at Garfield.
Fig. 12: Ready-to-erect houses
You are all familiar with the map of Queensland. Cape York peninsula like a long dagger pointing northwards makes it the most recognizable of all the states. But Queensland does not end with the tip of Cape York. Beyond that is Torres Strait, nearly one hundred miles wide, which divides two of the world's largest islands, Australia and New Guinea. Torres Strait is a major shipping channel for vessels of many nations. Unfortunately it is a perilous one, as it is strewn with coral reefs, shoals and numerous islands and the eastern approach is flanked by the northern end of the Great Barrier Reef.

The islands, some low coral cays partly submerged at high tide, and others high islands are all part of the territory of Queensland and therefore since 1901 of the Commonwealth of Australia. The Australian or Queensland boundary, whichever you like to call it, runs to within a couple of miles of New Guinea. The offshore islands of Papua, Boigu, Saibai and Dauan, are currently part of Queensland.

This boundary was fixed in 1879 for reasons which I will explain later. At the time most people were agreed it was a sensible arrangement. The Torres Strait islanders, who inhabited some of the islands were not consulted by the Imperial authority that fixed the boundary. Today, ninety-five years later, the boundary has not been changed, yet circumstances have altered dramatically. The Torres Strait islanders are now an articulate cultural group with the recognized right to decide their own destiny and that of their own homelands. Nuigini is just about to become a sovereign state with as much interest in Torres Strait as Australia. The question of control of the intermediate seas has yet to be decided. Torres Strait will no doubt be an important consideration at the U.N. International Conference on the Law of the Sea to be held in Caracas Venezuela later this year. The subject is highly controversial and cannot be easily settled.

In this paper I hope to explain why the Queensland boundary was
established so far north and to mention some of the abortive attempts made to change it before federation.

When Queensland was separated from New South Wales in 1859, Cape York Peninsula, was Queensland's farthest frontier. The tragedy of the Kennedy expedition, and the ghastly fate of the explorers, had left it with a bad name for impenetrable country and Aborigines who were more hostile and treacherous than in other parts of Australia. The pastoralists in the rush of the 1860's to north Queensland by-passed it. They turned north-westwards at the base of the peninsula to the Gulf country, occupying land reported on by Leichhardt in his overland expedition to Port Essington. Cardwell on the east coast and Normanton on the Gulf were established as the two most northerly ports of access.

There was however one very interesting exception to the way in which Queenslanders shunned the Cape York peninsula. In 1864, only 5 years after separation, the Queensland government established an outpost, called Somerset, at the tip of Cape York on the mainland opposite Albany island. It seemed an extraordinary thing to do at the time, for a new colony of some 35,000 white people. The settlement was 1200 miles from Brisbane. Much of the land in between was undeveloped and unexplored. The colonists had no ocean-going ships and the financial resources of the government were very meagre. Yet the outpost was to be of great subsequent importance and to lead to the Queensland boundary being extended to include all the islands of Torres Strait.

Somerset was a joint venture of the British and Queensland governments. Queensland paid for the civil establishment while Britain provided a detachment of marines for garrison duty, a man-of-war to visit the settlement three times a year, and a lump sum of £5000 for the erection of buildings. The Queensland government controlled the project. The colonists were enthusiastic about Somerset, which of course they had no hope of ever seeing, and praised Governor Bowen for the astute deal he had done with the Imperial government. It was a distinct advantage to have the British government, especially the Navy, actively involved in a small new colony.

The British interest was actually not in Queensland but in the
Torres Strait for humanitarian and strategic reasons. The Strait, renowned for shipwrecks was becoming an important sea-lane with the great increase in steamshipping in the 1860's. A 'harbour of refuge' for shipwrecked sailors and passengers was badly needed. A coaling station somewhere at Cape York was also becoming imperative, as early steamships had a voracious appetite for coal. Port Essington had been closed in 1849 and since then there had been no properly equipped harbour of refuge on the Torres route. Only Booby Island, at the western approaches provided a kind of maritime post office, where passing ships left messages in an iron box. Provisions for shipwrecked mariners were also hidden in a cave.

The Queenslanders were not vitally interested in the 'harbour of refuge' function of Somerset because they had no merchant shipping of their own passing through the Strait. They were more concerned with the commercial prospects of the settlement. They indulged in what later seemed an incredible fantasy that Somerset would be a second Singapore. They compared the Torres Strait to the Straits of Malacca with the area in between as a kind of Asiatic Mediterranean. A mainland site was chosen for Somerset to allow ample room for expansion. The first land sales in Brisbane for town-sites at Somerset were a great success.

Both the Imperial and Queensland governments were concerned with the strategic advantage of the outpost. A garrison base could control the Strait in the interests of Britain and the Australian colonies. The recent French annexation of New Caledonia was a warning that other powers had an interest in the S.W. Pacific.

Needless to say reality at Somerset was quite different from the myth of a second Singapore. In fact it failed to come up to expectations in nearly every respect. Port Albany had a poor harbour. It was too far from the main shipping channel. The Aborigines were hostile; soils were very poor and pastures inadequate for grazing. The Police Magistrate had no jurisdiction over the Torres Strait islands as Queensland control only ran as far as three miles off-shore at low water mark. There were half-hearted moves on both sides to abandon the settlement when the British government recalled the marines in 1867. Perhaps it would have
been given up except for an important new development in the Torres Strait in 1868.

This was the pearl-shelling industry, generally supposed to have been started by Captain Banner of Sydney on Warrior, Gabba, Saibai and Darnley islands. The pearling masters employed kanakas for ship-handling and shell-diving. They were operating in an area where there was no judicial control. No British naval vessel had patrolled the area for some 25 years because the Torres Strait was part of the China station, and out-of-bounds to ships of the Australian station.

The Torres Strait was becoming a disturbed area not only because of dangerous shoals and reefs. Lawlessness and human exploitation were developing as pearling masters recruited and worked their labour without restraint. There was violence between kanakas and Torres Strait islanders. The magistrate at Somerset found his attention centred in the islands. He reported to the government that the islands were at last opening up for trade, if law and order could be established in the area. The frontier was moving northward, yet he had no legal powers of jurisdiction.

This situation prompted the Queensland government to ask Britain for a more satisfactory arrangement by which Queensland could exercise more control and possibly get some return for the money spent on Somerset. In December 1871, the premier, Arthur Palmer, presented to Governor Normanby, a request to be forwarded to the Secretary of State for "Letters Patent conferring on the Government of Queensland Territorial Jurisdiction over all the Islands along the coast of the Colony within a distance of sixty miles therefrom". The Imperial government willingly granted the request. At the time they were extremely sensitive to the Kidnapping Trade in the South West Pacific but reluctant to spend money on controlling it. The Queensland government's request to share the burden in the Torres Strait was gladly received.

From 24th August, 1872 the new frontier was established at 60 miles from the coast. It was an arbitrary line drawn on an Admiralty chart with no thought for the inhabitants of the islands or even for the geography of the area. The boundary line cut some islands in half. Commander Heath, Portmaster of Brisbane raised an interesting question
to the Colonial Secretary, "Does the fact that all Islands lying within 60 miles of our main coastline are dependencies of Queensland give us jurisdiction over intermediate waters or the sea bed at a greater distance than 3 miles from low water mark?" Good question, but no one at the time could answer it. Perhaps the Law of the Sea Conference in 1974 will produce an answer at last.

The new boundary still excluded from Queensland control the pearl-shelling areas of Saibai, Warrior and Darnley islands. The police magistrate at Somerset did his best to control the Strait with a small cutter the Lizzie Jane provided by the Queensland government. The pearl-shell industry was growing rapidly in 1874 he reported it was worth £30,000 p.a. and that helmet diving had been introduced. Somerset was obviously badly sited for control of Torres Strait; as a harbour of refuge it was too far from the main shipping route, the Great North-East Passage and the Prince of Wales channel. The move to Thursday Island, a much more favourable position, was finally made in 1877. Henry Chester became the first Queensland government resident.

In the same year the northerly islands of the Strait, outside the Queensland boundary, came under the nominal control of the British Western Pacific High Commission. The purpose of the Western Pacific High Commission with headquarters in Fiji was to exercise jurisdiction over British subjects on islands which did not come under any 'civilized' i.e. western power. The British government had taken on a civilizing mission in the South Pacific which it was trying to execute on a totally inadequate budget. It was an immense area from Samoa to the Torres Strait. Sir Arthur Gordon, Western Pacific High Commissioner and governor of Fiji appointed Chester at Thursday Island a deputy-commissioner to give him some jurisdiction over the non-Queensland islands in Torres Strait. Chester reported this meant virtually nothing. Provided a shelling-master avoided being caught by a man-of-war, which he could easily do, at the expiration of his license, he could land his kanakas on any island probably without pay. In his opinion extended Queensland control was necessary in Torres Strait.

Accordingly the Queensland government applied to Britain for an
extension of the maritime boundary to include all islands of the Torres Strait from Cape York to New Guinea, from Bramble Cay in the north-east to Deliverance Island in the west. The British government in the circumstances was understandably agreeable, and the Letters Patent for the rectification of the Maritime Boundary of Queensland were received in the Colony in 1878. A proclamation by the governor was made conditional upon the Queensland parliament passing an act to provide for the annexation of the islands. The Queensland Coast Islands Act was passed in the following year and received the governor's assent on 24th June 1879.

The Act which had been proposed by a Liberal ministry under John Douglas was finally put through by a conservative ministry of Thomas McIlwraith. This was due to an election in December 1878. However both political parties were agreed on the matter and there was unusual unanimity in the parliamentary debates. Two considerations were important and emphasized by speakers from both parties. It was desirable to have more effective control in the whole area of exploitation in the maritime industries of pearl-shelling and bêche-de-mer fishing. The safety of Queensland was a general concern. Other nations were taking an interest in New Guinea and exploration of the great island had begun. Queensland should look to her own safety by gaining control of the whole Torres Strait, especially islands which commanded the main shipping channels. Without stepping into New Guinea the Queensland boundary had been pushed as far north as possible.

The first significant result of the move to Thursday Island and the extension of control was a new interest in the islands and the Torres Strait islanders. The Queensland government, under the terms of annexation, had been obliged to provide an adequate patrol vessel. Government residents made good use of it to get round their dependency. Their early reports are exciting as they seemed to be discovering a new world which was physically very beautiful. They began to realize ethnographical and cultural differences between inhabitants of different groups of islands; the distribution of population on the inhabited islands, determined by the availability of fresh water and the composition of the soil; and the difficulties there would be in applying Queensland
laws, framed for a western-type society to the islands. Hugh Milman, Acting Government Resident reported in 1886, "I do not see how it will be possible to administer these islands under the present laws of Queensland, more especially as touching the land question, and the tenure under which the native races are to be allowed to hold the land they own. There is no doubt that if every acre has not a reputed owner... that every grove or single tree of any value has its proper and legitimate hereditary owner. To disturb these rights, great care would have to be exercised, and the natives recompensed for any losses that they might suffer through deprivation."

One man who did a great deal to extend the knowledge of the islands and promote the welfare of the islanders was John Douglas, Government Resident at Thursday Island from 1884-1903. This was the same Douglas who, as premier of Queensland, had initiated the extension of the boundary in 1879. No other white man knew the islands and islanders as he did. His long administration of the Torres Strait islands is a story in itself which cannot be told here. During his premiership of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith also took a keen interest in the area, and toured the area with Douglas in 1893.

At the same time there were significant changes on the other side of the Strait. In November 1884 the British government declared a protectorate over the south-east portion of New Guinea. For the next few years Douglas held a dual position. Special Commissioner in Port Moresby of the Protectorate, and Queensland Government Resident at Thursday Island. During these years he lived in Moresby, while an acting government resident administered the islands from Thursday Island. In 1888 the Protectorate was proclaimed a British colony and Sir William McGregor, the first governor, took up residence at Moresby. Douglas returned to his 'island home', as he called it.

During his time as administrator of the Protectorate he had begun to look at the Torres Strait islands from the New Guinea side. Was the new Queensland boundary such a good idea after all? Circumstances had changed and Queensland's safety was now assured with a British presence on the northern side of the Strait. It now seemed possible
JEAN FARNFIELD

to talk about moving the boundary further south again. Douglas was the strongest advocate for a rectification. In 1884 he read a paper on the 'Islands of Torres Straits' to the Queensland branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, in which he remarked, "My duties in New Guinea will, I fear, call me away from the islands, unless we can induce the Queensland Parliament to agree to transfer some of them to New Guinea. That would give us a fine start..."

Several plans were put forward between 1885 and 1900 for changing the boundary. There is considerable correspondence on the subject from the British and Queensland governments and the Governor of British New Guinea. The suggestion made by Douglas in 1885 is historically known as the Douglas Line. It follows the 10° south parallel of latitude and cuts Torres Strait neatly in half. The off-shore islands and Murray and Darnley Islands would become New Guinea territory under the Douglas plan. The MacGregor Line, suggested in 1893, put the boundary much further north. This left most of the islands within Queensland, with the exception of Boigu, Saibai and Dauan to New Guinea. It also gave the Warrior Reefs, their traditional fishing grounds, to the Papuans. Sir Samuel Griffith visited the Torres Strait in 1893 and on his return suggested a line which gave the off-shore islands of Papua to New Guinea.

The problems of native administration were strong arguments at the time in favour of moving the boundary. The special ordinances of the New Guinea administration were more applicable to the off-shore islands. Douglas pointed out, "I have done the best I can to administer justice and maintain order in a patriarchal kind of way through the head men..., but something more than this is now required. It is difficult, nay almost impossible to apply our Queensland laws to such islands as Saibai, Dauan and Boigu. To the magistrate at Daru, with his native ordinances, and his proximity to these islands, it is another matter altogether."

All efforts to alter the boundary before 1900 proved abortive. It appears that this was not because of active opposition to the idea: there was very little general interest in the subject. As late as 1898 an order-in-Council was passed by the British government to alter
the boundary along the lines suggested by Griffith. It was to take effect when the Queensland government passed an act to endorse it. But such a bill was never introduced in the short time left before Federation. The boundary remained where it was.

The coming of the Commonwealth in 1901 changed the situation. The boundary was then not only Queensland's but Australia's. The new Federal Constitution put what Douglas described as a 'formidable lion in the path' of changing the boundary. This was clause 123, which reads,

"The Parliament of the Commonwealth may, with the consent of the Parliament of a State, and the approval of the majority of the electors of the State voting upon the question, increase, diminish, or otherwise alter the limits of the State, upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed on, and may, with the like consent, make provision respecting the effect and operation of any increase or diminution or alteration of territory in relation to any State affected."

So far the 'lion in the path' has not been directly challenged. But current circumstances, the independence of Nuigini and the question of the 'intermediate seas' and the seabed, indicate the Torres Strait boundary is about to become a highly controversial issue.

You will have noticed in nearly a hundred years' history of the Australian boundary in Torres Strait, the Torres Strait islanders themselves have featured very little. Since white settlement, they have been treated as unimportant in the game of 'moving' the boundary. Surely the most urgent consideration for the immediate future should be to give the Torres Strait Islanders the right to decide the future of their island homelands and the sea which surrounds them.
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND GOLDFIELDS

Mr. L.J. Colwell

In Queensland as a whole, goldmining has had far-reaching effects upon population and material growth: in North Queensland especially, gold built up and stabilised the infant community. The gold discoveries of the Sixties and Seventies provided markets which saved the pastoral industries from threatened collapse. With later discoveries and the rise of stable goldmining communities there developed in North Queensland towns, industries, railways, ports and telegraphic networks that were able to meet the needs of newer agricultural industries, particularly sugar, after the era of gold had faded. Goldmining made a major financial contribution to the growth and stability of the Colony of Queensland: perhaps even more important, it virtually created an entire province in nurturing, fostering and underpinning North Queensland.

White settlement of North Queensland developed in a colony-wide period of material growth and development in which North Queensland itself played a significant part and in which gold made a large contribution. Despite several economic setbacks and some political upheavals, Queensland experienced a period of growth within the 40 years between separation from N.S.W. (1859) and Federation (1901). A significant feature of the 40 years was the growth of country towns which came into existence for a wide variety of reasons significant in the history of Queensland as well as in the history of the North: the opening up of the rich inland pastoral areas; the discovery of minerals in outlying districts; the discovery (or revelation) that the whiteman could live and work in the tropics, and the subsequent increase in the sugar industry; the opening up further and further north of the rich coastal strip; and especially the creation, unique in Australia, of a decentralized railway system linking the interior section with the coastal towns. By the end of the century, from Ipswich, 25 miles from Brisbane, to Cairns, 1200 miles to the north; from Warwick with a population of 3,500 to Rockhampton with 1800 and Charters Towers approaching 25,000, the vast colony was scattered with a dozen towns of respectable size and industry.
North Queensland itself became open for white settlement in 1861 with the opening of the Kennedy district, which extended from Cape Palmerston, 40 miles south of Mackay, to Halifax Bay near Ingham, and inland to include the Burdekin Valley. The N.S.W. government had proclaimed the Kennedy District open to settlement some three weeks before Queensland's separation in December, 1859, but in fear of speculative land grabbing, the new colony countermanded the proclamation and waited for the report of Dalrymple's returning expedition. The Kennedy area had already been partly explored, Ludwig Leichardt's expedition from the Darling Downs to Port Essington in 1844-5 had passed through. Then Edmund Kennedy's ill-fated expedition in 1848 to Cape York from Rockingham Bay had passed through giving the area its name. A.C. & F.T. Gregory, two competent and experienced surveyors, followed the Burdekin in the closing stages of a 14 months journey from Victoria River to Brisbane in late 1856, and they spoke highly of the district's potential. George Elphinstone Dalrymple led expeditions to North Queensland in 1859, 1860 and 1864 after each of which he produced glowing reports of fine, large, agricultural and pastoral regions, of which coastal lands suitable for tobacco, cotton and sugar and most optimistically of all, suggestions of gold further inland. "The Land Act of 1860" set in motion a steady trickle of settlers, their families, possessions and stock moving slowly into the north land. Dalrymple himself was appointed Commissioner of Crown Land in the Kennedy district from the 1 January, 1861. His office later became established in the newly founded town of Bowen, named after the governor.

The Burdekin Valley itself saw the first white settlers in the north in 1861 when several men of Dalrymple's earlier party returned to claim areas they had pegged on the Cape and Broughton Rivers. These pioneers moving into the Upper Burdekin were mostly young men seeking prosperity on the new discovered and apparently rich lands. Of these young men, Edward Cunningham, took up "Burdekin Downs" now the oldest property in the area, Michael Miles took up "Fanning Downs" and Christopher Allingham took up "Hillgrove". Originally sheep runs, but soon changed to cattle these early stations brought the first white settlers to the Charters Towers District. The problem of hostile aboriginals, unfamiliar diseases
and expensive labour were compounded when the colony suffered a serious commercial recession in 1866 precipitated by collapse of the London Money Market. Northern settlers were hard hit. The more fortunate were just able to recoup their outlay, many lost everything. Some had to abandon their properties. A few held on until the discovery of gold produced new markets for station products.

Colonial and local authorities hoped that gold discoveries, optimistically predicted by Dalrymple and others, would enable Queensland to overcome these economic problems and enjoy the benefits which gold had brought to N.S.W. and Victoria in the Fifties. Their expectations rose when Peak Downs three miles inland from Rockhampton was discovered in 1862 and Nash in 1867 discovered gold on the Mary River not far from Maryborough. (This became Gympie). In North Queensland Richard Daintree, a geologist and amateur photographer of skill, endeavoured to systematize the geological survey of the north. Despite an initial lack of success, his advice led to the opening of the Cape River goldfields in July, 1867. The Ravenswood gold strike occurred in 1868/69, the Gilbert River and Woolgar fields were struck in late 1869. Ravenswood, a more successful and lasting field became a centre for further exploration and prospecting which in turn led to the discovery of the Etheridge field in 1871 and also the same year the alluvial field of the Broughton River westward near the future Charters Towers. This was followed in 1873 by the Palmer inland from Cooktown, the Hodgkinson to the south of it in 1875, Mount Morgan in 1882 (not strictly speaking, in North Queensland), and the Croydon in 1886. Then in the peninsula the Hamilton was discovered in 1899 and the Alice River in 1904. In addition to these major goldfields there were many other places scattered over North Queensland where gold was mined but which were never proclaimed as goldfields. They were the site of a few prospectors discovering pay dirt and may have been the site of some kind of minor rush, for the miners were incurably optimistic and prone to leave everything and follow some rumour or tale, but they were likely to last at most a few months. Goldmining late last century quickly came to dominate the life and economy of the north bringing with it a large influx of people to the several goldfields and, however makeshift, a
whole range of shops, services and industries necessary for the population. Gold more than anything else opened up and populated the north.

The North Queensland gold experience was quite different from that of the southern states. In N.S.W. and Victoria gold was discovered in areas already settled: a pastoral frontier had already passed across the territory. In North Queensland, with two exceptions, gold brought the first entry of the white man into rough and difficult terrain: the frontier was a mining frontier. Even in the two exceptions, Charters Towers and Ravenswood, conditions were extremely primitive. Compared with Bathurst and Bendigo, for example, their links with metropolitan centres were extremely tenuous.

The figures for Queensland's population between 1846 and 1902 illustrate dramatically the effects of gold. In 1846 the population was only 2,257. By 1864 it had risen to 61,467, and in 1868 to 99,312. Late in 1868 the first gold was discovered in the Ravenswood district. By 1871 the population had risen to 120,076 and by 1 May 1876 to 173,283. In the five years 1871-1876 three North Queensland goldfields had been proclaimed: Charters Towers, the Palmer and the Hodgkinson: in that period the population had increased by almost 50%.

The census of 3 April 1881 showed a population increase of 40,000, to a total of 213,525, but in the years 1881-1886, which saw the opening of the great Mount Morgan mine and the Croydon goldfield (1886), the increase was 110,000, or fractionally more than 50%. The census of 5 April 1891 showed a further increase of 70,000 to a total of 393,718. By 31 March 1901 Queensland's population had reached 503,266. (Figures from Pugh's Almanac for 1902, p.398).

In the years from 1871 to 1891 Ravenswood and Charters Towers were flourishing. Charters Towers, indeed, was rapidly becoming the second largest urban centre in Queensland, a position previously held by Rockhampton.

Turning now to the appearance, life style and attitudes of the North Queensland goldfields it is worth noting that the original strikes were always at least a month in advance of the actual proclamation of a goldfield. One of the best examples of this is Charters Towers where
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND GOLDFIELDS

gold was found in December, 1871. The claim was registered on 26 January, the following year and within weeks the area had miners fossicking and seeking for alluvial gold, but the goldfield itself was not officially proclaimed until 31 August, 1872. By the end of the first year some 3,000 miners were fossicking in the district scattered over an area "of about three miles square". At Ravenswood gold was discovered in various stages between the end of 1868 and April, 1869, but the actual proclamation of the goldfield took place on 3 November, 1870.

After the discovery of gold, registration of the claim and the setting in of a rush the shape and appearance of the town followed a kind of three phase architectural progression. The first stage would be canvas, then timber and if the diggings continued and were profitable bricks and mortar would follow at least in the centre part of the town. In most of the goldmining centres, outside the main street calico was the common material for housing. Many short-lived strikes never progressed beyond the canvas stage. Hotels seem to have been only grog shops on most goldfields, residential accommodation being provided by the Chinese in canvas shanties and bark boarding houses. Early photographs of any of North Queensland goldfields in the 1870's show a mixture of rude timber buildings. The floors of the early dwellings were usually a clay pug trampled into a suitable hard state, but some simple dwellings contained a rude timber floor constructed from split logs lodged in a rough frame. The roof was constructed from round saplings covered with bark sheets, tied down with bullock hide and further secured by additional poles strapped to both ridge and eavesboard. Later on some buildings had corrugated iron, but for the most part bark slabs dominated the scene.

The digger's residence was commonly a small calico tent, often on the slopes of the gully where the claim was. Its area was roughly 12'x8'. There were many canvas tents and a few log huts, and some had rude chimneys. The furniture consisted of one or two stumps of trees for chairs, anything in the shape of a box or tea chest was a table. The bed consisted of a stretcher or bunk made of forked stakes and saplings covered with a rug or blankets. Cooking utensils were few, and intended to wear well. Two or three tin or pewter plates, spoons, knives and forks,
two or three saucepans and one or two billies generally completed the list, while a frying pan was regarded as luxury. Once the original camp had stabilised into a town, there would be a main street lined with hotels, boarding houses, stores, banks and butchers shops, usually of wood. In the larger, more permanent centres some would be two storied and even carry some pretentious architectural ornaments. Behind the main street lay the tents in which most diggers lived. Everywhere there were earth mounds. Each reef was surmounted by a windlass with which men hauled up quartz all day. Such was the appearance of almost any goldfield in North Queensland in its early days.

After the initial canvas stage, if gold production continued, the township would begin to expand, graceless, unplanned, devoid of most public utilities. There was no street lighting and no water supply. What water there was would have to come from local creeks and dry seasons frequently brought the onset not only of scarcity of water but of many illnesses affecting miners and their families. Even in the comparatively stable and populous Charters Towers street lighting and running water only arrived in 1890. Spreading suburbs of miner cottages took the place of canvas and slab huts. Usually of four rooms, with a front verandah and a rear lean-to kitchen, they were made inevitably of wood with galvanized iron roofs, so too were shops, offices and other buildings. As the town and the mining industry grew, heavy horse drawn traffic stirred up clouds of dust from the unsealed streets. Around Charters Towers and Ravenswood the countryside had been stripped for miles of its scanty trees for mine props and fuel, while the large numbers of goats ate every piece of greenery.

If the gold did not peter out, and the industry continued to grow, there would be a continuing influx of population. The miners, traders, butchers and grog merchants who constituted the initial rush would be followed by general storekeepers, assayers, and bankers, and almost as rapidly by legal, police and administrative officials, all with their families. If growth continued, streets, houses, shops, schools, newspapers and some public utilities would develop within a few years. Charters Towers was proclaimed a municipality in only its fifth year. Political activity also developed early, centred on the trade unions,
the municipality and the district as well as on Brisbane. With all the ebullient communal growth there remained constant reminders of rude beginnings, especially in matters of health. In the mines, safety precautions were rudimentary and accidents quite frequent. Public hygiene was casual: garbage was thrown into the streets, refuse and drainage flowed from houses, shops and hotels straight into the gutter. Dead horses and other animals were merely dragged to a vacant allotment, and in the wet season earth closets were a constant health hazard. No wonder Charters Towers paid a bounty on dead rats. Annual epidemics of measles, and of dengue fever and other tropical diseases, were a routine part of life in North Queensland goldfield communities. In an era before modern medicine, transport and communications, personal qualities of good health, physical strength and firm courage were required of those foolhardy or gold hungry enough to venture to the north.

In the nineties a working miner could earn up to £260 a year. Wages ranged from £3 to £5 a week, but averaged about £4-10-0. This was good money, afforded the miner’s family a diet containing daily fresh meat, vegetables and milk, which were not readily available to labourers in the older communities of Europe from which many miners had come. Good wages and living standards, plenty of work, a sense of independence, the possibility of wealth and the miners' traditional radicalism combined to produce in the north a brash egalitarian and competent community.

One question that naturally arises about North Queensland goldfields is who made money? Usually not the miners themselves, mobile and peripatetic though they were, ready at any rumour to rush off in hopes of a better strike. In the literature of the period it is always hotel-keepers, shopkeepers and above all carriers, all ancilliary to mining itself, who grew wealthy. Typical was Corfield, buying goods, equipment and food in Townsville by the wagon load to take over the long and dusty track to the Cape diggings to sell at a profit. Later, as he relates in his book, he raised sheep and cattle on a property near Hughenden to be driven to the diggings and sold at a profit, varying but never less than good. Another good example of the entrepreneur was the German-born Isidore Lissner of Charters Towers, whose careful investments in and around the goldfields
led him to wealth and a career in public life. Besides mining itself, stamp batteries, pastoral ventures, meatworks, the carrying trade and the stock market provided opportunities for investment to the entrepreneur. Among a tiny group of the very successful are E.H.T. Plant, John Deane and Thomas Buckland all of whom entered municipal and colonial politics. Buckland became a board member of the Bank of N.S.W. and a knight. It must be stressed that such men made up a tiny minority, as did those who, after being spectacularly rich for a time, died penniless like Frank Stabley, famous for St. Patrick's Mine, Charters Towers, who died beside a bush track near Croydon in 1887.

The overwhelming majority of North Queensland mines were alluvial; that is to say the gold was sluiced by the use of water and the old fashioned tin pan. This was the case in the Palmer, Hodgkinson and all the others with the major exceptions of Charters Towers and Ravenswood. These two, after an initial period of alluvial mining became reef mining districts. One man alone can do sluicing, but once you have to dig down you need some kind of group, whether it be 2, 5 or 20. Someone had to dig the hole and work underground, someone else had to work the windlass, possibly a third person had to be in charge of the camp, look after the gold and take turns with the other two. As the greatest gold production came from reef mines, reefing communities had a longer life than the more numerous alluvial fields. The greatest alluvial field, the Palmer, no longer exists; Croydon a town of 7,000 in 1887, is but a village today; all other alluvial fields finished after a short life, whether spectacular or not. The two reef mining towns fell away in the first quarter of this century, Ravenswood to become one of the most romantic of ghost towns, Charters Towers to become, after a period of painful adjustment, a quietly prosperous centre for the pastoral Burdekin valley.

Old goldmining centres are surrounded by mullock heaps from the old mines - vast piles of dirt and stone - remains of derricks, bits of sheds and remnants of cottages. In towns no longer occupied the scene is ghostly, romantic, dreamlike. In the hot sunlight colours have faded, timber has weathered to a silver grey, brickwork has a film of dust remaining from the last storm, the streets are rutted, nothing moves.
Thus Ravenswood, perhaps the best ghost town of them all. Some others notably Gympie and Charters Towers, which have remained living centres for the local district, retain many remnants of the days of gold. Obviously Charters Towers is the most outstanding example. "The Towers" is a solid comfortable town of slightly over 8,000 people, centre of the Burdekin area's cattle industry. Reminders of the people and events of the past remain in the names of streets, parks, town areas and outlying centres together with the old mullock heaps and in the late Victorian buildings that still dominate the centre. In addition the ports of Normanton, Cooktown, Cairns and Townsville either originated or received their greatest impetus from goldmines in their hinterland. Possibly Ayr, coming into existence to meet Townsville's needs, is also to be reckoned an indirect consequence of goldmining.

As the goldfields of North Queensland went into decline towards the end of the 19th Century and in the first quarter of the 20th, miners and their families together with those who provided services ancilliary to the gold industry, moved to other parts of the North. They found occupation on the Atherton Tablelands, on the cane farms and sugar mills, in fishing, on the wharves, in the railways, in government and municipal employ and the whole range of urban work in North Queensland towns. Throughout the North descendants of the mining communities are interpreting goldfield attitudes and values in present day terms, and contributing to development of the district. The goldfields have made a contribution to the population, material growth and attitudes and values of North Queensland far greater than the visible remnants of goldmining would suggest.

"The gold industries most important contribution to North Queensland was not in dividends but in the miners and their families". (G.C. Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, Canberra 1970, p.276).
THE DESERTION OF GILBERTON

Mr. R.B. Brown

Since I have been working on Gilberton many people have asked, "What is Gilberton"?; some have even asked, "who is he"?

Gilberton was a gold mining town proclaimed in 1869 some 300 miles west of Townsville on the Upper Gilbert River. Gilberton, centre for the Gilbert River gold fields closed down in 1873. Some reports claimed that gold ran out. Others argue that gold did not pay. It is suggested that Gilberton had one crisis after another and was just unable to get on its feet. A wide range of sources suggest it was aboriginal resistance and lack of police protection which closed the Gilbert fields.

During the course of this lecture I intend to examine these theories and suggest to you from my research to date, why Gilberton and its gold field was deserted in December, 1873.

Let me begin by briefly outlining the significance of Gilberton and its gold fields in Queensland history. In a recently presented paper on Aboriginal resistance in 19th Century Queensland, Henry Reynolds and Noel Loos concluded that between 800 and 850 deaths resulted from conflict with Aborigines during the 50 years it took to fully occupy Queensland. Yet too frequently early Australian historians have been under the delusion that the nature of Australian history is uniquely peaceful, and confrontation with Aborigines mild and bloodless. Don't get me wrong here; frontier contact was both peaceful and violent, but the idea expressed by Russel Ward, "that men seldom had to go armed on the Australian frontier", is a myth quite incomprehensible to anyone living on the frontier areas of Queensland. Aboriginal resistance was a significant reality in Queensland's colonial life.

This fact was clearly illustrated on the Gilbert gold fields, a case example of the friction which existed between colonists and Aborigines.

You might well ask, where does Gilberton fit into the chronology of North Queensland history? Attempts at developing the pastoral industry in North Queensland during the 1860's failed miserably - the hardships and uncertainties of the area proved formidable to the pastoralist and
large scale investment unworthy. Small parties of intending squatters rode out north from Bowen searching for pastoral country only to return with nothing but disappointed reports. But it was not long before rumours of gold echoed through the land and before the first gold discoveries were made. Gilberton was part of the frontier which was successful in opening up North Queensland, the gold frontier.

The first discovery of gold was on the Star River some 50 miles inland from Townsville in 1865. Over the next four years diggings were established on the Cape River, Ravenswood, Charters Towers and on the Gilbert and Etheridge. The government encouraged prospecting in the area by offering a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of new fields. All new discoveries were submitted to Richard Daintree government geologist for North Queensland. If he found them payable, the discoveries were gazetted and the area proclaimed a gold field.

The Gilbert gold field came into the limelight early in 1869 when, after a months examination, Daintree reported payable gold. In his report Daintree made it quite clear that the extent of gold bearing ground was limited and patchy and that there was no hope of getting gold easily. He advised that, "anyone intending to come to the Gilbert goldfields must come either as a prospector or as one prepared to take the leavings of prospectors and so be content with little." But the advice was too late, excited men in the grip of gold fever blindly rushed to the Gilbert and the field was soon proclaimed the new northern El Dorado, an optimistic name applied to most new gold fields. At Cardwell every ship was overcrowded with miners and speculators. In July, 1869, 14 ships unloaded their complement of flannel shirted diggers and the mass made their way to the Gilbert. Soon letters from the field flooded Cardwell, Townsville and even Brisbane with reports such as, "we are all on good gold, each man earning from £6-20 a week....any amount of gold in country, come out here at once." It was confidently announced that Gilberton would turn out to be the richest and most extensive gold field ever discovered in Queensland.

Not all reports were positive - many miners complained about the greatly exaggerated reports in newspapers. They claimed the field was
over rushed and that no gold existed. A telegram to the colonial secretary from Townsville reported a petition signed by 104 disappointed diggers. They claimed they had been misled by false reports about the diggings and having spent all their money, applied for free passages back to the coast. Townsville's police commissioner reported that many of these men were destitute and as a result rations were distributed but no help was given for return journeys to the coast.

News from the Gilbert was indeed conflicting. It appeared that the rush was characteristic of rushes on any field in that, "the first comers generally do well but those who are incited by rumours of their success to follow them, almost always arrive at a time to be too late." Nevertheless by May 1869 most of the Gilberts 2-3000 miners were finding gold (though in many cases barely enough to live on) and it was not long before a town added the name of Gilberton to the map.

Gilberton township was initially planned by its first Commissioner, T.R. Hacket - "its streets were laid out widely divergent from a straight line an eccentricity peculiar to mining townships." It was initially a crude bush canvas town consisting of tents and rough gunyahs or wurleys which were the favourite class of habitation being cheap simple and very easy to erect and repair. One newspaper describes Gilberton as the height of its prosperity as

a very well built township surrounded by magnificent gardens, producing fruit and vegetables in abundance, from the pineapple and banana to the humble but useful sweet potatoe and pumpkin, a town with a stately court a recently completed Commissioner’s residence with luxurious bathrooms and all the other etceteras - police barracks and a lock up, a number of commodious hotels and stores - one of the finest assembly rooms in the north, a post office and numerous private dwellings together with an immense quantity of stores, goods, furniture and other property.

What a utopian spectacle this must have portrayed to the Southern reader. In reality this description was nothing more than a deceptive and emotional dream. Most of the buildings in Gilberton were of a primitive design and built very roughly. Good buildings were scarce and sawn wood very expensive. The sides of structures were composed of iron bark saplings, placed close together on end, the top nailed, the bottom embedded in the ground.
A more realistic impression of Gilberton at its peak is reported by another newspaper.

It presents a very imposing appearance consisting of numerous stores, public houses all very rude wooden shacks - several bough sheds dignified by the name of butcher shops. Several shanties, a lock up and court house, calico doctors shops, blacksmith shops and any quantity of digger's palaces.

The apparently formidable appearance of Gilberton did not prevent the town from living a very spirited life during its better days. With an unusually high number of women or to use Victorian jargon, "a goodly portion of Eve's daughters" and an average of 13 pubs which were nothing more than crude shacks housing crude grog, the miners in Gilberton knew how to have a good time.

In every community large or small there are always to be found eccentric people - the village idiot idea - Gilberton was no exception. As one miner reported

you certainly do meet a great variety of dress on the gold field, from the primitive fig leaf to the tall faced full share bell topper but to see an individual enveloped in a pair of knicker-bockers through which his legs have evidently been thrust about a foot too far is indeed a fair sight.

Gilberton also had its depth of community spirit, perhaps unified by the establishment of a hospital. Once the town hospital was erected it was commonly accepted that successful miners and business profiteers should contribute £5 to hospital funds. This unwritten law was strictly adhered to at least while Gilberton was prosperous and social functions were organized to raise funds for the hospital. A considerable sum was raised at Gilberton concerts where volunteers performed everything from classical arias to dirty ditties. On St. Patrick's Day in 1870 a group of spirited volunteers even performed the Third Act of Othello.

These same enthusiasts nicknamed their fellow Gilbertonians, "the wallabies" - they would often drink their spare time away with Normanton residents who were nicknamed "the alligators". After many swigs of what was termed "calamity water" the night usually ended in a supposedly well-intentioned brotherly fight, usually won by the alligators.

All this impresses on the mind the healthy degree of community spirit which reigned in Gilberton when "the skies were blue". It was
traditional for Gilbertonians around Christmas and other holidays to organise great festivities. Money was raised to form a turf club and even an athletics club. Gilberton certainly made its mark in state horse racing circles, when on New Year's Day, 1870, an event occurred which southern newspapers described as "the most disgraceful proceeding that ever occurred in the colony on any race course." To quote the Brisbane Courier:

On New Year's Day there was a much better attendance and better racing and all would have passed off well but for the cowardly, unmanly conduct of some of the diggers who placed an obstruction across the course and evidently tried their best to injure both horse and rider by pelting him with stones and waddies but happily he escaped injury - It certainly was the most disgraceful proceeding that ever occurred in the colony on any race course and I hope the ringleaders will meet their just reward.

The origins of the affair was that the horse ridden by its owner was supposed not to be the bona fide property of a digger but it was satisfactorily proved before the stewards and others that it was a digger's horse.

The obvious question which now arises is why did this apparently active and perhaps thriving township, collapse only five years after its establishment? Horace B. English in his dictionary of psychology defines tension as "an emotional state resulting when needs are unsatisfied or goal directed behaviour is blocked" and one of the results of sustained tension is a low morale. For most of Gilberton's history morale was very low, miners wanted gold yet they spent a good deal of their time literally battling with a host of physical and social problems, struggling to cope with their basic needs.

Let me make it clear that the Gilbert fields were not unique in their fight against social and physical problems. All gold fields were faced with similar struggles and only the most prosperous were able to survive. A consideration of some of these problems will not only illustrate what life was like on the gold fields but will also help to ascertain why the Gilbert was deserted.

To arrive at the Gilbert fields people had to contend with a multitude of hardships incidental to a journey 300 miles over mountainous country. All the trials of such a journey placed them in a remote and
and lonely district. Despite iron determination to claim their share of gold, miners were victims of great loneliness. One miner expressed his feelings towards isolation, (with tongue in cheek), in the following,

What a delightful place this town of Gilberton is to spend one's existence in - to a man tired of the companionship of his species and the busy turmoil of the world the place would prove a paradise, he would almost be as completely cut off from the outer world as the uninhabited Robinson Crusoe's Island.

In such a remote district residents had to do without luxury personal such as priests. You can imagine the reaction this must have caused in the refined and very proper circles of Brisbane and other populated areas.

One Gilbertonian reported, "as yet a vendor of the gospel has not found his way to this barbarous region". Looking at it commercially there was money to be made in Christening and marriage services but as our goodly reporter says, "not having a register of marriages resident among us here who could tie that awkward knot is to my vagabond way of thinking rather an advantage which I will prove by a brief illustration -

Some weeks ago, a rather buxom fair one found her way to the Gilbert looking for her married sister (so she said) and with that impulsive feeling of hospitality peculiar to my species she found shelter and tucker in a decent married woman's humpy whose husband's mate soon exhibited unmistakable symptoms of being under the influence of what in refined circles is called tender passion, but to use our venacular he was "collared" and the fair one did not repulse his advances. But to cut the story short they entered into partnership, there being no person or registrar to license them so to do, the implied understanding being that at the first chance they were to be made one. After celebrations the pair settled down in a very matter of fact way to their respective occupations. But alas for their happiness and connubial bliss, a shadow fell on them, a man dusty and dirty and unshaven came one evening to their tent and in a vulgar language claimed the unbewedded bride as his lawful spouse and in adjectival terms told her to come along to his camp. She objected - partner No. 2 sided with her, a fight resulted in which partner No. 1 "caved in" and returned bleeding amidst the jeers of the crowd. If there had been a parson here, there would have been a case of bigamy which through his absence was avoided.

Without a priest there were no funeral services. It was not unusual for a policeman to come along, look in a business way at the body, report the death, construct a rude coffin or box and bury it in a shallow
hole on the side of a ridge. One miner reported, "no prayers, no mourners, not even a chosen spot in which to find a resting place". Another reported that, "graves are to be seen scattered all over the gold field, some with a part of the coffin laid to bare by dogs with gourmet tastes". It is questionable whether coffins were laid bare by dogs but it is a fact that there was not a cemetery on the Gilbert field. At a time in history when people of all classes treated death with great solemnity, these circumstances must have antagonized the conscience.

Unfortunately there was a very large death rate on the field considering the number of people that passed through. The causes of most deaths were fever, dysentery, natural accidents such as drowning, suicide, sunstroke, and a host of diseases. Health was not good on the field as is commonly assumed. Although Gilberton was about 1600 feet above sea level the wet season claimed the life of many.

One writer says,

There is considerable sickness just now prevailing a sort of low fever that puts a man completely out of sorts and takes the steel out of him. You are not ill enough to lie down, but you are seized with a kind of nervous restlessness, loss of appetite and a most depressing languor. You fight it out as best you can and in the struggle you generally fade away till you become a most interesting anatomical curiosity, with a yellow-brown skin that becomes your permanent colour while located here.

Another very common source of sickness was referred to as delirium tremors, (a widely excited and disorderly state of mind resulting from heavy drinking). Indeed Gilberton was rarely short of alcohol. One resident commented -

I have never seen or heard of such a number of habitual drunkards as we can boast of in our little community here - the quantum of spiritous liquor and the villainous compounds they manage to soak into their clay is fearful to contemplate.

But the excessive consumption of what was termed "calamity water" was justified by another miner when he said "we do not live fast, we like our beer or in default run for it helps us to atune to the many discomforts we suffer". Although a miner may have lost his health through consumption of alcohol, he undoubtedly found some kind of temporary relief. Though clearly some became victims of permanent relief and these alcoholics
were sometimes chained to a tree day and night until cured.

Early in this lecture I mentioned that the Gilbert gold field contained both alluvial and reef gold. I should mention here that alluvial gold or surface gold was recovered by the use of techniques known as dry blowing, or sluicing, needing little or no capital for its extraction. By the end of 1870 alluvial gold became scarce and so attention was turned to reefing. Here quartz reefs had to be dug up, crushed and the gold extracted. For reefing to be profitable crushing machinery was a necessity. By the end of 1869 the Gilbert fields were literally pleading for machinery but naturally enough owners were very reluctant about taking their machines to the remote Gilbert - why send your machine all that way when there were proven and closer fields also calling for machinery, for example, Ravenswood.

Gilbertonians soon realised their field could not progress much further without machinery so a contract was drawn up offering anyone willing to bring a machine to the Gilbert £2 per ton of stone crushed and a bonus of £10 for the first crushing of each claim. Before long news of a coming crushing machine instilled fresh life and vigour into the reefing community and stone was collected ready for the machine to crush. But unfortunately for Gilberton the promised machine was delayed and the town was again overcome with anxiety. It was not until March, 1871 that crushing began and the first machine was christened with a bottle of "Rosey wine", speeches were made and a night was made of it.

After only four months of crushing the Gilbert was again seized by feelings of despair when crushing was stopped for want of stone. The machine was not stopped through any inability of the miners to provide gold bearing stone, but as a result of their dissatisfaction with the scale of charges. The expenses pressed too hard on the reefer and the price of crushing, at least double that of any other field in Australia, would obviously have to come down if the Gilbert was to survive. One writer noted that the crushing company at Gympie could make an excellent profit at 8s per ton crushed and leave a fair dividend from poor stone for the working miner. Between 40s per ton charged at Gilberton and 8s per ton at Gympie, the large margin of 32s per ton remained. In the
colony of Victoria crushing was a good trade at 6s per ton. In acquiring crushing machinery obviously a sum had to be paid to meet the cost of transit but this should only have been a first outlay, high charges should not have been continued.

"Unless crushing mill proprietors can be induced to accept a smaller portion of quartz proceeds and allow the working miner a living profit they may shut up their machines and leave." When one considers that machine owners were netting £52/10/- per week compared to £20 per week earned at Gympie it is quite understandable that miners were raging. As a result of this rage crushing prices were reduced to 32s per ton and more machines came to Gilberton at different times during 1871 and 1872 but even so reefers were unable to meet the heavy costs forced upon them. Take for example, the price of the gold escort. Each month in most fields, or in the case of the Gilbert every now and again, the government would send an armed escort to the gold fields to transport gold back to Townsville. In Queensland 1/6d was charged per ounce of gold transported to Townsville. Yet in Victoria and N.S.W. where distances were also great the government never charged more than 6d or 8d per ounce of gold transported. Alluvial miners were also subject to extra expense when water was scarce. At such times they had to cart their wash dirt to water holes at an expense of between 8 to 15 shillings a load and so only very rich gold could be expected to pay. Clearly, it was a necessity on the Gilbert to earn more than the average gold miner, because the cost of living was at times treble that of other fields and in the case of those working at a distance from the stores, the trouble of obtaining supplies enforced a loss of a day or two or more per week.

These circumstances were most unfortunate for the Gilbert because although the field had difficulties in sustaining a high production of gold, a wide range of sources suggest that plenty of gold existed. Alluvial gold was certainly patchy and widely distributed. Payable gold could be found over an immense tract of country but the different gullies were soon worked out and so much time was wasted by shifting camp and prospecting for new ground that the majority of diggers were disillusioned with having to travel long distances over fearfully rough
R.B. BROWN

country. Alluvial gold was hardly profitable, yet the Chinese seemed to make a living from alluvial gold mining throughout Gilberton's history.

Most reports on mining by reefing were very positive. There was plenty of gold in the reefs and had a suitable arrangement been made with machine owners it is likely that the Gilbert fields may have become a long lasting reefing district. One source reported

The reefs in the neighbourhood of Gilberton have now had a trial of 3 months, the average yield obtained is greater than that of any gold field in the colonies - not excepting Ravenswood and Gympie - certainly the reefs as a rule are narrow compared with the broad veins that characterize some quartz mining districts and at the present high price of crushing, many of the claims are barely payable. But it is something to say that the most remote and least known part of North Queensland can boast of an average yield of over 3 oz. of gold to the ton while the most famous gold field in the world, Ballarat maintains its high position on an average yield of 7 pennyweights 9 grain of gold per ton (there are 20 pennyweights per oz.).

I have checked these figures and they appear to be accurate. On the Ballarat fields the highest yield of gold in any one year was 1 oz. 9 pennyweight per ton of stone crushed and the lowest 3 pennyweight 23 grains per ton. Yet Gilberton in its crushing peak was producing 3 oz. of gold per ton of stone crushed and yet this was unable to be sustained, not because the gold ran out but because hungry machine owners monopolized the profits. Machine owners could probably have reduced their profits considerably but the depressed social and physical atmosphere on the field could not sustain their interest. Determined to get richer they were frequently in search of richer fields and had no intention of reducing their profits.

Severe climatic conditions were also partially responsible for the prostrated atmosphere on the field. For most of the time there was either too much or not enough water. During January and February 1870 the Gilbert field was victim of two severe cyclones. At the end of the first, it was reported

If the rush gets much heavier we will no longer be able to supply rations to outlying areas. The roads are cut, the mailman being forced to return to Townsville. There has been nothing but rain all day and all night and everything is getting blue mouldy and has that musty appearance which is anything but pleasing to the eye or refreshing to the olfactory nerves.

92
THE DESERTION OF GILBERTON

Another writer commented-

We poor exiles are completely cut off from civilization and like our aboriginal brothers are thrown completely on our own resources for amusements to kill time. Newspapers no matter what age are eagerly hunted up, miles are travelled to borrow a coverless book; impromptu social gatherings are got up; toasts are proposed in bumpers of colonial rum. Songs of a very miscellaneous and doubtful character are vociferously sung and encored yarns are spun, the gathering generally winding up with the ditty "rolling home in the morning boys" and all this varied amusement kept up most jollily and noisely with powerful McKay rum.

This was all very well until alcohol ran out, then it became a fight for basic survival. Another resident comments,

Horseflesh has taken the place of beef in the butcheries, the flesh of used up working bullocks has been esteemed a luxury and held at 9d per lb. while the old objection to possums in that they possess a strong gum leaf flavour has not been considered a reasonable objection for some time past by the good people of Gilberton.

Even the crow and parrot population "after furnishing many a meal for hundreds of hungry men", had disappeared. The desperation of the crisis is well expressed in the following description

Last week temporary relief was afforded by the arrival of 12 head of cattle from Carpentaria Downs and the scene at the cutting up of each on being slaughtered was a caution to fat cattle! As the junk of beef was separated from the carcass, it was seized by the nearest or strongest or best tactician in the crowd and held while it was weighed to prevent its seizure by some other half starved man and when the whole dozen had thus been distributed not half the people had a mouthful.

Although these reports may have been exaggerated the general hardships incurred during the early months of 1870 must have been demoralizing to any man.

Floods in any remote area result in provision shortages, a problem which further antagonises the tender minds of desperate men. The Gilbert field experienced during the months which followed the floods a chronic flour shortage - food, tools, clothing, paper, soap, tobacco and even grog became scarce. It was noted that, "Unless there is a prompt and regular supply of provisions I am afraid many of the diggers will leave - the men seem very discontented with their lot, not being able to obtain sufficient to eat has a lot to do with it." Indeed many disillusioned miners left after the floods, leaving behind them a very jaded town.
These men were off to other fields. Disgusted with Gilberton and allured by rumours of new fields, the main body of diggers steadily worked their way further north. Places such as Western Creek, the Delaney and the Etheridge were new far off El Dorados, and of course to Gilbertonians far off fields always looked greener.

I should mention here that this exodus from Gilberton was not really significant until 1872 when the Etheridge field was officially proclaimed. Prior to the foundation of Georgetown, centre of the Etheridge gold field, there were always miners entering the Gilbert and replacing those who left. But once the Etheridge was proclaimed, the news for the Gilbert field was not good.

Gilberton struggled on into 1873, by this time it was classified as part of the Etheridge field and was under the jurisdiction of Georgetown. Still the town battled on under the leadership of Dalrymple, deputy gold field commissioner. Throughout 1873 its population continued to decrease until in July, Dalrymple announced -

It is with much regret that I have to report to you that my anticipations as expressed in my last report and shared by the population have in no way been realised. Whatever the future of this gold field it is now my painful duty to report its temporary collapse. As the mining population has fallen away my services have become unnecessary.

Dalrymple was taken away from the Gilbert. Although the weary town could not boast of thousands of miners, it was kept alive for the remainder of 1873 by about 120 alluvial optimists and townspeople. Though most of the population had gone, problems continued to increase and it was these 120 people who were to spend the rest of the Gilbert days in constant fear of the Aborigines.

Let us go back to 1845, the year when Leichhardt’s expedition reached the Gilbert River, the year when the river was named in memory of John Gilbert, a member of Leichhardt’s party who was speared in the left lung by Aborigines. The Aborigines who speared John Gilbert were from the Yanga tribe, the same tribe who roamed the land around Gilberton. Some years later in 1856, September 5th, the Gregory expedition reached the Gilbert and it is recorded in their diary, “Aborigines rush expedition with spears ready to throw - a charge of small shot frightened them away -
except for one man who climbed a tree where we left him as our object was, to procure our own safety, and that with as little injury as possible to the blacks." Eight years later in 1864 the McDonald expedition found one of their horses, "Defiance" killed and eaten by Aborigines near where the Gilbert fields were later to exist. They were also unable to pass through a particular gap in the area because armed Aborigines were organized and dangerously placed. In 1868 Daintree commented, "It is a difficult country to travel over and as the Aborigines in it yet hold their own, it is unsafe for individual prospectors."

All these accounts perhaps explain why the Aborigines in the north were considered the most "treacherous and murderous villains in the colony" - why the Brisbane Courier reported in 1869 "the Aborigines in the north appear to be a far superior race than their brethren of the South, more bold in the depredations" and perhaps why the mining frontier was so apprehensive towards Aborigines.

For Gilbert River residents, there was some reason to be afraid. As early as 1869 local Aborigines took a liking to spearing horses. No doubt they paid for their sins with a face full of lead. Friction between Aborigines and European-Chinese gained momentum and in May 1870 Commissioner Townley reported: "I believe the diggers are afraid of prospecting any considerable distance away from the main body as the blacks have proven rather troublesome and dangerous." This report was based on numerous complaints Townley received from alluvial miners who claimed their tents were robbed, and their horses speared and eaten.

In February 1871 a party contracted to collect timber were driven away by Aborigines and their tools stolen. In June that year one of Gilberton's respected businessmen, John Corbett, was murdered while travelling, and large numbers of Aborigines were reported to have appeared in great force a few miles from the township. Life went on and the struggle for gold continued but what is significant is that after John Corbett was murdered, Gilberton was thrown into a state of excitement and townspeople were caught up in a restless hysteria. Immediately the fact of the murder became known there was a general roll up of 20-30 excited and angry horsemen who organized and armed themselves before
starting for the scene of the outrage. In August, 1872, a man named Daniel
Ryan was murdered and mutilated. He was found with his knee caps cut off,
appearing a local tradition practised to prevent evil spirits following
the Aborigines back to their camp.

The Chinese were frequently attacked, whether this was because they
occupied the lonely outlying areas of the district or whether because
their flesh was regarded as a delicacy is perhaps open to question. It is
certain that Chinese were critically frightened of the Aborigines. I say
critically because largely as a result of this fear many Chinese left the
area. I would suggest that these Chinese would have left the Gilbert fields,
Aborigines or no Aborigines, but it is clear that their exodus was hastened
by a very real fear.

Gilberton was again thrown into turmoil in August, 1873 when four
respected and needed businessmen were attacked by Aborigines, two killed
and the others badly wounded. After this outrage, only half a mile from
the township, it was soon asserted that the Aborigines were aware of
Gilberton's small population and with their superiority were taking
advantage of the circumstances. The situation progressively declined,
the atmosphere is perhaps well expressed in a telegram sent on November
24:

The blacks have made a raid on Chinese camp. Two Chinamen were
killed, two wounded and three missing. Constable Dillon started
for the place on receiving intelligences, but the blacks had left.
The white residents expected that an attack would have been made
during the night and had barricaded their premises. The Southern
mailman has not yet arrived at Gilberton, he is supposed to have
been murdered by the blacks. The Chinese are clearing out in
dismay.

It then remained for Gilberton, as the Mackay Mercury reported,
"to furnish a spectacle never before witnessed on any gold field in
Australia, California or anywhere else." On the night of November 22,
1873, the Aborigines moved in on the town under the cover of green
boughs and besieged the house of Mr. Cameron one of the last white
residents. The attack was frustrated by the regional sub-inspector of
police who arrived at the crucial moment saving the lives of those
seeking protection in a residents house. The incident totally drained
THE DESERTION OF GILBERTON

the Gilbert of its population. One crushing machine was left along with other valuable property and a lot of equipment was collected and burnt before leaving. The incident sparked off a reaction at Percyville and Mt. Hogan, about 18 miles from Gilberton. When the fall of Gilberton became known the residents became determined, "to bundle off to any place where there was safety with all possible speed." By January, 1874 the Gilberton fields were totally abandoned and remained so for several years until they were again opened up for reefing purposes by large mining companies.

The obvious question which deserves consideration - where were the police, why could they not save the gold town? This question which became very controversial in 1874.

From its earliest days a constant source of complaint on the Gilbert was government apathy on the matter of police protection. It seems likely that at times the government was apathetic but it is certain that a great deal of misunderstanding existed between gold field and government on this question.

Attention was called to the insufficient number of police despatched to the Gilbert in parliament on June 4, 1869. As a result it was decided to send additional men but in actuality they did not arrive, at least not for six months and when they did arrive they proved unsuitable for the job. One miner commented with some foresight, "If human blood and hair does fly, won't there be a cry of "where's the police" and an echo will loudly answer "where oh where" and the practical reply will be - hanging about Gilberton doing nothing but eating, sleeping and getting stiff for want of something to do." From most reports it appears that in the main the police were unable to cope with the extent of their district through both inefficiency and small numbers.

In 1872 Deputy Commissioner Dalrymple when prompted by many locals, informed the government of "the urgent need for the most efficient means of police protection for the protection of the lives and properties of the mining and licensing population." Here began an interesting conflict between Dalrymple and the government. In his correspondence Dalrymple requested 8 troopers. He also pointed out that the mailman
R.B. BROWN

was in danger having to camp out en route, a danger which put an end to the prosperity of alluvial diggings because no one would travel the roads unless they had to.

In his reply, the police Commissioner stated that there were three police at Gilberton and another 15 in outlying towns. He also mentioned that the mailman need not camp out as there were plenty of public houses on his route. Dalrymple corrected the police commissioner when he pointed out that in Gilberton there were only two constables, one was detained in Georgetown 100 miles away for misconduct and the other immobilized through sickness. Dalrymple also mentioned that 85 miles of the mailman's journey were without a public house and so he had to camp out in a very dangerous locality.

The police commissioner asserted that because the population was so scattered it was impossible to police the area adequately, no matter how many police were on the field. Dalrymple promptly stressed that it was precisely because of the scattered population that greater police protection was needed, and recommended a smaller rapid patrolling force frequently showing themselves to replace a widely scattered, irregular, lazy and inefficient native force.

Dalrymple assured the government that his reports were trustworthy and staked his impressive reputation status and qualification to that purpose. Instead of fulfilling Dalrymple's request, later in 1873, the government on learning of the Gilbert's small population withdrew all police and placed the area on the periodical patrol list from Georgetown.

It was the withdrawal of police from the Gilbert and consequent lack of police protection that formed the substance of a legislative assembly enquiry in 1874 when Patrick Corbett, a Gilberton storekeeper petitioned to the government for compensation on losses incurred from the evacuation. Corbett argued that as a result of the lack of police protection Gilberton fell to the Aborigines. Under oath he said, "I will swear positively that it was through the blacks that people left, they would not have gone if the blacks had not come in." According to Corbett, at the time of crisis the wet season had set in and indeed it
seems likely that if the residents were going to leave, they would have done so before the wet season. When asked if the population would return, if police protection was provided Corbett answered in the affirmative, because he claimed there were still good lines of reefs. It appears this was also true because once the Aborigines were cleared from the district, alluvial prospectors did return and several years after evacuation, the area was again opened up for reefing. But let me point out that Gilberton itself did not ever again become an important town.

In opposition to Corbett's claim the government stressed that police were removed from the Gilbert because its population did not warrant police on location. The government also agreed that, "in a wild and unsettled country it would not be possible for 10 detachments of police to protect from the blacks, solitary travellers or persons out prospecting who do not take the ordinary precautions and who frequently keep a close secret the direction they travel."

The result of the enquiry is clear - Patrick Corbett did not get his claimed £1,402, though he was partially reimbursed for his losses. Clearly there was a cry for police protection from misunderstanding more than anything, though inefficient police and to an extent government insensitivity were partially responsible. It was perhaps this realization which forced the government to carry a portion of the responsibility for losses incurred.

During this lecture I haveendeavoured to establish why the Gilbert fields were deserted. From my research to date we can establish that at its prime Gilberton was a significant town or centre for the Gilbert gold fields. But like all gold fields Gilberton had its share of social and physical problems: the problems of isolation and the conditions it necessitated: the problems of obtaining machinery and operating it economically: the problems of coping with exorbitant prices and harsh climatic conditions. All these served to undermine morale and realizing that the Gilbert was not profitable, restless miners soon found their way to other fields. Clearly there was
sufficient gold on the field but it was widely distributed and in the extraordinarily harsh circumstances problems of extraction were too severe. With the gradual transfer of power from Gilberton to Georgetown, the Etheridge fields dominated the district, absorbing most of the Gilbert's population. By the end of 1872 the Gilbert gold fields were crippled and Gilberton almost deserted. A handful of determined optimists, mainly Chinese alluvial miners, remained on the field but owing to Aboriginal resistance and lack of police protection were forced to evacuate in December 1873. Public outcry in Brisbane resulted in a Legislative Assembly enquiry from which a Gilberton storekeeper was partially reimbursed for his losses.

It is true that the small population servicing Gilberton, about 120 at the end of 1873, were forced to evacuate because of Aboriginal resistance and lack of police protection, but the Gilbert fields were not deserted because of Aboriginal resistance and lack of police protection. Clearly the population exodus during 1872 left Gilberton and its fields crippled before the crisis reached serious proportions. The important issue is perhaps, not that the Gilbert was deserted because of Aboriginal resistance but that Aborigines did present a substantial and significant pressure on the area.

Early in this lecture I mentioned that some people have asked me who is Gilberton? If Gilberton did have a character it was both furious and hopeless. The Greek poet Tyrtaious once said - "You should reach the limits of virtue before you cross the borders of death." Gilberton, certainly did not.
Initially, to clarify a technicality, I would like to point out that the majority of recruits for the Queensland sugar industry were drawn from Melanesia - the sweeping arc of islands from New Guinea to New Caledonia. "Polynesian" refers to only one of a great variety of racial strains in this area. Hence the more accurate terms are "Melanesian", "South Sea Islander", and "Pacific Islander"; and also the popular term for Pacific Islanders in Queensland, "Kanaka". Kanaka, incidentally, was an Hawaiian word meaning man; the Kanaka labour trade translates literally as a trade in men.

**Number of Pacific Islanders in Queensland**

The numbers of Islanders fluctuated quite widely between 1863 and 1906. In 1868, there were 1543 Islanders employed in Queensland; by 1883, this had risen to 11,443, which represented the peak of the migration to the colony. Numbers declined fairly steadily in the late 1880's and early 1890's, due to the depression in the sugar industry and the closure of the labour trade after 31 December 1890. After March 1892, when the labour trade was re-opened, numbers again rose in the late 1890's and early 1900's, until recruiting finally ceased on 31 March 1904. The number of Pacific Islanders in Queensland ranged from a peak of 9,327 in 1901 to 6,389 in 1906. Between 1863 and 1904, a total of 61,160 recruits was introduced into Queensland.

**The South West Pacific Labour Trade**

The recruiting trade which operated in the South West Pacific has attracted sustained interest. Queensland was not the only labour recruiter. Between 1863 and 1914, some 100,000 Islanders from the New Hebrides, Solomon, Banks, Torres and Gilbert Islands and New Guinea and adjacent islands and archipelagos, were brought, willingly or otherwise, as indentured labourers to Queensland, Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia. With regard to recruiting for Queensland, most of the Islanders, up to the late 1880's, were drawn from the Loyalty, New Hebrides, Banks and Torres Islands; but from the 1890's to 1904, over half of Queensland
recruits came from the Solomon Islands. Recruiting in New Guinean waters was prohibited by Premier S.W. Griffith in June 1884, after the disclosure of a number of scandals in the activities of the labour trade in this area.

Popular interpretations of the labour trade, as illustrated in the works of H. Holthouse and E. Docker, depict it as a practice rife with bloodshed, violence, kidnapping and illegal methods of recruiting. Undoubtedly these epithets are applicable to the early years of recruiting. But the more thorough and scholarly research of such Pacific historians as Deryck Scarr, Dorothy Shineberg and Peter Corris, indicates that such abuses quickly disappeared from the system, due to such factors as the awareness on the part of the Islanders of the rewards and hardships involved in recruiting, the increased supervision of the Governments over the labour trade as, for instance, in the appointment of Government agents to accompany the labour vessels, and the blackbirders' recognition of the advantages of not antagonizing the people in their regular recruiting fields. Kidnapping still occasionally occurred, but Scarr sums up the manner in which recruiting was generally conducted:

As a business, however, the labour trade required the substantial consent of all concerned, which was, in a considerable measure, forthcoming from the Islanders who were involved in it.

This raises the issue of why the Islanders would have volunteered to labour on Queensland plantations. Some signed up to escape danger to their lives; others may have been attracted by the material trappings of Western society, or the lure of adventure and a different life. It has been estimated that some half of Pacific Islanders who migrated to Queensland re-engaged for a further term. Added to their original reasons for migrating, may have been such motivating factors as the desire to secure extra wealth and hence added prestige when they finally returned, or the attraction of the higher pay, better conditions and semi-skilled work available to time-expirees (as such men were known), or in some cases the disenchantment felt by sophisticated recruits when they went back to their Islands - for instance, Mrs. Ivy Thomas of Mackay has related how her mother, Mrs. Kate Marlla, went back to her home Island but returned to Queensland because "she had got used to the way of living in Queensland..."
This has been the background to the main part of my lecture, in which I will be concentrating on the Islanders in colonial Queensland, and particularly on such aspects as their life on the plantations, their reaction to European civilization, how they were treated by the institutions of colonial society, how they mixed with other races, and the European reaction to the Islanders. Finally, I will survey briefly the deportation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland in the early twentieth century.

Treatment on the Plantations

A recent investigation of plantation conditions in Queensland 1863-1883, contradicts the previous complacent assumption that there was a low incidence of harsh working conditions and brutal treatment of the Islanders. Treatment apparently varied widely throughout the colony, but generally the Pacific Islanders on the small cane farms were better off (comparatively) than those on the large sugar estates. Although G.C. Bolton, author of "A Thousand Miles Away", has dismissed the likelihood of any 'Simon Legrees' - the brutal overseer immortalised in Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" - on Queensland plantations, conditions did depend to a great extent on the character and temperament of the overseer. Apparently a degree of violence was not infrequently employed as a method of correction for lazy and insubordinate Islanders. For instance, the use of the whip was recorded in the evidence gathered by the 1876 Select Committee on Polynesian Labour, and again in a letter entitled 'Bondsmen and Stripes' in the Queenslander in 1877. There are also a number of incidents recorded in which Pacific Islanders, enraged by the harsh treatment of the overseers, tried (usually unsuccessfully) to attack these men.

Housing

There was also wide divergence throughout the colony in the provision for housing of the Kanakas. As Clive Moore has told you in an earlier lecture, accommodation ranged from clean well-built huts to rough huts with thatched roofs to grass humpies built by the Islanders and preferred by them although they were inflammable and ill-ventilated, to the wooden communal barracks which were recommended by the Inspectors of Pacific
Islanders. On the large plantations, these barracks were often used to separate Islanders from different areas, particularly the New Hebrideans and Solomon Islanders, who had a reputation for animosity towards each other.

Food

Government regulations specified a scale of minimum rations, but the supply of food varied widely. Quantity, quality and variety were frequently lacking on the large plantations, at least in the early decades, as a number of official investigations in the late 1870's and early 1880's revealed.

Hours of Work

Although long, their working hours were comparable to those worked by white agricultural labourers at this time. The Kanakas usually laboured for 10 hours a day, and up to 14 in the busy period. As well as nights, the Islanders generally had half Saturday and all Sunday off.

Mortality Rate

The tendency among nineteenth century observers of the Kanaka system, such as Archibald Forbes and John Wisker, was to draw a rosy but superficial picture of the Melanesians as healthy, well-treated and contented during their stay in Queensland. But this does not correlate with the staggering mortality figures amongst the Islanders in Queensland; one reliable estimate has placed the number of deaths of Melanesians in the colony between 1880 and 1883, as some 5 to 6 times greater than the total death rate of the European population, the latter including infant mortality and deaths from old age. Even in the 1890's, it was still between 2 and 5 times greater than the European death-rate. The disparity is further emphasized by the fact that the Island recruits were predominantly males in the prime of life, ranging in age from 16 to 30. In retrospect, then, the use of the Pacific Islanders cannot be blandly justified by assertions that their general treatment was satisfactory. The mortality figures amongst these men is a sufficient condemnation of their exploitation.

Up to the 1880's, the Islanders seldom complained about their treatment, probably because of such restrictive influences as the language barrier, intimidation, their inability to comprehend the rules governing Western
society, and their habitude to harsh and 'uncivilized' treatment. However, from the mid-1880's on, the Islanders asserted their rights more determinedly as they gained experience in European ways, and Government inspection of plantation conditions tightened up.

The Pacific Islanders' Reaction to European Civilization

1. On the Plantations

In this respect, how the Islanders occupied their leisure hours is significant. A popular recreation on the week-nights was to sit around the fire dancing or singing into the early hours of the morning, to the musical accompaniment of mouth-organs, jews' harps and concertinas. Many of the Islanders also attended reading and Bible classes at night.

Apart from song-and-dance sessions, the Kanakas spent their leisure hours sleeping, gambling, fishing or hunting in the bush, and visiting friends on nearby plantations.

Another diversion was inter-tribal fighting; a continuation of the inter-tribal feuds which were so common in the islands, and which seem to have been a frequent occurrence on Queensland plantations. The general opinion was that these skirmishes were most often caused by disputes over women; for instance in November 1884, the police patrolled two plantations near Maryborough to prevent quarrelling between Solomon and Aoba men, which had broken out some weeks previously from a dispute over a 'Mary', as they called their women-folk. Fights were most common on Sundays or holidays, the Islanders arming themselves with spears, bows and iron-tipped arrows, and tomahawks. The New Hebridean Tanese and Solomon Malaitas were reputedly the most aggressive and war-like. Pacific Island descendants in Mackay today have recalled how the other Islanders kept out of the way of the fierce Malaita natives. In most of the larger clashes, Solomon Islanders and New Hebrideans could be found on opposite sides, as for example, in a fight in Mackay in May 1883, which was, incidentally, broken up by whites from a nearby plantation using riding whips very liberally on the Islanders.

These clashes were not as fierce as they may sound. Most observers agreed that the casualty rate of the Islanders was not high, and that most time was taken up in verbal attack. This is a brief description of a
PATRICIA MERCER

typical inter-tribal fight:

Thus armed the antagonistic bands parade, each side keeping its spirits up by loud abuse of the other. At last a meeting comes off, generally on a holiday. The first performance consists of representatives of the rival forces, like heralds of old, hurling defiances, from a safe distance, with truly Homeric fluency. Then a spear is thrown, the distance between the warriors gradually lessens, and the mêlée becomes general.

As a rule by the time the battle comes to an end by mutual consent, or the intervention of the authorities, very little damage is done. A few cuts, and an individual or two with a perceptible limp, are all the traces apparent the next day.

2. In the Towns

Usually the high spot of the week-end was the visit to town. Every Islander had a trade-box (a type of trunk), in which he stored his most valuable possessions, for instance his best clothes, weapons, musical instruments and ornaments. This was usually kept in the barracks, because of the fire risk of the grass huts. On Saturdays the Pacific Islander and his 'Mary', if he had one, would don their best clothes and walk to town. Long distances provided no obstacle; one Island woman recalls walking 22 miles to attend a Church meeting. Many observers have described the crowds of Islanders who thronged the sugar towns on Saturday nights. They visited the 'Kanaka' shops, which displayed the Islanders' favourite goods, or the 'China towns', areas of Chinese boarding houses and gambling parlours kept by Chinese, Japanese and time-expired Islanders. Today these 'China towns' no longer exist, although they were thriving centres in the 19th century, as for instance, the 'China towns' around Victoria Street in Mackay, and the lower end of Bourbon Street in Bundaberg. The Islanders, especially the time-expirees, also sampled the wares of the Chinese brothels. Another popular entertainment for the Kanakas was the week-end race meetings.

The Islanders' indulgence in gambling, drinking and prostitution, was viewed with disapproval by the townspeople. Some Europeans, however, were prepared to defend the Pacific Islanders against such charges; Henry Caulfield, well-known Inspector of Islanders at Bundaberg, contended that the Kanakas were well behaved and respectful in the towns. The time-expirees, who were popularly termed 'walk-about Kanakas', took the most advantage of the 'pleasures' of the towns; the Herald in a series of
articles on White Australia in the early 1900's, declared that "We can thank the swaggering free Kanaka for most of our Chinese gambling hells, Japanese dens and many other infamies in this 'Christian' land."

Disturbances caused by Kanakas were usually attributed to the consumption of alcohol. Whether the local police tried hard to stop this illicit trade, especially when whites were the suppliers, is difficult to judge; certainly the Mackay Mercury in the mid 1870's did not think so, when it called upon the police to concern themselves with the publicans supplying the drink to the Islanders to the same extent as they were concerned about "arresting these unfortunate victims to the effects of 'chain lightning' in the shape of colonial rum, who naturally conclude that they have as good a right to get drunk as a white man." Alcohol was also the attributed cause of inter-tribal fighting in the towns.

Before I assess the impact of European civilization on the Pacific Islanders, I will consider the effects of two institutions closely involved with the Pacific Island community: the Churches and the Law Courts.

1. Religion

The activities of the missionaries of various denominations constituted the most persistent attempts to impose a foreign culture on the Melanesians. In the early decades of the Kanaka system, however, the Queensland Churches were too involved in establishing themselves in the colony. They attempted, in vain, to transfer the burden of converting the Melanesians to the mission societies already working in the islands - the London Missionary Society and the Melanesian Mission. Official Church action to convert Kanakas in Queensland did not get off the ground till the late 1880's. Until then, a few active individuals had assumed the responsibility for the religious instruction of these people. Florence Young was the most successful of the undenominational evangelists. She began her work in 1882 on her brothers' Fairymead Estate at Bundaberg, and in 1886 founded the Queensland Kanaka Mission, which gradually extended its operations to other sugar districts and had, by the time it ceased in 1906, baptized some 2,484 Islanders.

The QKM seems to have had the most successful impact on the Melanes-
ians: its evangelical emphasis, expressed in enjoining the Islanders to 'open their hearts to Jesus', outdoor hymn singing sessions and mass baptisms in the rivers, probably gave the recruits some sense of security in their new environment.

In 1882, Mrs. Mary Goodwin Robinson, wife of the manager of Tekowai Sugar Mill at Mackay, opened Bible reading classes for a few Melanesians. This expanded into the Church of England Selwyn Mission, named after J.R. Selwyn, Bishop of Melanesia - and the son of G.A. Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand and founder of the Melanesian Mission - who had arranged financial support for Mrs. Robinson from the Melanesian Mission. Mackay planters also provided financial support for the mission.

In the late 1880's and early 1890's, the proselytizing efforts of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches gained momentum. Important Anglican Missions were established at the centres of Ingham, Mackay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Maryborough; Presbyterian Missions at Ayr and Mackay.

Assessment of the Influence of Religion

Clearly the Pacific Islanders were attracted to the Churches and particularly to the Church 'schools', wherever they were established. One important motivating factor was the strong desire on their part to learn to read and write, as evidenced in their purchase of Bibles and hymn books. Religion may have served to fill a spiritual void in the lives of the Islanders in the colony.

The Queensland Churches to a certain extent attempted to cater to the special needs of these congregations; singing was made an important part of Church services, in deference to the Islanders' love of music; and missionaries used the linguistic medium of Pidgin to instruct the Islanders, even to the extent of employing a Pidgin version of the Ten Commandments. For example, the Fourth Commandment 'Man keep Sunday good fellow day belong big fellow master'.

The missionaries claimed that in the colony their work helped to encourage temperance and avert tribal clashes and conflict between Islanders and Europeans. But what lasting influence did the Churches have on the Melanesians, who had been predominantly pagan before they recruited for Queensland? The Reverend A.C. Smith calculated in 1892
that about 75% of recruits had been exposed to Christianizing influences in Queensland. But Bishop Wilson of Melanesia contended that the majority of Melanesians, on their return to their islands, "throw off their Christianity with the civilised habit of clothing". David Hilliard, who has studied this question, points out that despite the high number of converts in Queensland, the retention of Christian beliefs was largely dependent on the influence of the missionaries in their home islands; for instance, in the Solomons, and especially Malaita, traditional influence was much stronger than that of the Melanesian Mission. In such situations, the majority of converts returned to their former religious practices and abandoned Christianity.

This raises the question of whether the traditional religious and magical practices of the Melanesians were abandoned by them during their stay in the colony, as Peter Corris has postulated. Oral history recently collected from the Pacific Island community of a North Queensland town by Clive Moore and myself, suggests strongly that the incidence of superstitious beliefs and supernatural practices may have been much more widespread than Corris has assumed. But as research is still in a formative stage, we cannot make any definite conclusions concerning the survival of such traditional religious and magical beliefs.

2. Law

This section concerns the question of how the system of British justice, which in theory recognized no differences in creeds, races or nationalities, operated in cases involving Pacific Islanders. The broader question of the problems faced by any non-whites who were brought before the Courts presents itself, but I will refer to the Melanesians specifically.

One major difficulty in the law courts arose from the fact that evidence could not be taken from those who were not Christians and therefore could not be sworn in. Queensland was one of the last Australian colonies to allow unsworn evidence in law courts, a concession granted in South Australia in 1843, and Victoria in 1854. Despite the recommendation of the Select Committee on the Operation of the Polynesian Labourers Act of 1868, that Pacific Islanders should be deemed competent witnesses in courts of justice, it was not until 1876 that the Oaths Amendment Act
finally legislated in this regard, by enabling those ignorant of the nature of an oath, or objected to as incompetent to take an oath, to make instead a declaration so that they could still give evidence. In practice this was found unworkable, as a declaration was not significantly easier to understand than an oath, and the evidence of Pacific Island witnesses was still not considered legally admissible: the trial of the crew members of the 'Alfred Vittery' in 1884 exemplifies this. The captain and crew of this ship were charged with the murder of Pacific Islanders they had recruited; a murder charge at least was proved against the accused, but because this was on the evidence of Pacific Island witnesses which could not be admitted, the accused men were acquitted. The passing of the Oaths Act Amendment Act of 1884 was probably catalyzed by this recent trial - the evidence of witnesses who appeared incapable of comprehending an oath, was now legally admissible.

However, the European attitude to the evidence of Pacific Islanders was expressed clearly in the debates on the 1884 Act: the prevalent feeling was that the evidence of such men could only be ranked with the statements of children and that it was up to the jury to decide what weight to place on such evidence; indeed, a number of speakers were indignant that the word of an alien should be placed on the same level as that of a white.

Pacific Islanders and Aborigines were provided with free legal defence. However, when Islanders came before the courts, the problem arose of securing a competent interpreter to help them understand the processes of the Law. Furthermore, an interpreter from an island hostile to that of the accused's, might deliberately misinterpret the evidence of the latter or of witnesses, in order to secure a conviction. On some occasions, Melanesians charged with offences against other Islanders, were discharged and sent home to their islands, when no reliable interpreter could be obtained.

There was a tendency on the part of white juries to exhibit partiality towards whites accused of offences against Islanders, and conversely, to show severity towards Melanesians charged with offences against whites. In one case in 1892, a judge accused a jury of being prejudiced: an
Islander, Tui Tonga, a well-educated man who spoke several European languages and had been for many years the dispenser at the Mackay Kanaka Hospital, was found guilty of murdering his wife. In recommending mercy, the judge said that there was ample medical evidence of temporary insanity which would have satisfied the jury in the case of a white man. Mackay residents apparently agreed with the judge; they sent a petition with over 200 signatures, to the Executive Council for the reprieve of the death sentence on Tonga. The request was granted.

In the infamous 'Hopeful' case, however, a white jury decided against Europeans. In December 1884, a jury of the Queensland Supreme Court found the 'Hopeful's' mate, Neil McNeil, and boatswain, Bernard Williams, guilty of the murder of a Pacific Islander. Both men were sentenced to death while other members of the crew received varying terms of imprisonment for the offence of kidnapping.

Reaction to the death sentences indicated the strength of public opinion when a white man's life was demanded as retribution for that of a non-white. It was a more intense version of the furore aroused by the execution of 7 whites for the Myall Creek Massacre in 1838. The prevalent attitude was that the Government, through these executions, was attempting to purge the 'national conscience' with regard to the labour trade. The guilt of the convicted men was not denied, but a reprieve of the extreme penalty was urged on the basis that they should not be made the scapegoats for crimes to which, until recently, the authorities had turned a blind eye.

Efforts to save the convicted men included monster meetings, letters to the press, demonstrations throughout the colony, deputations to Premier Griffith, and a flood of petitions to the Governor begging mercy for the prisoners. The death sentences were finally remitted by the Governor-in-Council to life imprisonment. Only four years later, the public petitioned for the complete pardoning of the 'Hopeful' prisoners, and they were finally released in February 1890. The importance of the final outcome of this case was the fact that the decision of the Courts had been effectively overruled by public opinion.

The 'Hopeful' case also showed that the Executive Council was not
above prejudice in favour of Europeans. By far the larger number of death sentences on Pacific Islanders which were commuted by the Council were given in cases where they had killed Kanakas or other aliens. The death penalty was usually allowed to stand when a European was the victim. This 'double standard' was likewise reflected in the charges laid against Melanesians; usually a charge of manslaughter was brought if a Kanaka killed another Kanaka, but this would be murder if it was a European who was killed.

In summation, it is clear that conditions in the law courts strongly favoured whites over non-whites. The foregoing, however, creates an inaccurate impression of the criminal tendencies of the Pacific Island population. The majority were peaceful and law-abiding. Rarely did Islanders commit offences against property; most convictions of Islanders resulted from disputes among themselves, or acts of violence against other races. Kanakas who committed violent crimes were often drunk, or not infrequently, insane. Some lawlessness can also be attributed to the different societies from which these men came and the consequent difficulty in adjusting to the laws of Queensland. Judges occasionally tried to make allowances for these factors by recommending mercy, particularly in cases of conviction for serious offences.

Europeans exhibited an irrational fear of the danger to the white womanhood of the colony, posed by so many unattached male Pacific Islanders. An attack on a white woman, one Mrs. McBride, at Maryborough in 1876, provides a good case study of the hysterical reaction of the white community on such occasions. Public feeling in Maryborough was strongly aroused, and the trial of the two Islanders, Tommy and George, for the attack on Mrs. McBride, was conducted under these very unfavourable circumstances. Added to this, the evidence of the chief witness for the prosecution was suspect, and the two Islanders showed confusion and bewilderment throughout their trial. The accused were found guilty and sentenced to death. W.G. Bailey, the member for Wide Bay, obviously felt that a miscarriage of justice had occurred; and he raised the matter in Parliament where, despite some humanitarian opposition, the prevalent feeling was that justice had been done. The execution was carried out on 18 May 1877 in
Maryborough. The McBride case was the centre of attention in the colony. Typical of public reaction was the conclusion of the Telegraph that, "if men of loathsome colour and habits are going to maltreat and criminally assault the wives and daughters of our isolated settlers some stricter surveillance will be required". The Maryborough correspondent of the Queenslander drew a wider lesson: "we may in years to come look back upon that barbarous deed as the beginning of a struggle between white and black races in the colony".

Such comments were representative of the European reaction to sexual crimes against white women committed by Melanesians. In actual fact, the incidence of such offences by Kanakas was quite low. But Islanders convicted of sexual crimes, were generally sentenced to death or punished according to the severity of the offence.

The Queensland Experience

What was the overall effect of the Pacific Islanders' Queensland experience with regard to cultural assimilation? Corris has isolated a number of important factors which shaped the degree of acculturation of Melanesians in Queensland; these include age, personality, occupation and employers, the district in which they worked, and most of all the duration and time-period of their stay. From this research in the Solomon Islands, he found that the Islanders were generally satisfied with their treatment and rewards in Queensland, although we must remember that the Solomon Islanders were mainly recruited for Queensland from the late 1880's onward, when earlier abuses had been removed from the labour trade and conditions on Queensland plantations had improved. But in coming to the Queensland plantations, either voluntarily or under pressure, these people exposed themselves to a traumatic cultural shock. Emotional disturbances caused by leaving their homes were increased by the hardships of the long voyage.

Detached from their cultural backgrounds, these men and women would be plunged into a different civilization for three years. By the end of that time, most of them would have acquired at least some of the outward manifestations of Western culture; for instance, habits of gambling, smoking and drinking, and the European mode of dress (the Kanakas were
renowned for their vanity in adorning their person with such nick-nacks as ornaments, hats and bright-coloured handkerchiefs). They would also have acquired such possessions as guns, axes, knives, pipes and jewellery, to ensure their prestige and welcome on their return to the islands. Particular experiences such as conversion to Christianity, may have influenced some of the Islanders more deeply.

Relations with Other Coloured Races

What was the tone of relations between Pacific Islanders and other races? We do not have a lot of information on relations between the Kanakas and the two other major minorities, the Aborigines and Chinese, and what we do have is drawn from European sources, and thus must be considered with caution. It is possible however, to make some suggestions about inter-racial relationships.

1. Aborigines

There was a degree of social contact between the Islanders and the Aborigines. Because of the relative absence of Island women, a considerable number of Melanesians married or lived with Aboriginal women. This contact was also marked with hostility; the Pacific Islanders tended to look down on the Aborigines. Indeed, Charles Eden has described how, on a plantation north of Cardwell, in the 1870's, his Kanaka labourers for months hunted and killed Aborigines on their Sundays off, until he discovered this.

Nor was this hostility all one sided. Kanaka shepherds in the 1860's and 1870's ran the same risk of Aboriginal aggression as did whites; and a number of Kanaka shepherds were killed by Aborigines. For instance, in 1870, the Cleveland Bay Express reported the murder of an Islander named Luck-Eye, employed on Waterview (a station near Townsville). Aborigines had murdered him, and returned later to eat his body. The Express had this to say:

This horrible act of cannibalism occurred within forty miles of Townsville and quite confirms the opinion we have frequently heard expressed that the Kennedy blacks are cannibals.

One wonders if the same detached type of observation would have been made if a European, and not a Melanesian, had been the victim.

2. Chinese

114
There was similar racial tension between the Islanders and the Chinese. The Islanders particularly disliked working on plantations where Chinese were employed. The Cairns Argus in 1893 reported the case of Jemmy, a Kanaka from Geraldton, who was sentenced to two years' hard labour for throwing a tomahawk at the Chinese cook on his plantation, who had called him a black something or other, and thrown a knife at him. However, the Kanakas were quite willing to avail themselves of the services provided by the Chinese in the towns: most stayed in Chinese boarding houses when they visited the towns. Pacific Islanders often preferred to save their money with Chinese, who gave better interest rates than did the Government Savings Banks. But there was sometimes friction with the Chinese in the towns: for instance, in November 1884, there was a severe riot between 60 Kanakas and a number of Chinese in 'Chinatown' on the South Johnstone, in which the former wrecked 3 Chinese stores and appropriated goods and cash.

Race Relations with the Europeans

In assessing relations between the Melanesians and Europeans, the latter's attitudes to the Islanders were crucial. This involves racial theories concerning coloured races, which were popular in the late nineteenth century - the era of Social Darwinianism and the theories of evolution and natural selection. The Melanesian was widely classed by contemporaries, such as Anthony Trollope, Charles Eden, James Hope, as above the Aborigine in intelligence and status. Nevertheless, in the 'ladder of races', the technologically backward and primitive cultures of Africa and the Pacific, were ranked on the bottom of the scale, with the complex but stagnant cultures of the Middle East and Asia above them, and the technological Western civilization at the top. This quote illustrates the popular interpretation of the Kanaka as an ignorant savage:

The latest contribution to ball-room music - the Kanaka Polka - comes to us from Bundaberg, and is dedicated to Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who represents that constituency in Parliament. The piece is appropriately named, and the composer - Mr. Franz Becker, R.A.M. - has been very successful in his treatment of some of the grotesque dances connected with several of their mystic rites. The short sharp "Yah! yah!" for instance, and the "Whir-r-r-r-r-r" produced by a
peculiar roll of the tongue, are happily expressed by a number of single and double appoggiatura marks, which add to the effect while not injuring the time for dance purposes. The melody throughout, though suggestive of barbaric origin, is pleasing, and the harmony is well sustained. The printing is excellent, and a boldly-designed frontispiece represents a group of howling grass-petticoated savages executing a war-dance around a camp fire.

The advance of the higher Western civilizations was also taken to mean the inevitable destruction of backward races such as the Aborigines and the peoples of the Pacific. This was the law of the 'survival of the fittest', to which many contemporaries referred in connection with the Islanders: for instance, John Wisker spoke of "the disappearance of the wild man before the march of civilisation" as an assured fact. In the late nineteenth century, this assumption of white superiority was reinforced by the belief that the homogeneity of the Caucasian race was a precious gift to be preserved.

As the White Australia movement gathered momentum, a number of racial objections to the Pacific Islanders became more prominent. Fears about miscegenation were closely related to the White Australia Policy. The proportion of Island women who recruited to Queensland was always very small, usually less than 10% of the total recruited. The unbalanced sex ratio of the Pacific Island population was a continual source of concern for Europeans. The radical Labor papers of these years were preoccupied with the 'Piebald issue', that is the half-caste children from the unions of Kanakas and white women. A quote from the Bulletin in 1901 reads:

Further, if Australia is to be a country fit for our children and their children to live in, we must KEEP THE BREED PURE. Do we want Australia to be a community of mongrels? There are now some 100 Queensland Kanakas married to white women; do we want an increase of such marriages or similar marriages? No; if such union is degrading. Brutal whites fall low as brutal Asiatics; but Asiatics have not white possibilities. Whatever our failings, we are the heirs of European civilisation; and we cannot merge our nationality in a barbarism, or in an alien civilisation to which European ideals are incomprehensible.

In actual fact, the Melanesians did not intermarry to any great extent with white women; less than 2% of the half-caste population in Queensland in 1901 were of Melanesian extraction, as compared to some 30% of Chinese
extraction. Nevertheless, the Labor papers were obsessed with this issue, even drawing comparisons to the Negro situation in the Southern States of America; the Herald declared:

The matter of special importance to us is his[the Kanaka's] relations with our women. It is that very concern which has time and again converted decent American citizens into bands of lynchers capable of taking the most fiendish revenge upon the negro who had dared to life his eyes to a white woman.

Like the Chinese, the Pacific Islanders were branded as immoral, since some frequented opium dens and Chinese brothels. Horror was expressed at the prospect of white women prostituting themselves for Kanakas. The Herald, in its White Australia articles, calculated that there were 23 prostitutes (9 Japanese, the rest European) for Kanakas alone at Bundaberg; and Japanese prostitutes and some "low white women" at Cairns. The Melanesians were also accused of introducing such dread diseases as leprosy and smallpox to Australia.

Race Riots

Racial objections to the Islanders were expressed more frequently and virulently in the 1890's, as the Kanaka question was caught up in the struggle for a White Australia and the emergence of the Labor movement. Clashes between Pacific Islanders and whites, and also inter-tribal fighting, do seem to have increased in frequency in this period as a result of the aggravated situation.

The most well-known clash between Kanakas and Europeans was the Racecourse Riot at the Mackay races on December 26 1883. A publican, with a reputation for illicitly supplying Islanders with liquor, refused to serve a time-expiree. In the ensuing free-for-all, the Islanders slugged glass bottles at the whites, until a number of Europeans mounted their horses and charged the Kanakas with stirrup-irons, driving the Islanders off the racecourse into the cane fields.

Borslem, the leader of the Islanders, was put into gaol: in most racial riots, it was the Kanakas who were arrested and who were regarded as the instigators of the disturbance. Only one white was charged with assault. Although no count was taken, at least one Islander died, 5 were seriously injured, and some 30 - 40 were wounded.
After this fight, a rumour that the Kanakas were going to storm Mackay, led to the townspeople arming themselves heavily. Tension in the town did not abate till mid-January 1884. Both Mackay and Maryborough had experienced similar tense racial situations in 1876-1877. Then the McBride case and other disturbances involving Melanesians, fostered strong white antipathy towards these labourers, which culminated in the disarmament of the Pacific Islanders in the Maryborough district in May 1877. All their dangerous weapons were locked away, to be returned to them when they left Queensland. In late May 1877, Mackay planters likewise disarmed the Pacific Islanders in the district, a policy which they continued for some years.

These incidents indicate that, at times when feeling was inflamed against the Islanders, whites were prepared to adopt such extreme measures as disarmament or segregation of the Kanakas. For instance, in Mackay in May 1877, it was also suggested that the municipal council pass a by-law forbidding all Islanders to enter the municipality unless provided with a written pass from their employers. For a few months in 1877, the Melanesians were kept out of the town of Bundaberg because of drunken rows. And in the Herbert River district in the early 20th century, there were separate railway carriages for Europeans and aliens, including Islanders!

Normal Race Relations

Yet such harsh racial attitudes were not typical of daily interaction between the two races. Racial prejudice could be evoked during short-lived periods of tension between Europeans and Melanesians; but at most times, any racial hostility was generally directed at the minority of Kanakas who made a 'public nuisance' of themselves in the towns, the larger proportion of the Islanders were a law-abiding and peaceable people. Many had secured steady jobs, married and raised families, attended Church regularly, and adopted European customs. By the early 20th century, many were farming land leased to them by the planters, while others had engaged in commercial ventures in the towns, such as shops and boarding houses. Their acculturation seems to have been the important factor in establishing amicable relations with the Europeans: The Pacific Islanders proved more amenable than the Aborigines or the Chinese to 'civilizing' influences,
and especially the efforts of the Churches.

**Deportation**

In view of this 'Europeanisation' of many of the Melanesians, it is not surprising that they were reluctant to leave Australia. In 1901 the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 heralded the eventual deportation of all but some 691 of the 9,324 Islanders in Queensland in that year (these figures have been estimated by Corris). The measure of their acceptance in the community was revealed by the number of letters received by the Queensland and Federal Governments, from sympathetic Europeans who favoured a relaxation of the strict requirements for exemption from deportation. Humanitarian protests at the injustice of the Act, were also forthcoming from such quarters as the Churches involved with the Kanakas, the Church of England and Presbyterian bodies.

The Pacific Islanders themselves were actively involved in agitating against the Act; they campaigned through the Pacific Islanders Association (formed in 1904), petitioned the Federal Government (one petition in 1902 had 3,000 signatures from Kanakas), and told their story to the Queensland Royal Commission of 1906, which was investigating the proposed deportation.

In face of such determined opposition the Federal Government in 1906 amended its original legislation and relaxed the exemption requirements so that approximately an extra 1,000 Islanders (Corris' figures again), were allowed to stay on in Australia. By 1907, 4,269 Melanesians had been repatriated, and the Kanaka system had come to an end.
A. Newspapers:
  The Bulletin (Sydney)
  The Cairns Argus
  The Cleveland Bay Express
  Figaro
  The Mackay Mercury
  The Queenslander
  The Sydney Morning Herald
  The Telegraph

B. Printed Works

C. Theses
During the nineteenth century, the Chinese, who for several thousand years had been one of the most geographically immobile populations in the world, suddenly began migrating to distant countries. This trend can be attributed partly to the parlous condition into which China had fallen owing to the decline of the ruling dynasty. When a dynasty in China deteriorated, as tended to happen every few hundred years, it was said to have lost the "mandate of Heaven", a type of divine right to govern, and thus an opportune moment had arrived for a rival to seize the throne. Indications that this mandate had been forfeited included official corruption, manifested in extortionate rents and taxes, banditry, the appearance of contenders for the throne and general misgovernment which was felt keenly at the local level. Earning a living or growing sufficient food for one's needs became a precarious undertaking and people began to look further afield for a stable means of livelihood.

Despite the poor quality of life in China at the time, however, those who migrated usually did so not for their own well-being but in order to increase the prosperity of their immediate family and clan. Consequently, money earned overseas was often remitted home to support relatives and the expatriate was expected to return also when his duties overseas were fulfilled. Not all immigrants to Australia were poverty-stricken. Some representatives of wealthy Hong Kong firms also migrated but these were more in the minority.

It should be noted that practically all Chinese emigrants came from a relatively small area of South China. The great majority of those who migrated to Australia originated from the region surrounding Canton and the Pearl River delta. This was partly due to the fact that South China was feeling the political and economic situation more acutely than other areas and over-population was reducing resources still further. However a more important factor was the establishment by westerners of trading links with China, in particular Canton. Thus, contact was made with the outside world and the Chinese became aware - as they had not been to any
great extent - that other countries existed and possibly held greater promise of economic prosperity. It stands to reason that they were attracted to countries where wealth could be amassed quickly, in particular to those containing goldfields. Therefore the discovery of gold in California and parts of Australia was an important impetus to migration.

In fact, it seems that reports which reached China were often exaggerated. One well known Chinese merchant from Innisfail, Taam Tze Pui (Tom See Poy) reminisces thus about his arrival on the Palmer goldfield:

There was a rumour that gold had been discovered in a place called Cooktown, the source of which was inexhaustible and free to all. Oh, what disappointment when we learnt that the rumour was unfounded. Not only was the gold difficult to find, but the climate was unsuitable and was the cause of frequent attacks of illness.

Probably the exaggeration of overseas opportunities was the fault partly of merchants who prompted poorer Chinese to enter "invisible agreements" whereby the fare to Australia (or elsewhere) was paid but the migrant was obliged to repay his debt in labour on arrival. These indebted immigrants often worked in gangs on the goldfield under the control of an agent of the merchant in question. This was a glorified system of slavery. Other migrants were financed by relatives or paid their own way and thus retained their independence.

Before the discovery of the Northern Goldfields there had been a trickle of Chinese immigrants to Queensland as cooks, shepherds and farm labourers, particularly after transportation ceased and a labour shortage was experienced. However the main influx of Chinese began with the discovery of Gilberton in 1869 and increased dramatically when the Palmer was opened in 1873. By 1877 there were about 16,000 Chinese on the Palmer, many of them in a state of complete destitution due to the shortage of supplies, intense competition for gold and the difficulty of obtaining it. From then on, the Chinese began something of an exodus from the Palmer. Many returned home, some went to Southern cities where large concentrations of Chinese already existed, and others settled at the first point of disembarkation which was the newly-founded settlement of Cairns.
The first small group of Chinese arrived shortly after the pioneers in late 1876 but were not given a courteous reception. One Chinese, whom Inspector Douglas sought to land in defiance of public hostility, was thrown back into the water and a fracas developed. This unpleasantness probably resulted from the fact that most Cairns settlers during this early period came from Cooktown, a centre of anti-Chinese feeling. The situation soon improved, however, and Chinese gardeners began to arrive unopposed. The pattern of Chinese settlement thus established in Cairns was typical of the whole area. Initially market gardeners began cultivation to serve the European community. This they apparently did successfully, as Cairns was soon totally dependent on Chinese-grown vegetables. Port Douglas, about forty miles north, was established shortly afterwards and until a Chinese began growing vegetables there, it was necessary to import such necessities from Cairns.

Gardeners were followed by storekeepers who supplied the requirements of both Chinese and Europeans. This was apparently a common pattern in many isolated parts of Australia. The exceptional feature of Cairns and district was the large scale participation of the Chinese in the growing of cash crops. The first venture in this respect was the "Hap Wah" Plantation, a co-operative effort comprising a hundred Chinese shareholders, with Andrew Leon as manager. Over six hundred acres were selected just south of Cairns and planted with sugar and cotton as cash crops. Thus Chinese became pioneers of the sugar industry in Cairns. To feed the many Chinese employees, pigs, poultry, peanuts and rice were included as subsistence products. Unfortunately the venture was a failure. The cotton did not mature properly and the sugar could not be processed to the best advantage with the primitive and inefficient machinery available. Labour costs were also a bugbear. In 1886 the land, crops and machinery were sold for £15,000, a loss of £20,000.

This large scale plantation form of agriculture by the Chinese was the first and last of its kind in the Cairns area and I have not encountered a similar case anywhere in Australia.
CATHIE MAY

The usual custom was for several Chinese to lease a small allotment, between about five and fifty acres, from a European farmer at a cost of £1 per acre per year. The Chinese tenant would clear the land and cultivate it for approximately five years, after which it reverted to the owner. There were advantages to both parties in this arrangement. The Chinese benefitted as, being aliens, they were not permitted to buy land and this way they could obtain the use of it relatively cheaply. To the European accrued the advantage of having his land rendered fit for cultivation. Moreover the improvements affected by the Chinese tenant fulfilled the requirements of the Homestead Act.

This system of land tenure was the norm in Cairns, Atherton, Innisfail, Port Douglas and Mossman, all of which came into prominence between 1876 and 1900.

On the coastal lowlands, particularly in Cairns and Innisfail, the main cash crop grown by the Chinese was bananas. The export of bananas from Cairns was first reported in 1886 and before long they had become the economic mainstay of the port. In September 1886, a correspondent to the Cairns Post stated: "I have heard it said that were it not for the banana trade, Cairns would be insolvent."

Chinese growers usually exported through the larger Chinese firms in Cairns to Chinese agents in the Southern Capitals. Therefore the industry was a virtual Chinese monopoly. Circumstances, however, were against the permanent establishment of the banana industry as there were numerous difficulties to overcome.

Transport facilities were less than perfect in several respects. The Coastal steamers apparently sailed south at a sedate pace making frequent stops and with no means of preserving bananas in transit, many cargoes were virtually worthless on arrival in Sydney and Melbourne. There were also hints that the bananas were not treated with the care they required. Lumpers were even reputed to walk over the piles of bunches while loading.

Fruitfly was always a problem, particularly after the Victorian Government introduced regulations for a stringent examination of Queensland-grown bananas in 1907. As a result, quantities of bananas which withstood the hazards of the journey were officially disposed of on arrival in
Loading Chinese-grown bananas at Geraldton (now Innisfail)
Melbourne with no compensation to either grower or exporter. An inspection fee of 1½d per bunch was then levied, for bananas to be examined in Cairns before shipment. However this also proved a hardship.

Competition from Fiji-grown bananas was another handicap to the Queensland product. Fiji growers enjoyed the advantages of cheaper labour and more efficient transport. The journey from Suva to Sydney took less time than that from Cairns and the ships were better equipped to carry bananas. This competition was so fierce that Queensland growers rejoiced when Fiji was devastated by a cyclone and vice versa.

Cyclones indeed posed an intermittent problem particularly in 1906, 1911 and 1918 when destruction was such that many growers abandoned their holdings.

Even by the 1890's, however, Europeans were resuming land for sugar and evicting Chinese tenants who had no security of tenure. The growth of the sugar industry caused concern about Chinese-grown bananas to diminish sharply as people were more inclined to encourage European cultivation. Bananas grown by Chinese had always been regarded as a temporary expedient.

A final legislative blow came in 1921 with the passing of the Banana Industry Preservation Act, which sought to shield those Europeans who had taken up banana cultivation, from Asian competition. Chinese and other "coloured races" were prohibited from engaging in banana growing but those already involved in the industry were allowed to remain by applying for an exemption certificate. The fact that over 300 growers in the Cairns and Innisfail area did so, indicates that the industry was not defunct, but it had been in a state of decline for some years and when these last Chinese growers left, it died a natural death.

Some Chinese during the late 1890's changed from banana to sugar growing. By 1906 there were about eleven Chinese cane farmers in the Hambledon area, several of them controlling two hundred or more acres each. Willie Ming, Ah Tong, Wong Fong and See Chin seem to have been the most prominent of these. Some Chinese business firms in Cairns also undertook sugar planting as part of their characteristically diverse business activities. By 1913, however, all but two of these growers had
left the industry largely, I conjecture, because of the economic disabilities which the "White Labour Bounty" inflicted upon employers of coloured labour.

On the Atherton Tableland, the main Chinese activity was maize-growing. To a slightly lesser extent than the banana industry, this was also a Chinese preserve. In fact, many former banana growers migrated to Atherton in the face of the numerous difficulties confronting the banana industry and maize production reached its peak in about 1913. This crop was not plagued by transport difficulties or cyclones but no encouragement to permanency was given by the Europeans in the area, who fiercely resented the Chinese control of agriculture and did everything possible to promote dairying as an alternative. As one correspondent to the Barron Valley Advocate poetically commented: "The Cow will oust the Chow". In 1917, the area was declared a soldier settlement and many Chinese farmers forced to leave. From then on, the Chinese population of Atherton declined rapidly.

The Chinese in the Cairns district also undertook a wide range of non-agricultural pursuits. They were particularly well represented in store-keeping. Numerous small Chinese general stores were dotted round the farming areas and in Cairns proper, more ambitious businesses developed. The most important of these were Hop Hing, Sam Sing and Sun Wo Tiy in Cairns while See Hoe in Port Douglas, Lee Sye in Atherton and See Poy in Innisfail also became important and reputable merchants. These firms and individuals carried on a wide range of business activities. In addition to selling merchandise across the counter, they traded with China, handled the export of bananas and maize to the South and sometimes entered into agriculture on their own account. Naturalised Chinese were also able to speculate extensively in real estate.

Practically all the hotels in Cairns had Chinese cooks, as Europeans were hard to obtain and often of dubious character. The fish and egg supply and the laundering business in Cairns were also largely in Chinese hands.

The Chinese also showed an aptitude for typically European callings. There was a Chinese tailor, watchmaker and bootmaker and by 1893 a Chinese photographer had commenced business.
Chinese temple ("Joss House") in Cairns
At the other extreme, there were those dedicated to providing goods and services exclusively for the Chinese Community. These were invariably to be found in the Chinatowns which developed in all the larger towns throughout the area. For instance, there would be a Chinese herbalist or chemist to dispense traditional Chinese medicines. Apparently a number of Europeans visited these practitioners, usually as a last resort and some experienced remarkable cures.

The religious life of the Community was centred on the temple or "Josshouse" of which there were two in Cairns, one each in Innisfail, Atherton and Port Douglas. Priests were employed to minister to spiritual needs, but may have combined the religious function with other duties. The Census of 1891 for instance records the existence of three "irregular clergy" amongst the Chinese in the area.

One of the major leisure activities amongst the Chinese was gambling, possibly due to the absence of female company and family life. Some Chinese were fully occupied conducting Fan Tan, Gee Fah and Pak-a-pu banks, much to the righteous wrath of the European Community. Often several activities were carried on by the one person. For instance a storekeeper might also run a boarding house and gambling establishment on the same premises. Fig. 1 gives an indication of the occupational structure of the Cairns Chinatown.

Some of the political turmoil then rife in China was reflected in the allegiances of the expatriate Community. Merchants and storekeepers in particular took an interest in politics and rival factions of Monarchists and Republicans developed during the early years of the century. Cairns and Innisfail seem to have been overtly relatively untroubled by politics but in Atherton the situation became more animated. Both the Republicans and the Monarchists had headquarters in Chinatown and in 1909 there was a minor outbreak of violence in which several windows were broken.

Being centres of Chinese culture, these Chinatowns assumed an exotic and colourful character, particularly during their heyday around the turn of the century. The senses of the visitor were stimulated by the aroma of incense and Chinese cuisine, the sound of banging gongs and tinkling of oriental instruments, the spectacle of Chinese inscriptions and exotic
merchandise. The celebration of Chinese New Year was the most colourful event of the year. A dragon parade was held, fireworks exploded and Chinese delicacies distributed to visitors of both races. Europeans intoxicated with Chinese wine were not an uncommon sight.

Chinatowns, as I have pointed out, were partly service centres for the Chinese Community as the main business area of Cairns was for Europeans. Until about 1930, however, they were also racial ghettos and in this respect constituted a symbol of the social gap between the Chinese and European Communities. This arose partly from the disinclination of first generation Chinese migrants to mix with Europeans or adopt their ways. They had no reason to, as most were intending to return to China and in any case the language barrier limited social intercourse. However, had the Chinese wanted to intermix residentially with Europeans, it seems probable that they would have received a cold reception as the current feeling of that time was anti-Chinese. As shall be seen later, the Cairns district was less extreme in this respect than many other areas but a brief examination of the nineteenth century attitude to the Chinese is nevertheless relevant. This attitude was based upon a number of assumptions, all of which now seem rather peculiar.

There was a widely held conviction that the Chinese were innately more industrious and able to endure a lower standard of living than the European. It is true that the first generation of Chinese worked incredibly long hours for small return but this was due to cultural and social factors. Some sections of the European community commended their diligence, but the Labor movement resented the unfair competition for employment which the Chinese thus supposedly presented.

A more general form of prejudice was racial. This began with an awareness that all Chinese looked markedly different from Europeans and all apparently looked the same as each other. As the century developed, this perception crystallised into a pseudo-scientific theory which asserted that Caucasians represented the pinnacle of evolutionary development and that all other races were intrinsically inferior. The extent to which social Darwinian assumptions penetrated to the ordinary man is doubtful. However it seems that the majority of people would have perceived the
FIG. 1. MAP SHOWING BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS AND LAND USE
IN CHINATOWN (CAIRNS) C1899

SPENCE STREET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Hotel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nakashiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuen Sing Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuen Sing Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hie Wo Shing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwong Sue Duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jew Goon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Kwong Hing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing Chong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hook Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwong Sing Chng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choy Quan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Tiy Chng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiy Loy Kee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soon Sun Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yee Hing Loong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See Lee Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiy Chng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On War Loong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishikawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hop Hing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Sam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SHIELDS STREET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Rear Entrance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwong Hoo Yuen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Various symbols are used to indicate different types of establishments and activities such as merchants, religious buildings, small fruit vendors, and cafes. The map highlights the business establishments and land use in Chinatown (Cairns) C1899.
conviction of European superiority not as racial prejudice but as a self-evident truth. Racial and cultural arrogance went hand in hand during the nineteenth century. Material cultures were also accommodated to the evolutionary pattern. There were vigorous, dynamic cultures like the European; there were fossilised cultures such as the Aboriginal which had not developed beyond the Stone Age and there were elaborate but basically stagnant and effete cultures which had supposedly achieved nothing for several thousand years. The Chinese culture was seen as one of the latter. The failure of the Chinese to invent the steam engine was taken as evidence of this fact. Europeans seem to have regarded Chinese culture with a mixture of fascination and contemptuous amusement; interesting but not worthy of serious study. For instance in the Censes taken at the time Chinese who were able to read and write their own language but not English, were classed as "uneducated".

To the convinced Sinophobe, racial and cultural factors were sufficient to preclude the Chinese from participation in the Australian society. However there were also a number of more specific objections. Their motives for coming to Australia were thought to be of the worst kind; namely, to plunder the land of its bounty, both mineral and agricultural, only to return to China bearing the wealth which rightfully belonged to Europeans. Metaphorical outbursts occasionally appeared in the Cairns Post to the effect that the Chinese were eating the orange and throwing the peel to the Europeans.

The absence of Chinese females was viewed as sinister. In one respect it was desirable as the proliferation of Chinese within Australia was thus prevented. On the other hand, the situation was fraught with the even greater danger of white women marrying Chinese men. This was considered unthinkable for two reasons. Firstly, it posed the threat of a half-caste society at a time when racial purity was thought essential to the establishment of an Australian Utopia (which was then considered possible). Secondly, there was a conviction among European males that their 'female counterparts were peculiarly vulnerable to the vices of the East if once led astray by an unscrupulous Chinese. Apart from opium smoking, these "unnatural" vices are not specified in great detail,
but one gathers that sexual debauchery figured prominently. White women
must be protected at all cost from such abominations.

The following, spoken by Mr Barlow in the Queensland Parliament,
1888, gives an indication of this attitude:

When I was in the North with the hon member for Fassifern, among
other things we inspected the refractory cell of the hospital, and
I wish I could bring before hon. members the sight we saw there.
We were shown in the refractory cell of the hospital, an unfortunate
white woman, a sister of our own and probably of our own race and
religion, who in the debauchery of the opium dens of Cooktown had
been reduced to such a state that as long as I live, shall never
pass from my memory. I speak strongly upon this subject, and if
hon. members could have seen that unfortunate creature, who was
committed to the grave on the very afternoon of our visit...

(At this point another member speculated on the possibility of some causal
connection between the visit of Mr Barlow and the death of the woman.)

Thus, association with one of an "inferior" race brought upon white
women who married Chinese such degradation that they were regarded, to a
certain extent, as social lepers.

With regard to lepers, it was also widely assumed at the time that
the Chinese were carriers of hideous diseases, mainly leprosy and small
pox. From time to time in Cairns there was a furor surrounding the appre­
hension of a Chinese suspected of having leprosy. Occasionally these
suspicions were justified but more often than not the supposed symptom
was a scar, burn or similarly innocuous blemish.

Chinese were also supposed to be intrinsically averse to cleanliness.
This myth was disseminated by the Cairns Post which asserted that when
Chinatown was in a poor state hygenically it was due to this factor and
when Chinatown was clean, it was a tribute to the vigilence of the
Inspector of Nuisances.

Finally, this assortment of objections was infused with the fear that
hordes of Chinese were about to overrun Australia. The grim result of such
an invasion was described by a writer to the Cairns Post.

Should it suit the great Celestial
Brother of the Sun and Moon
Thus to tell his yellow vassals,
"Drive the White Men to their doom","
Think you they would disobey him?
Even ask the reason why?
But tell their neighbours as they slay him
"Allee white men got to die".

This foreboding, known as "The Yellow Peril", has outlined all other aspects of Sinophobia.

It should be borne in mind that the points summarised above constitute the views of an extreme anti-Chinese element and in the local situation were probably considerably modified. I suspect that they were only voiced by a minority of the Community and then only when national or local conditions favoured an upsurge of anti-Chinese sentiment. This was likely to occur during times of economic adversity or when an election was imminent. On such occasions the Chinese provided a valuable scapegoat.

During the elections of 1888, for instance, each party tried to outdo the other in proposing anti-Chinese measures. An outburst of popular violence occurred in Brisbane as a result of the heated atmosphere which thus developed and considerable damage was done to Chinese shops. Some of this hysteria permeated to Cairns. For instance, the Cairns Post which had previously spoken of "our Chinese friends" began referring to "dirty Chinkies" and warnings about the Yellow Peril. In a moment of self-sacrifice, the editor proclaimed that the population of Cairns would rather go without vegetables than buy them from Chinese.

Moreover, the volume and doctrinaire content of anti-Chinese letters to the Cairns Post increased and people took the opportunity of indulging personal enmities by publicly accusing other people of employing Chinese. It should be noted that these utterances appeared in the columns of the Cairns Post which unashamedly supported the pro-Labour, anti-Chinese candidate. Apparently the Cairns Chronicle, which has disappeared, was more partial to the Chinese as also were the Cairns Argus and the Cairns Daily Times which competed with the Post at later periods.

The points of view found in rival newspapers of the time differed quite violently over the importance of Chinese to the wellbeing of the district. The non-Labour press asserted that white men were incapable, in a tropical climate, of performing the tasks undertaken by the Chinese.
Therefore the latter were seen as an essential part of the community. The Laborites, on the other hand, held that anything the Chinese could do, Europeans could do better. Thus, the "Celestials" were not only not useful, but were actively depriving the Australian worker of agricultural employment.

It is impossible to gauge the exact amount of support which either side of the argument had amongst the community at large. Neither the views expressed in newspapers nor the vehemence with which they were expressed can be taken as a barometer of public opinion. The outlook of the editor, particularly in a small provincial newspaper of that time was rather pervasive and he possibly sought to influence rather than reflect the local climate of thought. Moreover editors from outside the town were probably not attuned to the everyday concerns of the community. For instance, the editor responsible for the anti-Chinese outbursts of 1888 was from Sydney and it is not surprising that he was more concerned with the Chinese as a national issue than with the Cairns vegetable supply.

In actual fact, local conditions seem to have had an important effect upon attitudes to the Chinese. In Cairns, relations between the races were quite amicable by the standards of the day. It is doubtful whether this situation resulted from superior enlightenment on the part of Cairnsites, who shared the popular racial and cultural outlook. Chinese, it seems, were not the settlers they would have chosen if given the choice, but their usefulness was recognised by most of the community and hence their presence tolerated. This was largely because of the extent to which the population of Cairns depended upon the Chinese for fresh fruit, vegetables and fish and for the performance of arduous tasks which Europeans avoided where possible. One dignitary of the Church, touring North Queensland, wrote: "The Chinese are much in evidence in Cairns. They are the gardeners of the north and I don't know how the people would get on without them."

Apart from supplying many immediate needs, the Chinese brought prosperity to the district through the development of the banana industry. During the early and mid 1880's, even the Cairns Post joined in the chorus of praise for what it called "The fathers of agriculture in the area".
Because very few Europeans wanted to grow bananas, the type of competitive situation which usually made for conflict, did not arise. Innisfail, which was also a banana-producing area, was characterised by a similarly harmonious atmosphere.

The situation in Atherton was a rather less happy one, partly because Atherton was then a satellite of Herberton, a mining town with a "marked anti-Chinese tradition". However economic factors also influenced relations unfavourably. On the Tablelands, the more moderate climate enabled Europeans to participate in agriculture to a greater extent and hence to resent Chinese competition. In 1898, Inspector Roth, the Northern Protector of Aborigines, described anti-Chinese feeling as "rife and rampant" throughout the area. "The seat of the discontent", he said "is Atherton". He attributed this to the fact that the Chinese were able to undersell Europeans on the maize market. However the specific bugbear seems to have been the superior ability of the Chinese to attract aboriginal labour. There were very few Kanakas on the Tableland and aborigines were therefore sought as an alternative form of cheap labour. The mysterious preference which the aborigines seemed to have for the Chinese was attributed by the Barron Valley Farmers Association to the opium lure and on these grounds the Association demanded that Chinese be prohibited from employing aborigines. The inspector sent to examine these complaints however, found little evidence to support them. He concluded that the main reason aborigines preferred to work for Chinese was that they were better treated.

Relations between Chinese and Europeans in Cairns were never characterised by the same degree of animosity which was experienced in Atherton. However during the early years of the century the entry of some Chinese into the sugar industry was the cause of hostility on the part of the European sugar growers. Sugar growing had always been regarded as a European stronghold and the increasing importance of Chinese growers in the Hambledon area caused panic lest Europeans be "squeezed out". Measures had already been taken by the Mossman Central Mill to handicap the Chinese out of the industry. Despite their
effectiveness, such blatant discrimination was condemned even by some white planters. The Hambledon growers then called for the exclusion of Chinese from sugar growing, apparently without success. However the White Labour Bounty which was formulated to discourage the employment of Kanakas had the pleasant side effect of discriminating against Chinese growers who used Chinese labour. A more specifically anti-Chinese measure was taken in 1913 when a dictation test was instituted for "coloured" growers and labourers involved in the sugar industry. Naturalised Chinese were not necessarily exempt. Either this legislation was effective or the agricultural generation of Chinese was dying out, as by 1920 there were only a few Chinese sugar farmers left. A younger generation, however, has since re-entered the industry without opposition.

Basically, it seems that hostility to the Chinese arose from an underlying conviction that they were inferior or dangerous or both. However the extent to which people became consciously "anti-Chinese" was dictated by fluctuating national and local conditions. As Rose Hum Lee states "The degree to which physical distinctness hampers their social adjustment is correlated with crises and pressing needs the dominant group faces in a given era".

It would be an over-simplification to assume that all Chinese were regarded in the same light, despite the frequent use of racial stereotypes by exponents of both the pro and the anti-Chinese causes. Differing attitudes to the various types of Chinese are particularly apparent in small communities such as those found in the Cairns area. For instance, individual members of the local Chinese Community were not endowed with the sinister attributes of the anonymous masses in China. It was not uncommon to find in the Cairns Post or the Barron Valley Advocate a fiery editorial on the "Yellow Peril" and in the same issue a sympathetic article about a local Chinese who had been the victim of a crime or suffered some misfortune. In these cases, terms such as "unfortunate creature" or "hardworking, inoffensive Chinaman" were not uncommon.

The prosperous merchants amongst the Chinese were placed in a rather different category from the gardening and labouring class. Unlike the latter, they were treated with considerable respect by the European
Community. For instance, whereas the poorer Chinese were referred to merely as "a Chinaman" or "John", members of the commercial elite were called by name and Andrew Leon, a prominent farmer and businessman was even referred to by the Cairns Post as "Mr Leon" which was most unusual. It was not uncommon for a Chinese merchant to entertain Europeans, including community leaders, at a marriage or birthday celebration. Significantly, however, the more lowly of the host's Chinese guests usually celebrated at a different time or place from the Europeans. As an example of the extent to which wealthy Chinese were socially acceptable, the wedding of See Hoe in Port Douglas was said by the local newspaper to be causing "quite a flutter in social circles".

This differential attitude which Europeans adopted towards the Chinese merchants was probably due in part to the fact that "money speaks all languages" and consequently their economic importance to the Cairns district was recognised. A more important factor however may have been that these people cultivated a refined lifestyle and made such concessions to Western mores as dressing in the best European clothes and possibly marrying in a Christian church. Most were also able to speak good English. Thus they were better able to communicate, both verbally and culturally with Europeans and were less likely to fall victim to cultural intolerance. Moreover, Chinese merchants had a reputation for business integrity and generosity. Banks were known to lend large sums of money to them without security, as repayment of the loan was certain. Their names often appeared prominently in lists of donations to charity. All these factors tended to increase their standing in the community.

It should not be assumed, however, that an "apartheid" situation prevailed between Europeans and "lower class" Chinese. Despite the residential separation of the communities, social contacts of a "public relations" nature were quite common. Chinese hawkers or tenants often presented their customers or landlords with Christmas presents and sometimes received a Christmas cake or pudding in return. Despite the language and cultural barrier, relations of genuine mutual affection seem to have developed between some farmers' families and Chinese tenants, particularly the elderly and genial ones.
A complete picture of relations between Chinese and the larger community is now impossible to construct. For instance, the Chinese side of the question is almost totally lacking from written sources. From the European point of view, however, the output of correspondence and petitions from a given locality indicate the type and strength of feeling on various issues relating to the Chinese. Only one anti-Chinese petition was submitted from Cairns, and this was under exceptional circumstances in 1876 when the Chinese first tried to land. It was signed by 150 miners and storekeepers, whose motives were probably economic, as both occupations suffered from Chinese competition. This overt hostility soon faded away and when Cairns and Port Douglas were visited in 1886 by a prominent Sinophobe, John Potts, his efforts to form an anti-Chinese League were in vain. This was in marked contrast to his success in Townsville and Herberton. (Atherton and Innisfail were too small then to warrant a visit.) Speaking in Parliament during 1900, the Premier stated that a petition had come to the House in 1899, "signed by a great number of well-known people in Cairns, stating that the Chinese were the backbone of the place".

During the 1890's, however, there was a large output of written complaints about the Chinese from a small clique of Atherton farmers. As mentioned previously, this was a result of economic competition and I am not sure to what extent this body was representative of community opinion.

Deposition books recording contemporary Court cases indicate that the Chinese were frequently the victims of physical violence. This did not take an organised form, as it did on the Victorian goldfields and was not usually serious. Throwing stones at Chinese shops, physical assault and general harassment were common. There were many more "Chinese vs European" assault cases than vice versa and as a rule the European was convicted. This seems to indicate some element of anti-Chinese feeling, as the victim in giving evidence often deposed that the aggressor "called me an (expletive deleted) Chinaman and then hit me". Again, however, it is doubtful whether Europeans involved in such cases were typical of the community at large as they often had a record of lawlessness and possibly also bore a grudge against Chinese.
It is interesting to note that in cases involving a Chinese and a European, the contestants usually called witnesses of their own race and these almost invariably supported the claims of their countryman. Often the two sides of the case had nothing in common with each other at all.

In a way, it is unfortunate that the Chinese communities in various parts of Australia were not studied some forty years ago as the researcher could then have collected first hand impressions from those who recollected the situation during the nineteenth century. This is now impossible, but I have been fortunate enough to locate some people, both Chinese and European, who remember the early years of this century, a time when anti-Chinese feeling was still quite prevalent. The two Chinese to whom I have spoken both recall hostility on the part of Europeans. One lady mentioned deliberate discourtesy and insults from people in the street and also difficulty in obtaining employment as preference was given to Europeans. Another informant told me that prior to about 1918, Chinese were unwilling to live away from their ghetto because of community hostility.

Europeans to whom I have spoken about this period, however, have shown practically no awareness of any widely held anti-Chinese feeling. When asked the question "What can you tell me about the Chinese in Cairns", they have uniformly mentioned some non-controversial matter such as New Year Celebrations, Pak-a-pu tickets or an individual Chinese with whom they were acquainted. Opium smoking, which received such publicity from the anti-Chinese press, seems to have been regarded as a strange and exotic but hardly appalling aspect of the Chinese Community. When questioned specifically on the matter of relations between the races they have maintained that most people had a high opinion of the Chinese, though some responsible for the ill-feeling might have "had a chip on their shoulder". Possibly these are the ones who stand out in the minds of Chinese who remember that time.

By virtue of their role in developing the tropical areas of Queensland through both physical labour and commercial enterprise, the Chinese deserve a prominent place in any study of North Queensland. This is
particularly so of the area about which I have spoken and perhaps this is why it was said in the early days that "In Cairns they take their hats off to Chinamen".
This lecture is based on current research into Aboriginal material culture, and inasmuch as the research is still incomplete, any conclusions offered must be regarded as only tentative. For the purpose of the lecture the term 'material culture' includes all equipment manufactured by the Aborigines, such as clothing, dwellings, domestic utensils, hunting and fishing gear, canoes and weapons. The 'Herbert/Burdekin district' includes the area between the Tully River and Mackay on the coast, and inland to the Dividing Range.

The sources of evidence consulted in this attempt to establish the nature of Aboriginal material culture in the Herbert/Burdekin fall into several categories. These include the ethnohistorical literature, consisting of explorers' journals and contemporary reports of early settlers and officials who came into contact with traditional Aboriginal society; museum and privately-held collections of Aboriginal artefacts from the area; research in allied fields, such as linguistics; and the land itself, the environment within the Herbert/Burdekin district. A fifth potential source of evidence, which in this research has as yet only been utilized indirectly, is Aboriginal informants who have some knowledge of traditional life.

From the above it can be seen that the sources of evidence available to this kind of research are more varied and in some ways less precise than those available to historians, and an attempt has been made to use the variety to overcome the lack of precision. In this case the procedure has been to take one of these sources of evidence and look for a pattern in it, then use this pattern as a model with which to test the other sources of evidence independently. If the pattern does not fit, it may have to be adjusted or the evidence reexamined; if it does fit it will provide a model for understanding other data for the area, although it may not be applicable to other areas.
i) In search of a pattern or model:

The close and harmonious relationship the Aborigines traditionally enjoyed with their environment prompted me to look first at the environment in the Herbert/Burdekin district to try and detect any significant variation which might be reflected in the material culture of the Aborigines.

The most significant feature to the north, in the area between Cardwell and the Tully River is the rain forest; to the SW of that is the Herbert gorge, in many places steep and practically impenetrable. Further south the coastal plain forms a continuum relatively easily traversed, especially by sea, with patches of closed fine forest and rain forest along the coastal highlands, in particular Mt. Spec and Mt. Elliott. Towards the west and southwest the environment is drier, gradually merging into the western plains.

On the basis of the foregoing, on the environment and concomitant ease of communication, I postulated a hypothetical model for the variation of Aboriginal material culture in the Herbert/Burdekin district,

a) area bounded by Cardwell, the Tully River, and eastern headwaters of the Herbert River - "Rainforest culture"

b) coastal plain south at least to Mount Elliott - "coastal", including some rainforest elements

c) inland, including Herbert River valley - "Burdekin culture" (which may have much in common with areas further inland).

The islands could be expected to agree most with that section of the mainland which they are closest.

ii) Testing the model against ethnohistory and museum collections - by looking at a number of types of artefacts, and plotting their distribution throughout the area. For this occasion I have selected types with the intention of conveying an idea both of the nature of the Aboriginal culture and also of the way in which the pattern does or does not apply.
ABORIGINAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE HERBERT/BURDEKIN DISTRICT: A CULTURAL CROSSROADS?

a) Clothing. This was understandably kept to a minimum, and apart from items of personal adornment such as armbands, necklaces and sometimes feather headresses, seems to have been restricted to a blanket or rug occasionally worn over the shoulders as a shawl, more frequently used as a covering at night. Within the Herbert/Burdekin these rugs were found in two forms - possum skin and bark. Blankets of bark, removed from trees such as the fig and the tea tree, soaked in water and beaten, were in use, according to the literature, at the upper end of Halifax Bay near Ingham, on the Herbert River, on Hinchinbrook Island, on the Murray River, and further north. Possum skin rugs, on the other hand, were used in the Townsville and Ravenswood areas, on the upper Burdekin and Cape Rivers, and at Bowen.

It is unlikely that this distribution was merely a function of the source material: possums did occur in the rain forest and formed part of the diet of the rain forest Aborigines; although the fig tree was restricted to the high rainfall areas, the tea tree certainly was not. The most obvious explanation is that bark was found to be more suitable in areas of higher rainfall and greater humidity, while possum skin was preferred in colder conditions. Collections - I have been able to find no possum skin rugs from the area in museums. The Australian Museum in Sydney has a bark blanket from Cardwell, and the National Museum of Victoria has specimens from the Tully River and further north.

b) Dwellings. It is possible that Aboriginal dwellings or 'gunyahs', as they are commonly called in the literature, represent another area of differentiation in the Herbert/Burdekin district. There are numerous descriptions of these dwellings, on Hinchinbrook Island, Palm Island, Herbert River, Cardwell, Murray River and
further north. In all of these instances the construction is basically the same. To quote P.P. King's description of some on Palm Island in 1827:

Very snug habitations...of a circular shape and very ingeniously constructed by twigs stuck in the ground and arched over, the ends being artfully entwined so as to give support to each other; the whole was covered with a thatch of dried grass and reeds...

In other cases the leaves of banana or palm trees were used and also strips of bark from the tea tree or paper bark. In a number of instances the floors of these huts were covered with grass, and to secure them completely against rain, earth was piled up around the base, preventing seepage and providing a moat to run the water off. The door consisted merely of an opening, frequently so small that one had to crawl to get through. The huts seem to have been large enough for at least two people, with a tendency for them to increase in size towards the north.

It would seem reasonable to deduce that in areas of high rainfall Aboriginal dwellings were substantial constructions equal to withstanding the tropical wet season. It is possible that the solid construction of these huts also suggests that they were used for extensive periods of time. In the Cardwell area huts were observed to be occupied during the wet months, and also as late at June, so that for at least half the year the Aborigines were able to stay in the one place, it seems. So, substantial huts may be a function of high rainfall and of a rich environment (coastal, riverine and rainforest) enabling at least semi-permanent existence in one place.

To validate this deduction it is necessary to look at evidence of dwelling places in the drier environment to the south and west. So far I have come across only one description of Aboriginal huts in the drier region, and that is near Ravenswood,
ABORIGINAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE HERBERT/BURDEKIN DISTRICT:
A CULTURAL CROSSROADS?

The...huts were formed by sticking two forked sticks into the ground, placing a sapling across, and leaning sheets of bark against them. Bushes and branches of trees were added to keep off the wind. The front...was open...the floors were covered with opossum-skin rugs.

There are a few other references to huts, for example on the upper Burdekin, but they are not described beyond the fact that most of them were unoccupied.

From this relative dearth of evidence it may be possible to infer firstly that in this area there was less use of huts, certainly from April onwards when nearly all inland exploration and travel took place. The lower rainfall and the long dry season meant that there was less need for the protection of huts. Further, the relative sparseness of the food resources required more constant travel over larger areas, so the construction of large numbers of substantial huts was impracticable. Secondly, the lean-to type of hut described at Ravenswood was very common in southern half of the continent, and as nearly all the mariners and explorers were travelling from south to north, they would have been familiar with the type. The fact that there are no really detailed descriptions of Aboriginal dwellings until the rainforest area is reached suggests that here the explorers were seeing something new.

Collections - no specimens of dwellings from the area in any of the museums so far located.

c) Shields. The rain forest shield is quite unlike any other shield used by the Aborigines, and was restricted to north-east Queensland. It was made from the flanged buttress of the rain forest fig tree. Lummoltz described the shield in use on the Herbert River:

The shield, which reaches to a man's hip and is about half as wide as it is long...it is oval, massive, and slightly convex. In the centre, on the front side, there is a sort of shield-boss,
the inner side being nearly flat... The front is painted in a grotesque and effective manner with red, white and yellow earth colours, and is divided into fields which wonderfully enough, differ in each man's shield.

Further south, in the Mackay district, the shield was made from a kind of light cork tree or the kurrajong tree, and was much smaller, averaging about 50 cms in length and 22 cms in width. Whereas the rain forest shield is flat with a rounded boss in the centre to strengthen the area where the handle is carved out of the back, the Mackay shield is flat on the rear surface but quite generously rounded on the front to deflect spears and is of such sturdy construction that no boss is required. Unlike the rain forest shield, the Mackay type was decorated with incisions, and these incised areas were frequently blackened with a combination of grease and charcoal. Parts of the shield were also painted in red and white, although yellow, so much a part of rain-forest shield designs, was not used on the Mackay type.

These smaller shields appear to have been used further south, e.g. in the Rockhampton area, and their basic construction is also very similar to that of shields used in central and north-western Queensland, although decoration of the latter often included fluting as well as yellow ochre and more fluid designs.

It is apparent that somewhere between the Herbert River and Mackay there must be a region of contact or overlap of shield types. Museum collections include many specimens from both areas, but nothing in between. Their literature does suggest that the Mackay type was in use on the Cape River, a tributary of the Burdekin, but is not absolutely specific. The clearest indication comes from Meston who gives an account of an initiation corroboree held about twenty miles up the coast and from Townsville
Two Aborigines with rain forest sword and shields, Cardwell
attended by Palm Islanders as well as mainland Aborigines. At one stage during the proceedings, says Meston,

Two grim old men stepped into the arena, and there was a buzz of eager expectation. Each carried the broad, thin flat shield, and the heavy hardwood sword.

As they advanced, each held the shield aloft horizontally, and twirled the sword rapidly round his head with the right hand. The sword cuts were received on the upper edge of the shield. Their movements were done with the rapidity of lightning, and it was really a marvellous display. Then came two warriors with small shields and nullahs.

The implication is that the two types of shields were both known and used within a small area, although as several tribal groups usually came together for big ceremonies like initiation, there is no indication which tribe used which shield, or if both shields were used in one tribe.

d) Swords. The heavy hardwood sword to which Meston referred was as essential to the rain forest armoury as was the large shield; in fact they were used only together in ritualized duels or in battle. Lumholtz refers to the sword as the necessary companion of the shield...about five inches wide up to the point, which is slightly rounded, and usually reaches from the foot to the shoulder. It is made of hard wood, with a short handle for only one hand, and is so heavy that any one not used to it can scarcely balance it perpendicularly with half-extended arm - the position always adopted before the battle begins.

The swords were either straight or slightly curved, depending on the tree from which they were taken, but straighter ones were preferred. Sometimes the blade was covered in red ochre, but the only other alteration was a wrapping of gum and twine around the handle to improve the grip.

Further south, in the Mackay, Broadsound, Rock-
Helen Brayshaw

Hampton area, a two-handed sword was used. This sword was always curved, and had a graduated handle which could easily be grasped in two hands. It was usually made of lighter wood, such as brigalow, and shorter, being less than a metre in length. This type of sword was also usually painted in patterns of red, white and black.

So far the literature has revealed no more about the distribution of wooden swords than about the shields. Similarly the museum collections have many rainforest specimens from Cardwell and further north, as well as many smaller swords from the Mackay area. The only item from in between is a Mackay type sword from Whitsunday Island in the Australian Museum, Sydney.

e) Nulla-nullas, clubs. Several varieties of nulla were in use in eastern north Queensland. The most common sort, at one time to be found over most of Queensland, was about 65 cms long, globular and pointed at the far end, with parallel fluting chiselled with a stone adze along the length of it, and carving around the handle to provide a firmer grip; the whole was often covered in red ochre. The woods most frequently used for this type of weapon were gidyea, brigalow or mangrove.

A second kind of nulla was similar to the first in every respect other than the fact that it had two prongs instead of one. Both of these nullas were used for throwing rather than hitting at close quarters. The distribution of the latter nulla presents a problem. There are numerous specimens from Mackay and south to Rockhampton in museums, but none from further north, yet W.E. Roth, an extremely reliable source, reports their usage on the Tully River.

A third type of nulla, with what has been described as a pineapple head, covered in a series of wooden
E15033 Sword, Cardwell
E15025 Sword, Whitsunday Is.
32050 Shield, Herbert River
E25140 Shield, Mackay-Broadsound

Pineapple-type Nullas, north-east Queensland
Nulla, Whitsunday Is.
Double-pronged Nulla, Broadsound
nODULES, and used as a proper club rather than a throwing stick, did not penetrate inland at all, but occurred throughout the length of the Queensland coast. There are numerous examples in museum collections, and of these quite a few were obviously in use at the time of white contact, for instead of the nodules being carved out of the solid wood, horseshoe nails have been used and the result is a truly formidable weapon. Of this type of nulla, Roth says

Considering its limitation to the extreme north and to the coast line, and its resemblance to the pineapple stone club of New Guinea, I am inclined to regard it in the light of a Papuan introduction.

f) Canoes. Papuan influence is also apparent in the case of Aboriginal canoes, but in this instance it does not extend right down the Queensland coast but terminates at a point somewhere within the coastal perimeters of the Herbert/Burdekin.

The typical Aboriginal canoe was constructed of bark, usually a single sheet, sometimes two or three, from various Eucalypts and Acacias. There are a number of contemporary descriptions of the manner in which such a canoe was made, e.g. south of Port Denison:

It was made from a large sheet of bark, which was first flattened out, smooth side downwards. Then the rough outside was trimmed down, and the trimmings with a quantity of dried leaves, were spread evenly over the outside surface, and set on fire. When the sheet of bark was softened by the heat, the corners were turned up, each end was doubled on itself, holes were made with a shark's tooth and awl, they were sewn with withes, and the canoe was made.

Stays were often placed across between the two sides for additional strength, and the seams caulked with a resinous gum. These bark canoes were about 2.5 metres long and 60 cms wide, sometimes much smaller. They were rarely capable of holding more than two people,
often only one. Two small pieces of bark were used for paddling, and frequently also for bailing.

Papuan influence came in the form of the outrigger dugout canoe, which in the Torres Strait and as far south as Princess Charlotte Bay had two outriggers, but which below that had only one on the right or starboard side.

There seems to have been a considerable area of overlap of bark and outrigger canoes. Bark canoes were reported from Hinchinbrook and the southern end of Rockingham Bay, and Banfield stated that outriggers were unknown in the vicinity of Dunk Island, though twenty miles further north at Double Point "hollowed logs with outriggers of the stems of banana plants were common". Nevertheless outriggers were seen at Hinchinbrook and at Palm Island; they may have occurred even further south than that, but Roth gives the assurance that any outriggers found below Cape Grafton at 17° latitude were not of local manufacture.

g) Wommerahs, spearthrowers. These were in use north of the Herbert River, in the Cardwell - Tully rainforest region, and also on the Burdekin in the vicinity of Charters Towers. Once again, however, there appears to be a distinct cultural break within the Herbert/Burdekin, for wommerahs were not used on the coast south of Townsville to Rockhampton at least, and possibly as far south as Brisbane. Inland it may be possible to pinpoint one place of cultural differentiation. On the Cape River, a tributary of the Burdekin, south west of Charters Towers, the local tribe of Aborigines were reported as not using the wommerah themselves, but having a word for it in their language, and knowing their neighbours used it.

iii) Testing the model against research into Aboriginal languages.

This work has been undertaken by R.M.W. Dixon and P.J. Sutton
Canoe with single outrigger, Cairns

Bark canoe, Port Denison
of the Australian National University. They have looked at early vocabulary lists, but by far the greatest emphasis of their research has been on interviews with Aboriginal informants who still speak their native language. The picture which emerges is a complex one. In the upper Tully region of the rainforest proper was a closely related group of dialects collectively referred to as Dyirbal. South to Cardwell and Hinchinbrook the languages were similar but less closely related, while Nawaygai, spoken near the mouth of the Herbert, was also closely related to the dialects spoken at Cleveland Bay and on Magnetic and Palm Islands. This coastal continuity appears to have extended to about Bowen, where another series of language began. Further inland there was a distinct break between the rainforest languages and the language spoken on the Herbert River, namely Warungu, which was part of a Burdekin group of languages and related to others further to the south west.

iv) Testing the model against another data in the environment.

In this case two types of data will be considered, namely rock art and archaeological evidence. The Aboriginal rock art may substantiate the pattern or model in terms of both subject matter and style. In the Townsville region there are many representations of shields, and by studying the patterns closely it may be possible to determine from the rock art the location of the southern perimeter of the rainforest shield. Stylistically the rock art in the Herbert/Burdekin falls into several categories. These include stencils of hands and weapons on tributaries of the Burdekin to the north and west; linear outlines such as the shields in the Townsville area or simple anthropomorphic figures like those near the Fanning River west of Townsville; and naturalistic representations of dingoes found on the fringe of the rainforest near Cardwell.

Exploitation of the archaeological evidence will involve plotting
the distribution of surface campsites to determine whether the model of cultural variation applied to the Aborigines' use of stone tools, and excavation to determine whether the postulated cultural variation had any time depth.

Only selected elements of Aboriginal material culture in the Herbert Burdekin have been discussed, but it is hoped that testing of the model in the manner illustrated will provide a means of arranging and interpreting further information from the area. At this stage of the research, however, it is not possible to offer any definite conclusions about the nature of cultural variation in the Herbert/Burdekin district.

REFERENCES

Lhumholtz, D., Among Cannibals, London, 1890.
Meston, A., A Fragment of a Description of a Bora at Mt. Millbirraman, Science of Man, n.s. v. 1, 1899.
Robertson, W., Coo-ee Talks, Sydney, 1928.
Roth, W.E., Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines, Brisbane, 1897.
Rock Art: Mt. Claro

Fanning River

Kennedy
ABORIGINAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE HERBERT/BURDEKIN DISTRICT:
A CULTURAL CROSSROADS?


ILLUSTRATIONS

Two Aborigines with rainforest sword and shields, Cardwell.

i. E15033 Sword, Cardwell 146
E15025 Sword, Whitsunday Is. 
32050 Shield, Herbert River 
E25140 Shield, Mackay-Broadsound
Australian Museum, Sydney.

ii. Pineapple-type Nullas, north-east Queensland
Nulla, Whitsunday Is.
Double-pronged Nulla, Broadsound
Australian Museum, Sydney.

i. Canoe with single outrigger, Cairns district. 148
British Museum.

ii. Bark canoe, Port Denison. Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin, "

Rock Art. Photographs held in the History Department, James Cook University of North Queensland.
Stories of conflict between the Aborigines and the early squatters and their servants have been commonplace in Australian writing since the middle of the nineteenth century. Yet many problems confront the historian wishing to reassess this aspect of our past. Perhaps the most difficult is the task of trying to look at early race relations from the other side of the frontier, to see the encroaching tide of settlement as far as possible through the eyes of the Aborigines themselves. Clearly no easy endeavour! The historian - perhaps rather the ethno-historian - has to piece together innumerable fragments of information provided by European informants while rejecting much that can be assumed to be inaccurate, or hearsay or excessively biased. Fortunately a small number of explorers, officials or squatters were remarkably intelligent and perceptive observers of Aboriginal life despite the lack of sophisticated anthropological knowledge. Information gathered has to be weighed and tested against modern studies of traditional life and acculturation in Central and Northern Australia. What eventually emerges can hopefully be built up into a meaningful mosaic of the Aboriginal response to settlement.

We can assume that most Aboriginal groups had at least some prior knowledge of Europeans before the first settlers arrived. European commodities - pieces of iron, horseshoes, tins, wire, glass and even tomahawks - had passed along Aboriginal trade routes to tribes far behind the frontier perhaps as much as ten or twenty years before the first white men appeared. But what of information about the strange and powerful newcomers? Did that too pass along the routes of trade and ceremonial exchange? We know that myths and dances criss-crossed the continent in a remarkably short time being passed on from tribe to tribe. In similar fashion scattered news of the settlers may have gone ahead of the moving frontier. This seems especially true of information about the terrifying power of European firearms. Various bits of evidence support this. Settlers often found that Aborigines with no known previous contact were extremely frightened of guns even without their being fired. Similar information
comes from the Aboriginal side of the frontier. Dick Roughsey related how on Mornington Island his father heard stories before contact about "how these white people could kill a man with thunder that sent down invisible spears to tear a hole in his body and spill his blood in the sand".  

Linguistic information is also significant. The same word is used for gun in Aboriginal languages in many parts of Australia. Clearly it passed from tribe to tribe over great distances. Because an aboriginal word was used rather than the corruption of a European one it seems probable that the diffusion took place before the arrival of the earliest settlers.

The European's reputation for violence may also have preceded the pioneer. The Aborigines living around Mount Elliot among whom James Morrell lived for many years certainly heard of shooting and death before they saw the earliest pioneers. Similar information was provided by Bracefield, another white man who lived with the Aborigines before settlement caught up with him. He was a convict who, escaping from the Moreton Bay penal settlement, lived with the tribes who inhabited the mountains between the Brisbane Valley and Wide Bay. During his sojourn in the mountains the early squatters took their flocks into the Brisbane Valley north of the settlements at Moreton Bay and Ipswich. Conflict between Aborigines and shepherds erupted and on Kilcoy station a large group of blacks were poisoned through eating damper laced with arsenic. Bracefield subsequently reported that a large gathering of tribes met in the Bunya Mountains where news of the poisoning created great anger and desire for revenge. How common such reactions were it is hard to say. Gatherings as large as those which periodically took place in the Bunya Mountains were uncommon yet such was the devastating impact of pastoral settlement that it seems probable that news of conflict passed back from the frontier to tribes who had yet to see their first white man.

The Europeans evoked both great fear and intense curiosity among the Aborigines. Consequently a typical response was to keep out of the way of the newcomers but at the same time to secretly watch them and observe their behaviour. Europeans sometimes sensed this surveillance and felt that unseen eyes were constantly on them. Yet initial contact was often
peaceful with exchange of gifts and greetings. But good relations did not last except in a few quite atypical districts. The introduction of large numbers of sheep and cattle forced Aborigines and settlers into direct competition for land and water.

The Aborigines lived in delicate balance with their environment. The population was stabilized at the minimum level that could be supported in a poor season. Inevitably the sudden introduction of herds of cattle or flocks of sheep had a dramatic impact on the environment. Scarce water disappeared overnight and waterholes were polluted. Grasses and roots were eaten or trampled while indigenous animals retreated before the invasion. European attitudes exacerbated an already serious situation. Settlers in Queensland were imbued with the need to "keep the blacks out" at least during the early years of settlement thereby preventing free use of tribal territory and restricting access to water. Cattlemen were convinced that their herds would never settle on a new run if blacks were about. The saying 'cattle and blacks don't mix' was an axiom which boded ill for the Aborigines. In drier regions of the west, or during dry seasons almost anywhere, the competition for water was intense. We have interesting evidence of this from some of the first settlers to venture into the dry regions in the far west of Queensland who were forced to walk their sheep for long distances between water. On particularly dry stretches the animals became desperate with thirst and rushed out of control if they smelled water. Given the scarcity of drinkable surface water it would often happen that local Aborigines would already be camped around the water hole or creek bed. The mad onrush of the sheep would scatter the camp and drive the terrified Aborigines away from their camping ground. Thus water had became the basic source of conflict in the first hour of direct contact.

Use of grassland was another cause of confrontation. In many parts of Australia the Aborigines deliberately and systematically fired the grass every year in order to clear undergrowth and stimulate the growth of new grass. Some of the best known open downs in Australia were likely the conscious creation of the Aborigines. But the early squatters were quite unaware of this. When the blacks began burning the grass as they
H. REYNOLDS

had doubtless done for innumerable generations the settlers assumed it was a hostile act directed at them or else mere wanton destruction. The first serious conflict on the Darling Downs resulted from exactly this sort of misunderstanding.

Thus without hostile intent the squatters began to seriously impinge on Aboriginal life - restricting their access to water, depleting available flora and fauna and frequently confining groups to the least desirable portions of their territories. The fate of the Balonne River Aborigines was observed by the missionary William Ridley who wrote:

On this river the effect upon the aborigines of the occupation by Europeans of the country was forcibly presented. Before the occupation of this district by colonists, the aborigines could never have been at a loss for the necessaries of life. Except in the lowest part of the river, there is water in the driest seasons; along the banks game abounded; waterfowl, emus, parrot tribes, kangaroos, and other animals might always, or almost always, be found. And if, at any time, these failed to supply food for the human tribe, the fish furnished a sure resource. But when the country was taken up, and herds of cattle introduced, not only did the cattle drive away the kangaroos, but those who had charge of the cattle found it necessary to keep the aborigines away from the river, as their appearance frightened the cattle in all directions. In fact, it is said that while troops of aborigines roam about the runs, and especially if they go to the cattle camps and watering places, it is impossible to keep a herd together.

After some fatal conflicts, in which some colonists and many aborigines have been slain, the blacks have been awed into submission to the orders which forbid their access to the river. And what is the consequence? Black fellows coming in from the west report that last summer very large numbers, afraid to visit the river, were crowded round a few scanty water-holes, within a day's walk of which it was impossible to get sufficient food; that during the hottest weather the great red ants in that dry locality were so formidable that neither men nor even opossums could rest night or day except for an hour or so at noon; that owing to these combined hardships many died. This is only black fellows' report; but when we know that people have been cut off from four-fifths of their usual supply of food, and reduced to a scanty supply of water, is it an incredible report that sickness and death have fallen upon them?

Through the eyes of a contemporary then we see the ways in which conflict over land and water affected one group of Aborigines in Southern Queensland.

The sudden inrush of white men and their animals posed the Aborigines a terrible dilemma - either attempt to reach an accommodation with the
newcomers and exchange labour and sexual favours for food, or attack the flocks and herds in order to remain independent and perhaps to drive the newcomers away. The first option, that of 'coming in' to European settlement was frequently not available in the early period of contact because of the widespread determination of the pioneers to "keep the blacks out". Often the choice must have been between slow starvation in the bush, at least for the young and the elderly, or direct conflict with the Europeans.

Resulting Aboriginal attacks on sheep and cattle were more serious than has usually been appreciated. Often hundreds and even thousands of sheep were driven off unfenced runs and taken off into nearby mountain or forest. Although flocks were often recovered by enraged squatters their losses were considerable and at times on such a scale as to precipitate bankruptcy. Cattle were less vulnerable but were nonetheless speared in large numbers. As they came to depend on sheep and cattle to replace depleted indigenous food supplies the Aborigines adapted existing hunting techniques, developed new ones and quickly learnt how to handle the exotic European animals. Evidence of this comes from many places. Settlers noted that the Aborigines were finding ways of using their dogs to help run down sheep and cattle, or cutting out groups of animals from larger flocks and herds and herding them across miles of often difficult country. In many places the settlers found that Aborigines had constructed enclosures out of logs and bushes to pen the animals in while waiting to kill them for food. This is a most interesting example of cultural adaption resulting from modification of existing hunting techniques and methods learnt from close observation of the Europeans. Reports of Aboriginal 'stockyards' came from all over Eastern Australia. Such widely scattered evidence raises an interesting problem. Did each tribal or even each sub-tribal group develop these techniques in isolation or were new methods communicated over long distances? This problem remains unsolved but we can be quite certain that Aboriginal attacks on sheep and cattle were a principal cause of frontier violence.

It is no longer tenable to talk of the Australian frontier as being uniquely peaceful as some historians have done in the past. Almost every district in Queensland experienced a period of racial conflict lasting
anything from a few months to as long as ten years. Frontier violence in Queensland continued to smoulder throughout most of the nineteenth century, beginning when the first squatters pushed up onto the Darling Downs and only dying away in the 1890's as attempts were made to settle marginal land in the far west and Cape York. With patient accounting it has been possible to arrive at a fair estimate of the number of Europeans killed by Aborigines on the pastoral frontier. In some districts where conflict was sharpest as many as 10% or even 20% of the initial workforce died violently by spear or club or boomerang. Overall perhaps 500 or 600 Europeans fell to Aborigines attack. The death toll on the other side of the frontier was very much higher although impossible to determine with any certainty. But European firepower and mobility gave the settlers and the Native Mounted Police an easy superiority despite the Aborigines' intimate knowledge of the terrain. When conflict was at its height the Aborigines lived a life of constant insecurity; of precipitate flight and violent death. One can only guess at the ultimate death toll but it may have amounted to anything between five and fifteen thousand.

The precise course of white-aboriginal relations was often determined by the policies of particular groups of settlers, by how long and ruthlessly they enforced a policy of 'keeping the blacks out' and how skilfully they handled the many problems arising when eventually local Aborigines were 'let in' to settlement or station. Both policies were fraught with uncertainty and danger but from our point of view the most interesting problems arose when 'letting in' brought the two races into close and constant contact.

Remember that on the pastoral frontier each small group of Europeans - squatter, shepherds and other employees - were usually living in the midst of a larger, if scattered, indigenous population. Even without violence or ecological disruption the newcomer presented problems to the Aborigines. In tribal society all behaviour was delineated by complex codes of obligation based on kinship networks. Strangers could only be accommodated within this system by assimilation and Europeans who lived in constant contact with traditional societies frequently discovered that they had been incorporated within an intricate net of
kinship. This could happen in a number of ways. Someone might claim the white stranger as a lost relative returned from the dead or he would perhaps be awarded the status of brother to the first person who saw him. Once the newcomer's status was determined each person in the tribe or clan would know how to behave towards him and what behaviour to expect in return.

The problems inherent in such an attempted assimilation were manifold; opportunities for misunderstanding abounded. Mutual sharing was a marked characteristic of Aboriginal life and generosity highly valued. Even the poorest European settler had an overflowing abundance of material possessions when compared with neighbouring tribesmen. Two concepts of behaviour and of property met head on. Each race saw the other as behaving in morally unacceptable ways. To the black the European was manifestly selfish; the white was driven to anger by what appeared to be constantly provocative thieving.

Sexual relations were another source of misunderstanding and tension. As with material possessions two conceptual worlds collided. Neither group understood the other's sexual mores. Early settlers often found that women were offered to them; they in turn were frequently only too willing to accept the preferred sexual favours. But such behaviour appeared to the Europeans to indicate a complete absence of sexual morality. This assessment was of course far from the mark. The ceremonial offer of wives to visiting strangers as a gesture of friendship and hospitality was practiced in varying ways in many parts of the world. It indicated a different morality not the absence of it. If sexual favours were not offered the settlers frequently took them violently, running women down, tying them up and keeping them against their will. Europeans quickly learnt that sexual contact, regardless of how initiated, frequently led to deteriorating race relations and overt violence. They rarely understood the full ramifications of sexual relations with tribal women, that copulation involved them in a complex of social obligations which had to be met on pain of punishment. Having had intercourse with one woman their future sexual relations were strictly determined by traditional behaviour patterns. If another woman was taken the white man would quite probably be committing incest as defined in tribal society. To the
Aborigine the European appeared to totally disregard normal canons of behaviour and openly break tribal law. All such 'criminal' acts carried traditional penalties. It seems probable that in many cases Europeans were punished although often the knowledge of the settler's power deterred potential revenge parties. Once again we see the two races totally failing to understand each other. The Aborigines were applying traditional penalties to law breakers, the settlers were appalled by what appeared to be motiveless and unexpected savagery.

Some of the dangers and complexities of frontier contact can be illustrated by reference to the fate of the Frazer and Wills families who died in Aboriginal attack at Hornet Bank in 1858 and Cullinlaringoe in 1861. At Hornet Bank the Frazers initially had good relations with the local Aborigines who had been 'let in' and who assisted in the work of establishing the station. Suddenly violence erupted. In a well planned attack most of the family were killed. To Europeans this was an example of senseless and motiveless savagery perpetrated for the sheer joy of killing. On the frontier Hornet Bank came to symbolize the dangers of ever trusting the blacks. But from the Aboriginal side things looked very different. By piecing together scattered pieces of information it is possible to partially recreate the course of events.

The principal cause of conflict was the behaviour of European men towards Aboriginal women who were taken by force and raped. Opinions conflict as to whether the men were members of the Frazer family or their employees. Such behaviour merited dire punishment in tribal society. When no action of appeasement or retribution came from the Europeans the blacks took matters into their own hands and carried out the vengeance which traditional custom demanded. The whole Frazer affair then looks very different indeed when seen from the other side of the frontier. This is equally so with the case of the Wills at Cullinlaringoe in 1861.

When the Wills family arrived on the Nogoa, land was just being taken up. They wished to come to terms with the local Aborigines and 'let them in' from the start but unfortunately for them the tone of race relations had already been established. The earliest squatter, Gregson, was determined to ruthlessly enforce a policy of "keeping the blacks out".
The local clans tried repeatedly to establish friendly relations with him but were just as often driven away. The situation rapidly deteriorated. One of Gregson's shepherds lost a flock of sheep. They were found wandering aimlessly about by a group of Aborigines who in turn were discovered by the Native Mounted Police who shot on sight killing an undisclosed number. The tribe sought revenge. As all white men appeared to speak the same language it was assumed they were related and therefore accountable for each others' behaviour. So the unsuspecting Wills family died at the hands of a revenge party little understanding what had gone wrong. Once again the Europeans took the killing as evidence of irreconcilable savagery and in turn exacted their own massive and disproportionate revenge.

Yet conflict was only part of the story and eventually an accommodation was reached in all frontier districts. Both sides found violence costly. The Aborigines will to resist was frequently broken by dwindling food supplies, constant tension, violent death and general disruption of traditional life. The settlers too felt the anxieties of frontier life. But they suffered economically as well. While conflict continued their flocks and herds were depleted and labour was extremely expensive even when procurable. Despite its inherent dangers 'letting in' came to seem the lesser of two evils. So in small groups or in large the Aborigines began to take up semi-permanent residence in camps on the sheep and cattle stations exchanging labour and sex for food and relative security. By this time the first period of contact had ended. Race relations entered a new phase which has lasted in some places up to the present day.

REFERENCES

Before looking at the three frontiers indicated in the title of this paper, it is important to focus attention upon Queensland's frontier policy. For the policy of 'keeping the blacks out' and 'letting the blacks in', described by Reynolds in his paper, was not only condoned by the colonial government but actively assisted. A Native Police Force was provided to help break Aboriginal resistance. This combination of settler initiative and government support was referred to euphemistically throughout the Australian colonies as Queensland's policy of 'dispersal'. It aimed at conquering and dispossessing the Aborigines and keeping them subservient by as much force as was considered necessary. The government expected the settlers to use arms and closed its eyes to excesses committed on the frontier. This policy which had evolved from the experience of the squatting movement proved satisfactory for the settlers on the pastoral frontier of North Queensland but inadequate on the other frontiers, i.e. those dealt with in this paper.

Most of North Queensland was colonised by Europeans exploiting its pastoral wealth. However, in much of Cape York Peninsula the discovery of gold, and later tin, attracted large numbers of Europeans and Chinese into inhospitable country then virtually unknown to them. The main frontier goldfields were thus the Gilbert, the Palmer, the Hodgkinson, and the Etheridge while the main tin field was in the Herberton - Tinaroo district. (See map, opp. page 164)

These fields were in terrain suitable for Aboriginal resistance and often the loss of European and Chinese lives alarmed the settlers especially on the Gilberton-Etheridge and Palmer goldfields. The loss of Aboriginal life was of course immeasurably greater. Thus the Barbaram tribe was almost wiped out in the 1880's tin rush to Tinaroo. The normal response of a miner was to shoot on sight. Thus James Venture Mulligan recounted how a party of prospectors approaching a camp at dusk automat-
ically fired upon the shadowy figures moving around it only to have their fire returned by members of another prospecting party. The explanation of the intruders that they had thought it was an Aboriginal camp was readily accepted as a reasonable explanation.

The nature of the frontier goldfields was largely responsible for the intensity of the conflict. They were not only situated on watercourses which were as valuable, indeed essential, to the Aborigines as to the miners but also often in mountainous terrain. While this latter fact aided Aboriginal resistance it also meant that there were no predictable refuges to which the Aborigines could retire. Prospectors and even large numbers of miners could suddenly intrude into the most inhospitable fastnesses. This was very different from the pastoral frontier.

Another factor which the Aborigines had to contend with was the highly mobile nature of the digger population. The term 'gully raking' aptly described the prospecting for alluvial gold and surface lodes. Prospectors were always moving into new areas even while a field such as the Palmer was at its height. This must have been disastrously unsettling and provocative to the Aborigines and helped produce their intense resistance.

Added to this was the ephemeral nature of most of the centres of population. A mining camp or town could grow overnight and become a ghost town almost as quickly. In most areas there was not enough time to break Aboriginal resistance or for Aborigines to resign themselves to the presence of miners. Indeed, by 1880, when the period of major rushes was over, Aborigines had not been let in on the goldfields. It was left to the pastoralists and more permanent residents of reefing towns to reach an accommodation with them.

Aboriginal resistance posed very serious problems on these frontier fields. There were poor and often lengthy communications between mining centres and between the fields and the coast. The Palmer and Hodgkinson lifelines to the coast were extremely vulnerable. The Aborigines attacked travellers, bullock teams, and the teams of packers. Camping sites on these roads were few and well known to the Aborigines who repeatedly attacked the animals let out to graze. An additional reason for attacking
North Queensland, showing principal goldfields

ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE ON THE MINING, RAINFOREST, & FISHING FRONTIERS

the lines of communication was the limited number of cattle the Aborigines could attack as most needed for the mining fields were driven from the often distant pastoral areas. As the natural resources of the Aborigines had been limited by the intrusion of the miners, there was great incentive to attack the vulnerable animals which were so essential to communications.

Frequently such attacks threatened the very existence of the mining fields and an important function of the Native Police was to keep the roads open. In addition, prospecting was often inhibited by aggressive Aborigines. Prospecting entailed small groups of miners, often secretly, pushing out into new areas, splitting up further into ones and twos. Such miners were very vulnerable to attack. Vulnerable too were the miners' tents and camps which were deserted temporarily while the men were gully raking or working their finds. Aborigines could often keep the miners under observation and clean out their tents while they were away working. The miners then were confronted with the expensive and time consuming task of replenishing their supplies from the nearest town.

Perhaps the following extract from the Cooktown Herald of 24 June 1874 best encapsulates the struggle between the frontier miners and the Aborigines:

The recent outrage by the blacks, as detailed in a late issue of our paper, has occasioned some uneasiness among miners and others about to start for the Palmer, and the subsequent appearance of these sable gentlemen in close proximity to the Eight-mile has filled the minds of the more timid with serious apprehension. It seems strange to us that six men should allow a mob of darkies to drive them back in broad daylight, armed as they were - but, nevertheless, the fact remains the same. These men were driven back whilst on a prospecting tour in the immediate neighbourhood of Cooktown, and compelled to leave provisions and horses behind them to the mercy of the blacks. This unfortunate affair is much more serious than it appears, as the very fact of white men giving way to the savage must necessarily tend to increase the importance of the natives in their own estimation, and make them much bolder in consequence. They now find the whiteman is not the terrible apparition which they were accustomed to regard as something supernatural, whilst the terrible weapons borne by him are not used with the same proportionate degree of skill as the darkies spears. Still, the aggression of the natives will mitigate in a
great measure against the prospecting for gold or other minerals by small parties of diggers. When savages are pitted against civilisation, they must go to the wall; it is the fate of their race. Much as we may deplore the necessity for such a state of things, it is absolutely necessary in order that the onward march of civilisation may not be arrested by the antagonism of the aborigines. The miners have difficulties to contend with without having to enter into a guerilla warfare, and risk their lives fighting their sable foes, who are immeasurably their superiors in tactics and bush-fighting.... Therefore in the interests of the miners and packers, it is absolutely necessary to have an increase in the present numbers of the native police, so that a constant and thorough patrolling of the road may take place, and not only of the road to the Palmer, but also our own neighbourhood. This matter is more important than it appears from a casual notice - for as has been said before, the fact of the blacks making raids upon the camps, and spearing unfortunate diggers and their horses, has a deterrent effect upon others who naturally hesitate when they see the risk they run by undertaking these prospecting expeditions. It necessarily causes men to keep together in mobs, and prevents a very great deal of prospecting which would be undertaken by miners singly, or at all events in small parties, if the Government would only step in, and by largely increasing the native police force, so as to have "native contingents" stationed at the worst points of the road, or wherever most required. We believe that this is one of the main reasons why no new ground has been discovered, as every digger coming to Cooktown from the south made it a point to reach the Palmer, and on arrival they never ventured very far from the main camps, except in very few instances, and when a move was made it was in large numbers. Men did not care to isolate themselves with the chance of a spear terminating their existence suddenly. Therefore, prospecting on the Palmer has not been carried on to the extent it ought to have been simply because, as has been stated hundreds of times, "The niggers were bad" and the little or no protection afforded to the miners by the Government.

It should be noted that the Queensland government was never able to offer miners the protection required. The Native Police were nowhere near as effective in intimidating Aborigines on the goldfields as on the pastoral frontier. Indeed the Police Commissioner pointed out that he would have needed ten times the number of Native Police to pacify the mining frontier. The diggers mainly had to protect themselves as Queensland's frontier policy could not cope effectively with these frontier mining fields.

* * * * *

The facility of some Aboriginal groups to find refuge in extensive areas
of thick scrub or rainforest is a recurrent theme of Aboriginal resistance in eastern North Queensland. Thus, near Woodstock and on the lower Herbert River the Aborigines were able to defy the pastoralists for many years while between Bowen and Mackay, near the present village of Bloomsbury, they had successfully raided squatters' herds for twenty years by using such favourable environment. However, it is the extensive area of rainforest north of Townsville from the Herbert River to just south of Cooktown that I am most interested in, especially that of the Atherton and Evelyn Tablelands. (See map.) It was in this area that Aboriginal resistance produced a response from pioneer farmers that led to a completely new government policy to pacify the frontier.

To travellers, the fringe of the rainforest imposed often an almost impenetrable barrier of ferns, young trees, and herbaceous nettles, while beyond this, the taller trees with their canopy of foliage produced a gloom which limited travelling to the midday hours when the sun was overhead. Through the foliage canopies protruded giant red cedar, kauri pine, and others that caught the attention of the early timber getters, the tallest trees growing near to water courses on the most fertile alluvial soils. The soft soil surface, covered by fallen logs and leaves and humus, made the early settlers' transportation very difficult.

Within the forest occurred pockets of open schlerophyll forest. It is probable that at least some of these clearings were made and many extended and maintained by the rainforest Aborigines. Christie Palmerston noted in his diary of his expedition from Herberton to the Barron Falls in 1884:

We reached a pocket - that is a piece of open country about a quarter of an acre in size, circular shaped, used by the aborigines for war dances and fighting. They take particular care to keep the place free from jungle, which would creep over it in a few seasons if allowed. There were several gunyahs around its margin...

The early settlers found well defined paths connecting the pockets. James Venture Mulligan approached the western fringe of the rainforests and described the network of tracks he found linking Aboriginal 'townships'.
A splendid track, the best native track I ever saw anywhere. There are roads off the main track to each of their townships, which consist of well thatched gunyahs, big enough to hold five or six darkies. We counted eleven townships since we came to the edge of the scrub, and we have only travelled four miles along it... Their paths are well trodden, and we follow them sometimes for miles.

The Aborigines of the rainforest were pygmoid i.e. 'A people characterised by a high incidence of relatively and absolutely small stature, crisp curly hair, and a tendency towards a yellowish-brown skin colour'. There were probably twelve tribes of between 1,500 and 2,500 pygmoids fringed by tribes of semi-pygmoid Aborigines.

As early as 1874, timber getters were attracted to the Tully, Johnstone and Daintree Rivers. They revealed the land's fertility and were soon followed by small selectors anxious to take advantage of the 1876 Land Act. The 1884 Land Act and its amendments further encouraged small selectors of limited capital. By 1880, much of the best cedar of the Johnstone and Daintree was exhausted and in 1881 the timbermen turned to the tablelands behind Cairns and revealed its agricultural potential. This penetration of the rainforest produced conflict with the Aborigines but the timber and land made the intruders determined to overcome it.

On the western side of the Great Divide, miners encroached on the rainforest of the tablelands when the Herberton tin field was discovered in 1878. On the coast, gold was discovered in the rainforest on the Mulgrave, Russell, and Johnstone Rivers. After 1886 when most of the available land around Cairns and on the Barron River had been taken up, the selectors' invasion of the Atherton and Evelyn Tablelands quickened.

The Aborigines, more and more restricted, more and more hungry, saw their ancient homelands producing maize, potatoes, and bananas in abundance. The settlers' huts, miners' camps, and timber getters' camps beckoned enticingly and were regularly raided. The Cairns Post of 11 April 1888 reported: "A revolver and rifle are as necessary to the miner as a pick and shovel". Roads from Herberton to Cairns and Port Douglas became dangerous trade routes and requests for police protection were frequent. Some settlers, especially miners, were killed and the Chinese were reported working for security in groups of twenty on the Johnstone River. In fact the local correspondent to the Queenslander reported
"the scrub and the blacks are 'terrors'." On the Daintree in the 1880's, Aboriginal raids were so incessant that the Port Douglas local authority suggested that the Police Commissioner withdraw the Native Police as they only deluded the settlers into a false sense of security.

In some districts, such as Cairns in 1886, the Aborigines found were 'let in' but in many areas they found refuge in the least accessible parts of their tribal land as they were denied the river valleys, the sea coast, the more open fringing areas, and the newly cleared farmlands.

On the Atherton Tableland, the Aborigines seriously inhibited the expansion of farming. In 1884, the Wild River Times lamented that Aboriginal raids had become so frequent in the neighbourhood of the scrub in the vicinity of Herberton (being indeed of almost daily occurrence) that their recital wearies us as well as our readers and it is only the more sensational cases that now find any interest outside the victims of their thieving, destruction and blood-thirsty propensities. (Quoted Port Denison Times, 1 January 1885.)

From 1885 until early 1889, the pages of the Herberton Advertiser and Cairns Post are studded with reports of horses and bullocks killed, sheds, huts, and houses broken into and robbed, and crops of corn and potatoes stolen. Selectors eloquently and unashamedly described their constant fear. Thus, one selector complained he was unable to meet the residence regulations of the Land Act:

There are many of us who are compelled to live away somewhere in the immediate vicinity of our selections, not only for convenience and economy, but for safety's [sic] sake, on account of the well known danger we are in from marauding and murdering blacks.

Needless to say the inability of the Native Police to prevent such raids was vigorously criticised yet the problems confronting them were immense. Most of the time they could not use horses in the dense scrub and rainforest. Yet there were only two officers who were regarded as having the constitution to lead the foot-patrols in the tropical conditions. Even the Aboriginal troopers had to be rested after such exertions.

What then was the government response to this situation? To cope with the problems posed by such closely settled frontier areas eight of the thirteen Native Police detachments were broken up into nineteen units,
each with an ordinary policeman and three trackers. Yet neither this proliferation of police protection nor settler retaliation could prevent rainforest Aborigines from successfully raiding the selections. Once again Queensland's frontier policy had failed in North Queensland.

The selectors near Atherton urged the government to try to conciliate the Aborigines. As a result, a policeman known for his concern for and skill in dealing with the Aborigines, Constable Hansen, was sent to make contact with the rainforest Aborigines. When this was effected, it was found that the Aborigines were starving, or would have been, if they had not robbed the settlers. Food was provided for the Aborigines on the understanding that they stopped their raids. The scheme was an immediate and dramatic success. Depredations ceased almost entirely. Selectors were able to clear more land and profit by the harvests and very soon Aborigines were working for the settlers and providing a plentiful source of very cheap labour which was always available to be tapped. Other areas asked for rations and soon a number of food distributing centres were set up in North Queensland to pacify the Aborigines of other districts. This policy was continued beyond 1897 when the first protection act was passed.

Thus the Atherton initiative produced a frontier policy, which, given the colonists' determination to dispossess the Aborigines, may have been an effective alternative in some areas of Queensland and, probably, could have been an effective complement to Queensland's customary policy of dispersal. The problems posed by the rainforest resistance also focused the government's attention on the Aborigines in a peaceful, bureaucratic manner. The scheme that developed extensively involved the police force, police magistrates, and senior government ministers and their senior departmental officers. A base was thus established to build on after 1897. Finally, Aboriginal resistance in a suitable terrain had once again shown the inadequacy of Queensland's frontier policy.

* * * * * *

It was very early realized that the waters of North Queensland contained easily exploited wealth in the form of beche-de-mer, tortoise
shell, guano and, after 1868, pearlshell. The earliest accounts of exploitation date from the 1840's and by the early 1860's "a little trade" had developed in and near Torres Strait which was based on Singapore and Sydney.

By far the most important products of the North Queensland Fisheries were bêche-de-mer and pearlshell. Bêche-de-mer required a large supply of cheap, unskilled labour. It was collected at low tide by hand, gutted, dried and smoked, and then despatched through the nearest port to the Chinese market. Pearlshell fishing also required a large supply of cheap, unskilled labour before the introduction of diving suits in 1874. Between 1874 and 1885 swimming divers gave way to those using diving dress which allowed the exploitation of deeper and more remote waters. However, whenever new banks were opened up (e.g. near Batavia River in the late 1890's) shell was still collected by swimming diving.

The Pearlshell industry was based on Thursday Island and the bêche-de-mer industry on Thursday Island, Cooktown, and, to a much lesser extent, Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay.

Bêche-de-mer crews could be fairly described as the scum of the earth and, unfortunately, it was in this industry that Aborigines were mainly used. Southern and partly-acculturated Aborigines were employed first and obtained from such areas as Fraser Island and Townsville. However this labour supply was not sufficient and obviously not as attractive a source as the Aborigines adjacent to the fisheries who could be picked up and disembarked cheaply. What is more they were not sophisticated enough to realize the value of their labour or the value of the food, tobacco, clothing, and blankets etc. they were normally paid in.

In the 1880's and 1890's there were probably between 300 and 500 Aborigines working in the northern fisheries. There were many similarities in the recruitment of such labour to that of the Kanaka labour trade. Boats called into islands such as the Palm Islands, Hinchinbrook, and Dunk and into convenient mainland areas. Contact was made with the Aborigines who were lured on board with gifts. Sometimes they were forcibly taken or kept on board. Aborigines who had had little or no contact with whites had no chance of understanding the nature of their
projected labour or the time they would be away. Thus each new recruiting area was opened up by trickery, kidnapping, and brute force.

When Aborigines were returned and the other members of the tribe became aware of the nature of the work and its rewards, a regular labour trade developed. The young men, especially, were willing to go to sea. They were less held by traditional ties and recruiting opened up a way of avoiding the dominance of the elders and of experiencing a novel way of life that offered previously unimagined excitement and interest. As well the older men soon began to exploit this new source of tribal wealth by trading their young kin whether they were willing or not for bags of flour and tobacco. As the male population of the fisheries were sexually dependent on Aboriginal women, the males who had authority over them traded their services with the fishermen.

The taking of the young and able and the prostitution of the women had an obvious disastrous effect on traditional life. Aborigines were introduced to the worst elements of European and Asiatic society. For many, traditional diets were replaced by unbalanced diets. Diseases were introduced and the nature of the work in the fisheries made the Aborigines particularly vulnerable to illness. Venereal disease was introduced and this plus the withdrawal of many young and able Aborigines from the tribe for lengthy periods lowered the birth rate. The cumulative effect of introduced diseases, a lower birth rate, and Aboriginal vulnerability to such diseases was great depopulation. This was so marked that the fisheries had to progressively shift their recruiting ground as the older ones became worked out. By 1897, the Batavia River area, at Mapoon Mission, was most resorted to and contact was just beginning to be made with the tribes near the present town of Weipa.

For the Aborigines, life in the fisheries was a gamble. The dependence of the fishermen on Aboriginal labour had some limiting effect but the industry became notorious for its abuses. If one considers that even in settled areas of Queensland, extensive legislation and supervision was required to control abuses associated with the Pacific Islanders, it would be foolish to expect that there would not be greater abuses in the almost totally unsupervised fisheries. Thus many Aborigines were
imprisoned in the fisheries. They were not returned to their tribal areas and were unable to return from places where they were disembarked because of the hostility of intervening tribes or simply because of the distance involved. Thus, stranded in such places as Cooktown or Thursday Island, they were forced to reship. The crude and often brutal exploitation of Aboriginal women was a feature of the labour trade. In the court cases reported in the Cooktown papers, almost every fisherman had his 'gin' who was treated as a property and retained or discarded according to the whims of the fisherman.

The kidnapping of Aboriginal men and women was so common that in 1884 the Liberal government of Samuel Griffith introduced the Native Labourers Protection Bill. The immediate motivation was fear of Imperial criticism. 1884 was probably the peak year, in which Queensland received unfavourable publicity for abuses associated with the Pacific Islander labour trade. A Royal Commission was set up to investigate kidnapping of labour from islands adjacent to New Guinea. Later that year Griffith discovered, to his horror, that abuses as bad as those in New Guinea were being committed within Queensland's territorial limits on its black but British citizens. Indeed, the abuses were reported to him by an officer in the service of the Imperial government.

The 1884 Bill was thus modelled on the imperial Kidnapping Act of 1872. It was, however, emasculated in the Legislative Council largely because of the actions the government had recently taken with regard to the Pacific Island labour trade. The 1884 Act was a very weak instrument to curtail the abuses, was hardly policed at all, and did little or nothing to restrain kidnapping or the retention of labourers beyond the time they really wished to remain in the fisheries.

Yet there was another aspect of the fishing industry in North Queensland that can be easily overlooked. This was the revolutionary impact it had on traditional Aboriginal life. A wholly new multi-racial society was forming in the north. European, Asiatic, and Pacific Island fishermen had formed an integral part of the way of life of many coastal or island tribes. Aborigines from, say, the Batavia River who had not previously seen a white man could be at sea for six months, or even several
years, putting in at Thursday Island or Cooktown for lengthy periods and observing and sharing in the unique life-style of the fisheries. Indeed the rapidity with which Aborigines adapted to this new force in their area is quite surprising. Missionaries at Mapoon and Yarrabah had to fight against the attraction of the fisheries. Thus at Batavia River in 1897, 90% of the eligible Mapoon Aborigines were working in the fisheries. The missionary, Nicholas Hey, claimed that about half of these were absent because they had been traded by their elders but as the missionaries had been trying to dissuade the Aborigines from recruiting, it is most probable that more were willing to enlist than he believed. An old Aboriginal on Palm Island referred to life on the bêche-de-mer boats as golden days.

The accounts of individual Aboriginal responses that have survived show a lively creativity. The Aborigines often wished to return home before the fishermen were willing to release them. Consequently, Aborigines frequently ran off with boats and often had to attack and even kill the fishermen restraining them. Quite often Aborigines recruited with the intention of running off with a boat to gain possession of its cargo. Indeed, there was a well established refugee trail across Cape York Peninsula from Cape Melville back to the Batavia River. As well, some inland Aborigines were attracted to coastal areas to exploit this new source of wealth.

As with the whole of Aboriginal-European relations in North Queensland in the nineteenth century (and I suspect in other areas of Australia) the physical reality of depopulation obscured the less obvious reality that Aborigines were mentally adapting to the presence of the colonists and modifying or even abandoning their traditional way of life. The problems associated with such acculturation have often obscured such dramatic and even revolutionary changes. The 'doomed race' theory thus has cast its shadow over the whole of Aboriginal society and, indeed, upon the very nature of Aborigines. Moreover, anthropologists, fascinated by the traditional Aboriginal society and deploring the obvious problems associated with contact have until recently helped to perpetuate the concept of unadaptable Aborigines. A much stronger case could be put
for the inflexibility of the dominant white society in the demands it has made of Aborigines.

* * * * * *

In conclusion, it can be seen that on none of the frontiers dealt with in this paper did conflict lead to conquest and dispossession. When this occurred, it was for other reasons. On the mining and rainforest frontiers, Aboriginal resistance inhibited European colonization whereas on the sea frontier a working relationship with the Aborigines was necessary for the exploitation of its wealth. All three frontiers posed challenges that Queensland's frontier policy could not adequately encompass and provided the Aborigines in varying quantities, with room to move. The nature of the invaders' industries coupled with the environment being exploited thus allowed the Aborigines some freedom to respond without surrender.
In this paper I hope to show that Townsville fits into the overall Australian picture during the war, but at the same time displays a few characteristics that are unique to it alone.

On the outbreak of war, Townsville as elsewhere rallied strongly to the Allied cause, but as time passed the initial fervour died down, to be replaced by a more passive patriotism. Group relationships were relatively harmonious but this was not to last long.

The first signs of conflict arose during the campaign for the 1915 State election, and simmered below the surface after the conservative forces in the north brooded over the fact of having lost 12 of the 14 North Queensland electorates to the Labor Party, thus breaking their virtual stranglehold on government since the birth of Queensland.

The way in which the new State Labor Government set about implementing its policies in order to satisfy its supporters, only added to the ire of the conservatives. But with the advent of the conscription referendum they saw what they felt was a way to undermine the Government's policies, by stressing the need for all the Government's effort to be directed towards winning the war, rather than implementing its industrial and social reform measures. And in an effort to enforce their view, they began to question the loyalty of the labour movement. Victory before socialism became their banner - an issue which tended to be unique to the Queensland and local campaign over conscription. This slogan also represents the conservatives attempt to foster a "new" nationalism - one based more on pride of race than pride of class. This, coupled with the continued denigration of the labour movement's loyalty - something which really could never be in dispute - drove a wedge firmly between the two groups in the town.

The conscription referendum was lost in Townsville, partly due to the arrogance of many of the Federal Government's measures, and also because of the determined opposition of the labour movement, which initiated and sustained the local campaign. This is somewhat different
to the rest of Australia, where factors such as the farmers' vote, the Catholic vote, fears concerning the importation of coloured labour to replace workers who were conscripted, and so on, were equally as important.

All the antagonism and bitterness aroused by this referendum carried over into the Federal election of 1917. Hughes, who led the Nationalist Party, after splitting the Labor Party over conscription, won the election. Townsville however voted against him, showing that not only did it not want conscription, but that it was even dubious about the forceful prosecution of the war.

The town's attitude to conscription was reaffirmed later in the year when Hughes held another referendum, and the NO vote increased substantially. The issue in this referendum was freedom for the individual - a rather pressing matter given again the continuing arrogance of Hughes and his supporters.

Inextricably caught up with all this divisiveness surrounding the war and conscription, was the issue of industrial militancy, the last aspect of group relations in the town that I wish to consider. Apart from the overflow of hate from the political campaigns, other contributing factors were: the rise in prices and the failure of real wages to retain parity with them; and the gradually worsening unemployment situation, which at its peak saw 7% of the male workforce of the town unemployed.

Tension became increasingly pronounced from the time of the 1916 railway strike onwards, as the workers felt that equality of sacrifice was a deceptive slogan, behind which the men they trusted made assaults on their standards of living and their industrial rights. Not only was their animosity directed towards employers and their mates who scabbed on them, but it was also directed against the State Labor Government, which the workers felt was not doing enough for them. The town increasingly came under worker control, the final act in the suspense drama being the celebrated lock up incident of 1919. So much then for the general picture.

Australia's declaration of war on 4/8/14 was greeted in Townsville with heady exhilaration. The local Kennedy Regiment left Townsville on the eighth for Thursday Is., having been farewelled by over a third of the town's 17,000 people. The exuberence of the town however, like an
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR I

effervescent drink, was eventually to exhaust itself.

For the first year, Townsville rallied fairly well to the cause of Empire and country. Various patriotic funds were heavily subscribed to, women joined Sock and Comfort funds to knit clothes for the volunteers, and patriotic meetings were held to maintain the people's zeal for the war effort. Patriotic badges and tie pins were sold, and many social events were held to raise money. Some businessmen, in the hope that sales would increase, tended to use war terminology to describe the determination with which they kept prices down, or the concern they had to sell only the best. This kind of advertising, on occasion, descended to the level of bathos. In one instance, women desirous of helping their sisters in Belgium overcome the distress prevailing there, were exhorted to "buy (Belgian) Royal Rustless P.D. Corsets".

On a more serious note, local women, at their own request, were given lectures on nursing by the ambulance brigade. A detachment of Light Horse was camped at Victoria Park to guard the wireless station. And the City Fathers wired the Minister of Defence in December 1914 requesting that the town's water supply be guarded against sabotage, all of which is rather reminiscent of the TV series "Dad's Army". Reinforcing this concern was the editor of the Townsville Daily Bulletin, whose patriotism was beyond question. This was evident from the editorials and the selected articles that were reprinted from overseas journals. These usually dealt with German perfidy as compared with the Allies' moral righteousness.

As far as enlistments go, it is not possible to cite accurate figures for Townsville. One is forced to fall back on Queensland figures, and assume that the proportion of men enlisting state wide is also true of Townsville. If this is so, and there is no real reason to doubt it, then one can say that approximately 38% of all males aged between 18 and 44 in the town enlisted.

As time passed though, the initial fervour for Australia's great adventure abated, as it gradually began to dawn on the local populace that the war was not to be a six month skirmish. Men continued to leave for the front, clerics kept reassuring people that God was their "refuge
and strength", and more relatives grieved as the casualty lists grew longer. Gradually fewer people ventured forth to see the weekly departure of volunteers, and by May 1915 a lull in volunteering had occurred in the Townsville district.

As a result of the lull, a determined effort was mounted to revitalise the campaign in June. The Townsville Daily Bulletin, like other papers, began to feature daily the "Call to Queenslanders". This was devised using the language of an earlier, predominant, left wing, inward looking Australian nationalism. It was modified however, so that we now see the seeds of a newer, conservative, outward looking, nationalism permeated more by a flavour of pride of race rather than of pride of class.

The "Call" asked:

Are you not going to be a sport and help the boys who are gone; if you don't, and they get beaten, how will you hold up your head again? Don't wait for conscription... don't be a looker on, take a hand in the game.

The war game, however, was not as attractive for some, as those currently being played within Australia, and as Tin Pot Man said in a letter to the Bulletin:

Should we all volunteer for the front our football clubs would go bung, there would be an end to cricket, and whatever would become of the horses now in training?

To counteract this feeling, the Queensland State Government and many private firms offered to keep the volunteer's job open on his return. A further measure was the arrangement of regular recruiting meetings at which representatives of all Churches (bar the Catholic), the Mayor, leading lights of the local establishment, and Anthony Ogden (a prominent unionist) were usually present.

By 1916 though it seemed as if most people, had adopted a similar attitude to that of the headmaster of the local Grammar School, who had said in June of the preceding year:

We cannot spend our time with long faces and black ties looking at newspaper notice boards, or anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Bulletin. We can best serve those at the front by attending all the more zealously to our work.

This the townspeople did, while, at the same time, celebrating in a proper manner those occasions which were now taking on overtones of a grave or sacred nature. Anzac Day was in this category. At a patriotic
meeting on the Day itself in 1916, Mr Justice Shann described it as "the day the world awoke to the fact that Australia was a nation standing alongside the Mother Country". It is around this time that we see the cultivation of the Anzac legend. Cannon Williams (Anglican) a few months later was commenting on how the war had built up the Australian character, and had elicited characteristics in it that Australians had never dreamed were there.

The new nationalism still exhibited traces of the old with its racist, cliquish, insularity. This is obvious in the anti German feeling in the town, little though it was, because of the small number of Germans. As early as October 1914 there was friction between Australians and Germans on the wharf over job preference. In May 1915 there was a similar problem at the Ross River meat works, followed by June 1916, when men at the City Council quarry refused to work with a German employed there. It is also about this time that the name of the suburb German Gardens was changed to Belgian Gardens. The last and most interesting incident of anti German feeling involved Dr. Anton Brienl, and took place during February 1916.

The issue was precipitated following the monthly meeting of the Hospital Committee, when Anthony Ogden spoke against the action of the Board in accepting Dr. Brienl as the hospital surgeon, following the departure of the resident surgeon to Thursday Island. Dr. Brienl had been brought to Australia by the Federal Government from the Liverpool Tropical Disease Research Institute, to take charge of the local Tropical Institute. His knowledge of tropical diseases was considered so good that naval men from the south were sent to Townsville for treatment, as were others from Rabaul who had contracted malaria. On the departure of Dr. Ross for Thursday Island, Dr. Brienl had voluntarily offered his services to fill the vacancy which resulted. The trouble arose because, while he had been naturalised in May 1914, he was a native of Bohemia. An anti Brienl campaign subsequently followed in the Daily Bulletin, where, among other things, it was stated that there were Australian doctors who could have handled the job as well; that Germany did not recognise a subject's naturalisation in another country;
that more mothers would send sons to the front if aliens were not in high positions; and that while Dr. Breinl might not appear to be interested in politics, everyone knew "how Germans say nothing but think a lot".

The tide did not run completely against Dr. Breinl, for while many put forward numerous reasons why his appointment was far from wise, a number of other people, who could loosely be classed as part of the upper echelons of Townsville society, considered it a proper and wise action. Their pro Breinl sentiments however did not reach the same intensity of feeling that marked the anti Breinl campaign, as is seen in a letter by Ogden:

The death grip is on us as a Commonwealth. Is it Germany's fault that Dr. Breinl is not Superintendent of the Townsville Hospital in the name of the Kaiser today? Have my critics the hardihood to say that such a high public position being filled by a stranger doesn't work against the Commonwealth? Dr. Breinl is not the issue; but the Empire and freedom against the militarism of the fire eating Prussian.

Well to the forefront of the movement for Empire as against the "fire eating Prussian" was the Anglican Church. Bishop Feetham had been in favour of the war since its outbreak. He had equated patriotism with Christ's sacrifice on the cross - theologically a rather questionable parallel. He was not alone in this regard, as most clergy of all denominations felt the same. (Once again it is difficult to know what the Roman Catholic clergy felt). The war itself was not always seen in the same light. Feetham himself took the view that, "there would have been no war, but for the great mass of unrepentent and unforgiven sin in the world...". Other clergy had a somewhat different view. So much then for the relatively quiet tempo of the time up to this point. However, when Hughes dropped the bombshell of conscription on the Australian people with his announcement of 30 August, Townsville's pastoral torpor was shattered.

The first signs of the division that were to take place over this issue occured as early as 20 July, when the Ross River sub branch of the A.M.I.E.U. passed a unanimous motion objecting to the introduction of conscription. A month later a meeting of all members of the A.M.I.E.U. passed a similar motion, while at the same time condemning Hughes, and stating that, "the next Parliament should be in the Trades Hall where labour could get its desires". Similar union called meetings also fell
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR I

into step. The anti conscriptionists who comprised many of the
trade unionists also gained confidence, when the State Labor
Government on 21 September announced its decision to oppose
the referendum.

In the period that led up to the referendum on 28 October,
Townsville began to experience political violence on a wide
scale, and in most instances it was as a result of anti
conscriptionists breaking up pro-conscription rallies. Police
in most cases stood by helpless. An already difficult situat­
on was not improved when it was announced on 29 September that
all single men, and widowers without children, between the ages
of 21 and 35, were to be called up for training, pending the
outcome of the referendum. These became known as the Hughes­
liers, and Hughes action caused a backlash which went against
the Government in the referendum. In Townsville the number of
men thus called up reached the figure of 2,800 or 16% of the
town's population, though after allowing for exemption
applications and those medically unfit, only 1,175 entered the
Kissing Point camp.

Supporting the pro-conscription cause in the town were
the Townsville and Thuringowa Conscription League, the City
Fathers and respected gentry of the town, the federal Labor
member for Herbert (Bamford), the clergy, and the editor of
the Bulletin. Advertisements in the paper supporting conscript­
ion read:

The Kaiser expects every voter to vote NO. Protect
Australia's honour and her womanhood by voting YES.

True to it's Labor loyalties, a fact attested to by the
town's voting in the 1914 Federal election and the 1915 State
election, Townsville voted against conscription - the vote
being 56.5% for NO.

Much of the heat that was generated by the referendum
seemed to dissipate slightly in the ensuing months, only to
come to the surface again during the Federal election campaign in
April 1917. This election followed fairly closely on the heels
of the Labor Party split over conscription, and saw Hughes leading the Nationalists. All the animosities over the previous referendum were injected into this contest, the Nationalists continually decrying Labor's patriotism. Townsville was no exception to this Australia wide phenomenon. Here Labor's patriotism was being questioned by linking them with the IWW. The smear worked to a certain extent, because "there were a considerable number of active members among the meat workers, and it seems that the rest responded somewhat sympathetically to the emotional gospel of industrial liberation".

It was becoming more obvious by this time that the conservative elements of Australian society were deliberately fostering a split within the country, and felt that their new and more respectable, imperial oriented, race centred, nationalism was the issue which would return them to power. As had been the case with both sides during the conscription campaign, wit and manoeuvre were more important than honesty and due assessment of fact and reality. Arguments were good if they scored a point, regardless of whether they were valid or not, a splendid example of the old cliche that in times of war and hostility the first casualty is truth. Labor for its part kept stressing the point that a Nationalist Government would be of no use to the workers, and also referred to the spectre of conscription that hung over the community if Hughes was returned to power. Hughes went on to win, as did the local Nationalist Bamford. While this vote for the Nationalists seems to negate the country's earlier vote against conscription, this is not correct. The explanation lies in the fact that while the people were against conscription, they were still very much in favour of a forceful prosecution of the war, and felt that the Nationalists were more likely to do this than the Labor Party. The interesting point to note about Townsville though is that it voted against the Nationalists, which tends to make one believe that not only was Townsville against conscription, but that it was also tired of the war.

It was not until 7 November, that Labor's dire warnings about Hughes came true, and, as predicted, Hughes announced another referendum on conscription. The Labour movement again came out strongly in opposition,
though the Trades and Labor Council pledged to assist the local recruiting committee in the interests of increasing voluntary recruiting. This however, was not as dramatic as the support offered for the war effort by the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, which, on 23 November, proclaimed that:

Townsville will not lay down its sword until Germany surrenders its fleet intact, extends the boundaries of France to the Rhine, replaces every Allied ship sunk, and splits up the Federal German states.

It's not known how much sleep the Kaiser lost over that ultimatum.

The second conscription campaign was less intense in Townsville than the first. The labor non-labor conflict of the 1916 referendum is played down, the theme this time being more that of freedom for citizens, as opposed to the 1916 slogan of freedom for socialism.

While Hughes' distortions and underhand methods antagonized the local unions, the conservatives forgave all, because they knew, "that we are fighting for the 10 commandments". Once again however the smear tactics and the impugnment of Labor's loyalty failed, as the NO vote on 20 December in Townsville increased to 64.5%. Advertisements such as the following had fallen on deaf ears:

**How would they vote**

How would the Kaiser vote? NO!
How would the Sultan vote? NO!
How will Mr Ryan vote? NO!
How would you vote if you were a German? NO!

With the advent of the new year, the minds of the people were diverted from the war by a campaign of a different kind - the State elections. During the campaign many of the issues raised during the conscription referendum were resurrected. The local Nationalist candidates concentrated on impugning Labor's patriotism, criticised what they saw as its excessive class bias, and condemned its treatment of returned soldiers. Local trade unionists did not take too kindly to this, and Nationalist meetings were consistently disrupted as a result.
One particularly noteworthy meeting saw speakers howled down, lumps of street metal thrown at them, a Bulletin reporter stoned, the speaker's platform overturned, and the speaker himself surrounded by a crowd of several hundred when he took refuge in a nearby car. The police stood by helpless. Notwithstanding all this, both Labor candidates retained their seats. In the seat of Townsville the Labor vote reached 54.6%, and in the seat of Mundingburra 70.1%.

Labor's dominance in the town was to show itself in more ways than election and referendum results, and this brings me to the last, and perhaps most important aspect of Townsville in this period—industrial militancy. The first signs of group polarisation seen around the time of the 1916 referendum, became less of warning posts than established facts, as strikes in Townsville after 1917 became more frequent and more bitter. Violence increased, and made those samples of it seen during the first conscription referendum, and during the 1918 State election, look pale by comparison. This no doubt resulted from frustration with the war, the rising cost of living, and increasing unemployment. The absurd accusations which came from the responsible sections of the community would not have helped matters. Society's leaders failed the people as they did them. There was certainly a limit to the extent to which the labor movement would stand having its patriotism impugned, before it would strike back. It would seem that there was a high correlation between these two factors. It was also questionable as to how long labour could be expected to stand for a depressed standard of living even though a war was in progress. What was the use of having a Labor Government in power after fifty five years, if the labour movement received no tangible results? Why should labour carry the burden of the war so that the capitalists would have a better life? These and other considerations it seems explain the degree of union militancy in Townsville. From a city of relative calm, and at least normal group relationships, Townsville came under the dominance of industrial labour. The Liberal, pro conscription, Empire-oriented sector of the town became submissive to the unionists' will. In a town where labour was dominant
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR I

(as is attested by voting patterns and census statistics) there is nothing much else they could do but 'grin and bear it'.

Townsville had seen strikes in the war period as early as August 1914 in the railways, and somewhat later in the meatworks, but it was not until the railways strike of November 1916, which followed closely on the heels of the conscription referendum, that group polarisation and antagonism really increased. This strike snowballed as time passed and encompassed more unions, until by August 1917, 10 months later, all railway systems from Mackay northwards were left idle. Means of alleviating the hardship caused in the town were prevented by threats to blacklist individuals and organisations. Both meatworks in the town closed down putting 10% of the male workforce out of work and employees in town businesses were also laid off, substantially boosting the percentage of the workforce unemployed. Food shortages also became acute in the lower Burdekin, Cloncurry, McKinley and Hughenden shires.

As the strike dragged on, the trend towards an extremist position became more apparent. At a mass meeting of 2,000 Townsville trade unionists on 19 August, Anthony Ogden, speaking in a manner which was almost a volte-face when compared with some of his previous pro-establishment pronouncements, argued that:

employees should have the right to say how long they should work, how much they would do, how much they should get for it, and whom they should work with. It is not for Justice McCawley to decide these questions - it is for the men themselves to decide it.

Speakers at the same meeting also claimed that North Queensland was now educating Queensland in labour unity, and contended that their success, in completely holding up the railway system, was one of the finest arguments in favour of the One Big Union. The strike eventually collapsed on 27 August, when the southern and central Queensland branches of the railways union broke ranks with those in the North.

From the time of the collapse of the railway strike in August 1917, until October 1918 the industrial situation in Townsville was relatively calm. This contrasted somewhat with the ferment in the general political conditions of the time. From July 1917 on, IWW slogans begin to appear around the town, the classic being "fast workers die young", and in
January 1918, some months after the divisive conscription campaign of 1917, complaints were aired in the press about processions through the town of, "dirty foul mouthed blackguards who monopolise the sidewalks of our town and sing the Red Flag". The only other trouble in the town occurred in February as a result of demonstrations over free speech, which resulted in union criticism of police over victimization.

It was not to be long though before industrial trouble arose again, this time as a result of a sanitary workers strike in October. One historian has described this strike as a:

Well planned campaign of filth and vandalism until the state of the streets made it almost unsafe for people to move outside their homes.

As far as the editor of the Bulletin was concerned:

Townsville for the last year or so has been developing Bolshevism until now, except that there is no bloodshed, the mob management of affairs in this city, differs very little from the Petrograd and Moscow brand... With the exception of Broken Hill, there is less regard for industrial laws in Townsville than in any other centre in Australia.

In referring also to the Butchers' strike which was on at the same time, he went on to say:

These strikes completely prove that the leaders having exploited the Arbitration Court and a friendly government to the utmost, now propose to disregard both, and rule the community by terrorism and "direct action". They have hoisted the Jolly Roger, jettisoned the industrial judges, and thrown the Arbitration Court and all its provisions overboard. "Long live Anarchy!"

And even more incensed he asked on 26 October:

Is the Queen City of the North to be ruled by its eleven honourary aldermen or its twelve paid sanitary workers?

After two weeks with no sanitary service the Council demanded that the Government step in. A week later a number of sanitary services in the city were interferred with, and the contents emptied in Ogden Street. Two tins of night soil were also piled against the door of the Town Hall, and the City Health Inspector's office. Finally on 28 October, four weeks after the strike began, the Government intervened and the men returned to work. This intervention had only resulted because of fear of a typhoid epidemic. No sooner had order been restored than yet another
strike broke out at the meatworks. Trouble had been flaring up all during the war period at the meatworks, and the workers had invariably got their way because of the prosperity of the industry, and the protection accorded to it by the Meat Supply for Imperial Uses Act of 1914.

It is important to note that until March 1918, when the meat industry was handed down its first award under the arbitration system, wages and conditions were determined by direct negotiation between employer and employee. Industrial disputes were solved by similar negotiation between company representatives and the union representatives on the job. More important even than the issue of collective bargaining, and a factor which was to be at the heart of the meat industry strikes in 1918-19, was the issue of preference to unionists. This had been granted by the meat export companies at the end of 1912, and resulted in all labour required for the works being engaged through the union. This led to certain abuses, as a new hand sent by the union to the works, reported to the departmental (union) delegate, and not the works foreman. A number of these delegates from various departments made up a board of control (the basic unit of the A.M.I.E.U.), and to a large extent these boards were able to usurp the functions of management. The unions were also placed in a strong bargaining position because a stoppage meant the total loss of a considerable quantity of valuable and highly perishable products. It is not surprising that the only time there was a serious strike in which the A.M.I.E.U. was involved, was in 1918, when the meat companies, for the first time, took a stand against union demands.

Trouble had been brewing at the meatworks since April 1918, partly instigated by the employers who tried to create sectional rivalry between employees. By November, men at both works were out on strike over relatively insignificant issues, issues which however for the unionists involved matters of principle that they could not concede, even though they realised their employers were deliberately provoking them for ulterior motives. From these small issues things developed into a strike over job control at the meatworks. This issue came into prominence on 16 December when it was learned that the meat companies in Queensland were to approach the Industrial Court in January 1919 to seek the
abolition of the clause in the meatworks award under which the companies were bound to employ men through the A.M.I.E.U. office. The companies, exasperated by union control at the works, forgot their long standing rivalry and joined forces. In their attempts to bring the A.M.I.E.U. under the control of the Arbitration Court, they had willing allies in the State Labor Government, who were becoming increasingly embarrassed by industrial unrest in the town. Not much love was lost between the A.M.I.E.U. and the Labor Party, whose claims to represent the working class were rejected by the union. In fact even Brisbane officials of the union were terrified of being seen in the streets of the town on those occasions when they had to come north.

The timing of the company-activated confrontation was largely determined by an end to the war, an eventuality which would involve the loss of safe financial returns guaranteed by imperial contract, and the necessity once more to compete on the highly competitive international market. After Justice McCawley abolished the preference clause on 30 January, a meeting of 700 unionists declared both works black. Shipping companies subsequently refused to call at the port unless they could get a guarantee that railway men and wharfies would load the ships. Conflict subsequently broke out between the scabs and the strikers, being particularly violent between returned soldier scabs and strikers. These two groups resorted to using rifles against each other. The strike was eventually broken in March, four months after it began, because enough scabs were found to operate the plant. This was due not to any lack of class consciousness on their part, but because of the extremely high unemployment in the town, which reached 7½% of the male workforce at its peak. This however failed to moderate the pronouncements of the militants who claimed that a scab was, "not worth a spit from a good unionists mouth". This isn't all that they had to say about the scab, and at this point I feel it's apposite to quote from the Ross River meatworks scab list which was circulated at the time. The degree of personal abuse and the general smearing of character shows the extent to which unionists were concerned at the lack of worker solidarity exhibited by their former friends. Some descriptions are as follows:

190
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR I

1) fifty, 5'9", married, dark, greaser, late Indian army flogger, ex-pub yardman, tried false pretences Chillagoe, now member F.E.D.F.A. or Scabs Union, living Oonoonba

2) pimp and spy for boss

3) very dark, Austrian, boiler cleaner, late bosses spy Charters Towers, now pimping Ross River, tried for larceny

4) living bigamously, member Townsville waterside, attempted to form scab union, beer hum

5) buck teeth, flat footed, scabbed in every strike, keeps a baby farm

6) paid under the lap by the company, tale teller, beer guzzler, speed up artist, ex-soldier, and bike stealer

7) gone grey from creeping to management, German

8) Jewish appearance

9) went to war to escape jail for carnally knowing

10) drunken pig and fornicator

11) one wall eye, gutty, robs drunks, well known bludger

12) married, sexual pervert, fitter when fit

13) speed up man, bosses donkey, made his sons scab

14) chow appearance

15) 1891 shearer shooter

16) returned soldier, criminal record

17) returned soldier, ex pug, went mad from scabbing, gone to Goodna

Running concurrently with the strike were the regular meetings and processions through the town of the unemployed. Radical solutions to present ills were the order of the day. One of the leading figures of the local unemployed declared that:

The only chance of the worker is the O.B.U...The time is coming when each of the industries will be organised on the job, and then we will be able to dispense with the Arbitration Court and the politicians and eventually overthrow the capitalist system and become free men.

The situation in Townsville went from bad to worse as the months passed. The Spanish influenza epidemic reached Townsville in May where its ravages produced widespread panic. On 20 May the local branch of the Federated Seamen Union went on strike in support of nation wide demands
that ships be quarantined in each port. In Townsville the dispute centred around the ship Morialta. On 28 May a monster union demonstration was held on the wharf near the Morialta. Strategically placed between the demonstrators and the ship was the gunboat Una, which was an ironic choice given the situation that we have, of the Establishment of Townsville using a captured German vessel of war to prevent a workers' demonstration. Under the shadow of small cannons and vigilant armed men, the union leaders addressed the crowd, and asked them to back the A.M.I.E.U. in its fight against the scabs employed at the meatworks. A motion was passed accordingly.

From this time on, depression, unemployment, and industrial unrest, begin to reduce the city to a state of siege. As work on the wharf ceased, the food supply dwindled and commodities such as flour had to be rationed. Before long a government official reported that, "it is not a question of having to work for a living, but fighting to live in Townsville, under present conditions". It was in this atmosphere that the earlier meatworks strike broke out anew in Townsville on 23 June over employment of scabs. The meat companies refused to give an inch, and welcomed the strike, as employment at the works would in any case be irregular due to the shipping strike, and at least this way they saved money, while making it seem the unionists were to blame. With uncertainty surrounding production the companies were not prepared to concede.

Various employer groups spoke out against the A.M.I.E.U. and asked for its deregistration. The editor of the North Queensland Register in a sweeping attack upon the labor movement in general stated that:

Carney, Rhymer, Ogden, Sampson and company, defy the government; proclaim the superiority of combined unionism above mere majority law; terrorise unionists who recognise that the anarchistic policy adopted is hurrying the Party to ruin, and the country into insolvency; the Labor members for Townsville have been scared into silence... the government too are afraid to act.

The initial spark that was to be fanned into a far bigger conflagration, resulted from a raid, in the early hours of 27 July, on the Stuart Creek railway trucking yeard, by 300 unionists who wanted to prevent the removal of 500 head of cattle from the district. The presence of six policemen and two stockmen failed to deter the men. The following afternoon, Pierce Carney and Mick Kelly were arrested in connection with the raid, on a
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR I

charge of intimidating a stockman into leaving his position, but both were subsequently dismissed on the grounds of insufficient evidence. The same night there was a record attendance at a meeting at the Tree of Knowledge, where speakers criticized the fact that Kelly, a sick man, was put in a cell. They also criticized the Government's "repressive" measures to prevent serious trouble occurring. After the meeting, the crowd, "egged on by speakers, some of whom appear to have suggested violence in words ostensibly intended to dissuade the crowd from it", marched to the lock up to see Kelly and Carney, singing the Ref Flag.

On arrival at the lock up some of the demonstrators called for the release on bail of Carney and Kelly, while others went inside the grounds. A scuffle ensued with a police sergeant, firearms went off, and people scattered. Nine people were wounded in the melee. A section of the unionists, who were antagonised by this police action, were not to let the matter rest there. Two days later on 30 June, a meeting was held at the Tree of Knowledge, at which Carney (released the day before on bail) addressed the men. Sherwood well describes the situation thus:

The main shopping centre became a ghost town... The main street of Townsville was in the possession of the meaties and their allies, and they disported themselves by shooting pigeons off the Post Office roof.

Twenty police with rifles arrived at the scene to disperse the unionists, but after being narrowly missed by one of the more excited riflemen, they took refuge in the Bank of Australasia. The meeting then got out of hand, and one section of the crowd (estimated by one police officer at 2,000) raided Rooney's, for the purpose of obtaining rifles and ammunition with which to defend themselves. Another section raided Alfred Shaw's for the same reason, smashing glass doors and firing off rifles in the store, as is normally depicted in movies of the American west. The sequels to both raids were court cases on 23 July, at which one of the crowd leaders was convicted and imprisoned. On 7 August, a fourteen year old boy was convicted but put in the custody of a clergyman because of his youth.

The Mayor of the town was perturbed by the lawlessness prevailing in his city, and immediately after the raids sent a wire to the Premier
and the Commissioner of Police in Brisbane. Cabinet conferred on the crisis and decided to dispatch fifty police to Townsville. A proclamation was also issued by the Government acquiring all firearms, ammunition, and explosives, in the town's stores, or which were in the stores in the previous forty eight hours, and they were ordered to be handed over to the Police Magistrate. Hotels were also closed at the Mayor's request. Townsville had, as Bolton aptly describes it, "the air of a beleaguered city". The police sent from Brisbane also experienced trouble in arriving at Townsville, because the Charters Towers railway employees refused to work the train to Townsville, but they were eventually brought down by four officials and a regular guard, and the men who refused to work the train were subsequently dismissed.

In the ensuing months, criticism was continually levelled at the Government by the striking unionists, because they had intervened on the side of the employers. One spokesman claimed that: "now they had beaten the Huns, they had had some of them brought home, and put them in Labor Party uniform, to shoot the workers down."

By the end of July, with no apparent signs that the strike would end, the local meat companies cancelled all contracts for cattle. The compulsory conference that had been sitting in Brisbane for the previous two weeks, broke up a week later, when the A.M.I.E.U. voted against giving an assurance that there would be no more strikes in 1919 and 1920, if preference was restored. Meanwhile, Carney, who by this time seems to have let his position in the A.M.I.E.U. go to his head, was saying at public meetings, that "he just wanted to sling a tip to the coppers that they had gone far enough".

While the strike was still in progress the Government set up a Royal Commission to investigate the lock up incident. This virtually white washed the police. At the same time as the Royal Commission was probing into this, parliamentarians were discussing the issue in Brisbane. While other M.P's were condemning Townsville, Dan Ryan, the local representative put the blame for the present trouble with the "American beef trust":

We know that in America, the great home of the Yankee beef trust, it is not a case of direct action on the part of the men in order to get their rights. When the men of the Yankee beef trust assert
their rights they are shot down by gunmen and others hired for the purpose - which the law permits - and that is one of the reasons we find that wherever the Yankee beef trust makes its home, there is trouble between them and the workers of Australia.

By 7 September, however, the unionists had withdrawn some of the demands that they had previously put to the "Yankee beef trust", and the strike was over.

REFERENCES


Cutler, T., "Sunday, Bloody Sunday" in J.Iremonger Strikes Sydney, 1973


Australia - Census & Statistics, Bureau of 1911 Census 1921 Census

Australia - Defence, Dept. of Report 1914-17 Melbourne - 1917

Townsville Chamber of Commerce Minutes 1914-19
I have taken only a fairly short period in order to illustrate some of the prominent features of politics in the north. In doing so, I hope to propose some hypotheses about the nature of electoral behaviour in North Queensland. Naturally, any conclusions are only valid for this period, but I believe some interesting comparisons with the present political scene can quite readily be drawn.

The interesting aspect of politics in the north at this time was the apparent contrast between the voting pattern in state elections and that in federal elections. It is this contrast in electoral behaviour which I now want to investigate.

In the nine state electorates which then comprised North Queensland, the non-Labor parties were consistently successful in only one - the cattle grazing and sugar-growing district of Mirani, near Mackay. The other electorates - from Cook in Cape York to Mackay, were generally, and correctly, regarded as safe Labor strongholds. The main reason for this was simply the nature of economic activity in the north, and the correspondingly large working-class. Pastoral, mining, and sugar workers combined with industrial and transport workers of the towns to give a solid base to Labor's electoral strength.

The federal electorate of Herbert then included all of coastal North Queensland from Sarina north to the Torres Strait; it is therefore a very convenient area for any study of politics in the region. The federal political situation in Herbert up to 1916 was virtually the same as the state scene. A Labor publican and journalist by the name of Fred Bamford won the seat narrowly in 1901, but subsequently improved this hold, gaining 64% of the vote in 1914. Thus Herbert seemed to be a blue-ribbon Labor electorate.

I have been unable to find out very much about Bamford. Unlike many politicians, he was never given much to talking about his past; he left no personal papers and apparently severed all his connections with North Queensland after his retirement in 1925. He was born in outback New South Wales in 1849, and subsequently lived in Toowoomba, where he learnt
carpentry. Bamford came to North Queensland in the early 1880s as a railway inspector of bridges. He settled in Bowen, where he ran both the Railway Hotel and a short-lived newspaper. He was elected to the town council and became Mayor of Bowen in 1898. After two unsuccessful tries at winning the state seat of Bowen, the prospect of a federated Commonwealth parliament gave Fred Bamford his chance. He was endorsed as Labor candidate for Herbert in the first federal elections, in 1901. Bamford's campaign was fought virtually on a single issue: coloured versus white labour on the sugar fields, and he presented himself as a "White Australia" advocate, establishing a precedent for later elections. Racial prejudice and fears of alien economic competition formed the basis of the labour movement's political catchcry of "White Australia", which in North Queensland meant abolition of kanaka labour and repatriation of the kanakas to their Melanesian homes. This catch-cry struck a responsive chord among most North Queenslanders, and, as a result, Bamford was returned.

Bamford's main political beliefs expressed the prevailing tenets of Australian nationalism. His ardent patriotism, which came to the fore during the first world war, was combined with a strong sense of British imperial loyalty, for Bamford, along with other Labor politicians, was convinced that Australian safety was founded on British protection. This sense of imperial nationalism transcended Bamford's other political ideals and led to his eventual expulsion from the Labor Party in 1916 when the great debate over conscription for overseas military service split the Labor Party. Bamford was amongst those expelled for supporting conscription. This rejection by his traditional political backers could be expected to spell electoral doom in such a firm Labor area as North Queensland. However, as a non-Labor, that is, Nationalist Party man, Bamford continued to win in Herbert - much to the consternation of the ALP and the bewilderment of many political observers. Even Bamford's retirement did not mean the return of Labor to its previous dominance of the Herbert federal electorate. The elections of 1925 saw the Labor Premier of Queensland, E.G. Theodore, defeated in Herbert by a local doctor from Mackay. The Nationalist Party's success in the north came
to an end only in 1928, when Labor re-gained Herbert, holding it unbroken for thirty years. This picture seems to suggest that the federal elections of 1917, 1919, 1922 and 1925, when the Nationalists won Herbert, were but temporary deviations from a North Queensland Labor norm.

Thus North Queenslanders returned non-Labor members to federal parliament in four successive elections, while at the same time they voted fairly solidly for Labor at the state level. Why then, was there this 10 year Nationalist interlude in a traditionally safe Labor area? This question can be answered firstly by a look at the various state-wide and Australia-wide political factors which affected the north; and secondly, by isolating local political factors which were, perhaps, peculiar to North Queensland.

Electoral behaviour in the north was in most respects typical of that in other Queensland and Australian electorates. Issues were very often the same as those raised in the south; speeches by national political figures often took precedence in the press over the local election campaign. Newspaper front-page headlines during elections invariably told of happenings in Brisbane, Sydney, or Melbourne; the local campaign was reported in the middle pages. Further, it can be assumed that voters in North Queensland voted the way they did for reasons similar to those of voters throughout Australia. Therefore, if national and state-wide trends and issues can explain the North Queensland voting pattern to a significant extent, perhaps the first factor that should be looked at is the relative strength of the state and federal political parties.

Strange as it may seem today, the Queensland branch of the ALP was, in days bygone, a very strong and vital organisation, combining a progressive image and talented leaders with a reformist program geared to the needs and wishes of the vast majority of electors. In 1915 Labor gained the state government benches in a landslide election in which they won 45 of the 72 seats. They remained in office until the DLP rupture of the '50s, save only for a few years of Tory rule, which occurred, unfortunately for the non-Labor forces, during the great Depression. Impressive advances in social welfare and successful agricultural re-organisation following Labor's advent to power had established a firm base of support
for Labor as a moderate, reformist and petty bourgeois, "small-man's" government. Although there were increasing signs of bitter internal feuds within the labour movement, and of dissatisfaction with Labor's alleged administrative extravagance, it was not until the late '20s when these reached the stage of threatening electoral success.

The non-Labor political parties in North Queensland, in contrast with the efficient Labor organisations, were often disorganised and both financially and numerically weak. However, after the issue of conscription split the Labor Party, the non-Labor forces received an injection of enthusiasm. Moves towards better organisation resulted in the formation of the Northern Country Party in 1920. Yet despite strong campaigns, and despite the backing of the conservative press, they failed to achieve much success in state politics.

So much for the overall state scene as a contributing factor in North Queensland politics. Let's now turn to the federal scene. The success of state Labor was not matched in federal politics. Labor gained office in 1914 on their leader's promise that Australia would support the Allied cause in the war to the "last man and the last shilling." It seemed, momentarily, that Labor's position in federal, as well as state politics, was unassailable, and that Labor was, indeed, as its supporters claimed, the "natural" government for Australia. On the other hand, the tensions of an alarming rate of unemployment, rising prices and disagreement about Australia's degree of commitment in the war were soon to prove portents of a decline in Labor's federal fortunes. The virulence of the conscription referenda campaigns of 1916-1917 drove a wedge not only into the Labor Party, resulting in their defeat, but also into Australian society as a whole, embittering political life for years.

In federal parliament, Bamford was quickly identified as a staunch advocate of conscription. In fact, he was the first MHR to urge conscription - a somewhat dubious distinction of which he later boasted frequently. In July of 1915 Bamford made a speech charging both sides of the house with lack of courage: the voluntary system of recruitment had failed to provide enough soldiers, and, according to Bamford, the voluntary system was also unfair. "While many men have volunteered"
he said, "others, equally fit to serve have failed to come forward."
Conscription would therefore eliminate both inefficiency and injustice.

Such opinions show the proud, imperialist attitude to the war held by Bamford and some other Labor members. This group led by W.M. Hughes, wished to suspend Labor's domestic political program and concentrate on winning the war by whatever means possible. Like others in this group, Bamford was relatively older, had had several years parliamentary service, was Protestant, and had little trade union background. However, the mood of rank and file labour and a large part of the parliamentary party opposed conscription and the subordination of Labor's peace-time policy of social reform to the Allied war effort. A left-wing faction, influenced by the ideas and traditions of socialism, pacifism and Irish nationalism, was increasingly hostile to the war itself.

Meanwhile, back in North Queensland, the protagonists of the conscription debate polarised along the lines of existing socio-political divisions. Unfortunately, lack of time prevents me from discussing the colourful upheavals and divisions which the question of conscription produced in North Queensland. Suffice it to say that the pattern throughout the north was very similar to the Townsville scene, which Michael Douman described in his article, ["Townsville During World War I", v. sup.]. I would like now to confine my remarks to the effects of these two bitter campaigns on the federal politics of northern voters; bearing in mind the question I posed initially regarding the contradictory voting pattern in state and federal elections during the war and early 1920s.

The effect of the conscription issue in North Queensland can be summed up by saying that it destroyed Labor's secure hold on the Herbert electorate. The loss of Bamford to the nationalists was probably the biggest set-back to Labor's aspirations in federal politics in North Queensland. Labor's share of the vote declined sharply from its pre-conscription level of about 60% to only 46 to 48% in the elections of 1917, 1919 and 1922. The national split in the party had repercussions in the north. ALP branches were wracked by defections and demoralization. For example, the president of the Ingham branch campaigned extensively on behalf of the 'Yes' cause in the referenda, exhorting "all true labour
Thus the chaos wrought in North Queensland by the Labor split was a major factor in Bamford's win, now as a Nationalist, in the 1917 federal elections. Three fairly distinct groups of voters supported Fred Bamford after his change of party. Most obvious were the committed Liberal or anti-Labor voters, who accepted him with few misgivings, because although he may once have been a Laborite, he was now the anti-Labor candidate. Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, there was a section of regular Labor supporters who continued voting for Bamford because of the attraction of his personality, or because they agreed with his views. Finally, there were the uncommitted, or "swinging" voters, who shied away from the manifest weakness of the Labor Party.

The reaction of uncommitted voters to Labor's federal weakness was a feature of the Australia-wide decline in Labor support. The loss of most of its federal leaders left the ALP with a lack-lustre leadership whose search for a viable alternative policy was too often plagued by internal divisions. The demoralisation of federal Labor was clearly apparent in North Queensland. Few people could disagree with the Townsville Bulletin when it argued during the 1922 election:

> even supposing the sugar growers of North Queensland were sufficiently deluded to accept the assurances of Labor Codlins, what is there to be gained by supporting such a hopelessly discredited hotch-potch.... The Labor Party, federally, is down and out.

Or when the same paper commented with satisfaction when the result - a Nationalist victory - was known:

> The defection of Mr. Hughes and those who went with him was a stunning blow, from which Labor has never recovered.

Although the Labor Party was unsuccessful in the federal arena after Bamford's defection, the state electorates of North Queensland remained Labor strongholds. In the post-war years the federal party was weak and ineffectual, but state Labor remained efficient and successful. The conscription split decimated the federal parliamentary party, but it did not affect the political fortunes of the state party, from which there were few defections. In fact, Ryan and Theodore, the party leaders, had gained in stature from a conflict between state and federal authorities.
over conscription and war censorship.

So, the contrasting voting pattern in state and federal politics in North Queensland, was, I would suggest, both a cause and a symptom of the relative strength of state and federal political parties. Having looked at this, I want now to elaborate a little on some of the Australia-wide issues which contributed to Labor's electoral disfavour on the federal scene, and to point out how such issues were reflected in the north.

One aspect of Fred Bamford's electoral appeal, both as a Labor man and a non-Labor representative, was his ardent nationalism. Although he had opposed the Boer War, Bamford fell in with the trend of Labor Party policy - before World War I, - towards support for compulsory military service and the formation of Australian defence forces. In all election campaigns he also stressed his vigorous support for the White Australia policy - which was an inseparable component of Australian nationalism. By the time of the great war, Bamford was a proud and outspoken Empire loyalist. To the people of North Queensland, he contrasted himself after 1916 as an "Empire Nationalist" with the allegedly unpatriotic Labor Party.

Many historians have described how Labor's success before the war was attributable partly to the fundamental sentiments of Australian nationalism which the ALP embodied and expressed. This nationalism had developed from a sometimes republican anti-imperialism in the 1890s, to a much less strident and exclusive patriotism, which most people felt was compatible with continued membership of the British Empire.

During the course of the war, nationalism, previously linked with the political Left, was harnessed by the conservative classes, changing character subtly once again to become even more oriented towards Empire and more closely identified with the pride of race of the Protestant middle class. The sentiments which Bamford expressed exemplify this shift in Australian nationalism from Labor to non-Labor between 1901 and 1918.

Declining support for Labor in Herbert thus reflected a widespread belief that Labor was no longer the party of Australian nationalism. Certainly the ALP recognised that one explanation for their failure was the popular appeal of Bamford's patriotic and chauvinist declamations.
The Labor candidate for Herbert in 1922, one Mossy Hynes, acknowledged this when he expressed the hope that:

As the jingo madness subsided...the position would alter largely, and the men and women in Herbert [would] exercise their votes with more intelligence and a greater measure of class consciousness.

The swing of Australian nationalism from Left to Right was also linked with a trend in the labour movement towards a more doctrinaire socialist outlook. Conditions in Australia after the war were conducive to the spread of more revolutionary notions amongst the trade unions. Declining confidence in the efficiency of political action facilitated the spread of the beliefs of the anarcho-syndicalist I.W.W. and the Communist Party. Now, as some trade unions became more influenced by syndicalism and communism, so the electoral image of the ALP appeared to take an ideological turn to the Left, despite the efforts of moderate politicians to keep the party on a fixed and stable course. This unfavourable image accounts for the success with which non-Labor was able to attack Labor for its war record and supposed communist influences.

In North Queensland, frequent strikes lent especial virulence to the raising of the Red bogey. Editorials in the daily press reminded electors that "the communist has gradually under-mined the power of those Labor leaders who were shy of revolutionary doctrines." Articles like one leader in the Mackay Mercury abounded: headlined "Bolsheie on the Back Seat", it charged that bolshevism had been occupying the back seat of the Labor vehicle since the war, and that, "if the industrial history of Australia during the past few years counts for anything, the reins already are in the hands of the Communists, and whether they are to remain there will depend solely on the decision of the electors next month." Some Nationalist Party officials hinted at "bloody revolution" should Labor win control of federal parliament. Another, perhaps carried away by his own rhetoric, declared the small town of Babinda to be the "heart of Bolshevism in the north."

The allegation of communist saturation of the labour movement rebounded more on the federal Labor Party than on the state. It was hard for the non-Labor forces to credibly accuse the state government of socialist tendencies. Not only was the so-called socialism of the Labor govern-
ment confined to piece-meal state enterprises and co-operative marketing which fell far short of beginning to approach nationalisation, but the leaders of the state ALP, Theodore and McCormack, showed a predisposition to castigate "communists" almost as indiscriminately as conservative politicians. Remarks Theodore made about "booting out direct actionists" and his denunciation of the insidious influence of "the revolutionary, direct-action and sabotage minority", could well have been said by a non-Labor politician, rather than the titular head of the Queensland labour movement.

So much for the Australia-wide and Queensland-wide issues influencing northern politics. Now, to go further towards finding out why North Queenslanders voted for Labor in the State, but anti-Labor in the federal sphere, we must investigate those political factors peculiar to North Queensland.

One of the most striking of the local features was the importance of the sugar industry and of the welfare of sugar farmers. The development of North Queensland was due largely to the success with which sugar cane was cultivated in the fertile river valleys. Not only was the economy of the region based almost entirely on sugar and ancillary industries, but the sugar industry was also seen universally as a bulwark of that cherished national ideal, the White Australia policy.

A Royal Commission into the industry in 1912 well exemplifies this feeling. It concluded that:

Unsettled areas of the tropical parts of Australia are not only a source of strategic weakness. They constitute a positive temptation to Asiatic invasion; and may give to the White Australia policy a complexion which must inevitably weaken the claims of Australia to external support...the ultimate, and in our opinion effective justification of the protection of the Sugar Industry lies beyond questions of industry or wealth production. It must be sought in the very existence of Australia as a nation.

Because the sugar industry depended on government subsidy and tariff protection for its prosperity, if not for its survival, all political parties competed to win the vote of the cane grower, sometimes with very extravagant promises. Moreover, the non-Labor parties could not then rely comfortably on the support of the farmers. They were a politically alert group whose allegiances could swing either way.
On the federal level, it was the Nationalist Party after 1917 which was more successful in convincing sugar farmers that it was the only party genuinely sympathetic to the industry. Before the conscription crisis, and the ALP split, voting returns show that many sugar districts of North Queensland voted Labor. However, when the Hughes group left the party and the Nationalist Party was formed, the sugar areas changed their allegiance accordingly. The key to this change is in the system of sugar marketing agreements between the state and federal governments, under which the Commonwealth of Australia controlled both the retail price of refined sugar and the price paid to growers and millers. This sugar agreement was generally regarded as the foundation of stability in the industry, as the federal government's control was used to maintain a profitable price for the producer, rather than to keep prices down for the consumer. Hughes' Labor government had initiated the system, and the Nationalist Party, still under Hughes, continued with it. The growers voted for the sugar agreement. Bamford himself was regarded as one of the chief instigators not only of the agreement itself but also of subsequent rises in the price of raw sugar. His successor as representative for Herbert, Dr. Lewis Nott, likewise presented himself as the "Sugar Farmer's Candidate." After his election in 1925, one newspaper gave as reason for his win, that "the dominating issue in North Queensland has always been the sugar question."

The federal Labor Party never wholly escaped from the charge that it wanted cheaper sugar for the consumer. The Nationalist Party never stopped insisting that Labor was controlled by southern interests wanting cheap sugar. The presence of some prominent Labor politicians at a meeting of the Housewives' Association in Melbourne, where a resolution was carried demanding the end of the sugar agreement and a lower price for sugar, did nothing to refute such allegations. In southern states and metropolitan centres, a policy of lower prices was an undoubted electoral advantage, but in North Queensland, it was a millstone around Labor's neck.

The political importance of sugar also helps explain contrasting state and federal voting patterns in North Queensland. Although in the sugar grower's mind the federal Labor Party was identified with southern consumer interests, the state Labor Party earned support for their
assiduous protection and encouragement of the sugar industry as a whole and the small farmers in particular. Legislation benefiting farmers was enacted soon after Labor's accession to power in 1915, and formed the basis of the industry's marketing structure for many years. The record of the state Labor Party in fostering a stable sugar industry, one occasionally conceded even by their opponents, provided the basis for strong rural support for Labor. Such support contrasted sharply with the poor showing of the federal party in rural areas of North Queensland.

Another major feature of politics in the north was the radicalism of the labour movement. The largest and most powerful trade union was the A.W.U., a conservative mass union whose officials controlled the ALPs Queensland Executive for so long. A.W.U. officials likewise dominated the Labor Party branches in the north, providing most of the region's parliamentarians. Professor Bolton writes that:

> It could almost have been said that an A.W.U. organiser carried a cabinet minister's portfolio in his tucker-box. In Theodore, Gillies, McCormack, and Forgan-Smith [all A.W.U. men], North Queensland provided Labor with four successive leaders, and Queensland with its premiers for all but 3 of the years between 1919 and 1942. [G.C. Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, p. 335]

The A.W.U. represented ALP orthodoxy in the north, but in contrast to this attitude was another tradition of labour political activity in North Queensland - a tradition of left-wing radicalism and direct-action militancy. Evidence of this tradition is not hard to find, and Bolton speculates that the sharp edge to northern radicalism was a particular product of North Queensland - the economic dependence of the region on the seasonal industries of meat and sugar, resultant economic insecurity among employees in such industries, and the tough, practical conditions of life in a frontier society, isolated socially and politically from the centres of authority in the south. Yet, in the absence of any detailed research on the labour movement in the north, the veracity of this radical tradition must remain uncertain.

Be that as it may, the core of militant unionism from 1914 to 1929 was in the railways, the meatworks, and on the waterfront. The A.R.U. led other militant unions in consistent and outspoken criticism of the state Labor government, spearheading a conflict between radicals and moderates
D.W. HUNT

which ultimately divided Labor in Queensland, causing its downfall in 1929. The post-war period saw a rash of strikes throughout Australia in response to spiralling prices and static wages. In the north, a series of particularly bitter strikes, often accompanied by violence, broke out. The most famous of these was the Townsville meatworkers' strike of 1919, hallowed in Townsville folk legend as "Bloody Sunday."

The effects of working-class militancy on politics is not easy to discern. However, I would postulate that union militancy had two political effects, both of which were detrimental to Labor's election prospects. In the first place Labor lost the support of many unionists who became increasingly disillusioned with the moderate reformism of the state Labor government. This dissatisfaction was particularly evident when Theodore stood as federal candidate for Herbert. His rallies were often disrupted by disaffected militants. At Bowen and Innisfail Theodore was told to get out of the labour movement. Local watersiders also accused him of being a liar and a scab.

However the evidence is far from conclusive that discontent within the ALP and militant hostility towards Theodore actually produced a vote for the non-Labor candidate. Internal dissension certainly weakened the party, but would the far Left have deserted Labor to vote for the Right? In the absence of parties or candidates standing for a more radical ideology than that which Labor offered, working class voters would presumably have continued to vote Labor OR expressed their dissatisfaction by invalidating their vote. Indeed, a high percentage of informal votes in various Herbert elections suggests that this may well have been the case.

Secondly, the frequency of strikes in the north undoubtedly produced a reaction against Labor among middle-class voters and also among many of the moderate working class majority, who normally voted Labor but who were swayed by so-called "Bolshevist extremism." Indeed the frequent strikes seemed almost perfectly timed to harm the ALPs federal candidates. In 1919 Nationalists were able to point to incidents like "Bloody Sunday" as evidence of the dangers of industrial militancy and left-wing tendencies in
the Labor Party. During the 1922 election campaign, a strike by Innisfail watersiders again provided fuel for the Nationalist attack on industrial unrest under Labor. In 1925 a state-wide railway strike had forced the capitulation of the government on the question of wage increases. And, a bare fortnight before polling day, violence broke out on the North Queensland waterfront, as farmers, determined to get their produce to southern markets, clashed with watersiders demanding a fairer system of employment.

The strike arose when the Queensland shipping companies rejected a demand that the work of loading be equally distributed amongst all available labourers. After a few weeks, however, secret ballots showed that most watersiders favoured a return to work under the award conditions existing before the strike. Most branches thus resumed work, but the militants of Cairns and Bowen held out. Large consignments of sugar and timber soon piled up on the wharves, and primary producers became increasingly antagonistic towards the strikers. The press reported that the Home Hill sugar farmers, who then used the port of Bowen, were desperate, and that there was a "general paralysis of trade and industry in Cairns and district."

The confrontation finally exploded as the strike entered its ninth week. Over 600 cane farmers and timber cutters arrived in Cairns on a Sunday night with the avowed aim of restoring peace on the waterfront. Next day, the producers marched - in columns of four - to load the produce on the ships themselves. After a day of chaos and ugly incidents, the watersiders agreed to return to work. Farmers searched houses and ordered watersiders out to work; leading union officials were physically intimidated and forced to resign (one being driven to the edge of town and told to "start walking"); while only police intervention prevented the lynching of a unionist who had rashly brandished a revolver.

The way the newspapers of North Queensland saw this incident says much for the depth of class antagonisms aroused by industrial militancy. Under the heading, "the Rout of the Communists", the Cairns Post said:

Monday, November the second, will be long remembered as a historic day in the annals of Cairns and North Queensland, when the primary producers of the Tableland and the sugar districts delivered a most
staggering blow to the Communist forces, who had sought to control
the local watersiders and hold up the produce of this district...
The events of the day demonstrated conclusively that the people
of the North, which has too long been the happy hunting ground of
the Communist pest, are determined to rid Cairns and district of
it once and for all.

In similar vein was the North Queensland Register. Describing the
farmer's actions, it praised them in eulogistic terms, drawing an analogy
between the situations in North Queensland and in Italy. Nothing that in
Italy "socialism and industrial anarchy created the Fascist movement, who
re-established a more peaceful state of affairs", it praised the farmers
as "the Fascisti of North Queensland", who faced with repeated industrial
hold-ups "and the pitiful failure to rule of the Queensland Government",
admirably stepped in to restore peace and industry. The Advocate also
saw the comparability of the two movements, though in a much less favour­
able light.

The detrimental effect of strikes on Labor's political fortunes in
the federal sphere was no less marked in the area of state politics.
After the 1919 strikes, there was a severe state-wide decline in Labor
support. The government's majority was reduced to one; in North Queensland
the Labor members for Townsville and Kennedy were unseated by Northern
Country Party candidates. The culminating effect of militant dissent
in the labour movement came after the South Johnstone sugar worker s
and railway's strike in 1927. The action of the Labor premier, McCormack,
is dismissing the striking railwaymen, lost the Labor government the
support of large numbers of its traditional supporters. As a result,
Labor was ousted from the state benches in the next elections, in 1929.

Finally, I must mention one very interesting aspect of North
Queensland politics. That is the apparent importance of personal
popularity as an ingredient of political success. Scholars have suggested
that North Queenslanders, convinced that those in authority in the distant
southern governments cared little about them and less about their conditions,
developed a strong conviction in their ability to look after themselves.
This conviction manifested itself in a tendency to "choose a man irres­
pective of his political label." [G.C. Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away,
p. 337]
FORCES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND POLITICS, 1914-1929

Whether this is true, or whether it is only a myth, remains to be seen. But it seems anyway that North Queenslanders have produced a number of highly individual politicians whose success is indeed a reflection of their personal popularity. The case of Fred Patterson, who was the Communist member for Bowen in the late 1940s, is a famous example. In more recent years, the names of Tom Aikens and Duke Bonnett come readily to mind.

A significant element in the success of non-Labor in Herbert federal elections was the personality of the Nationalist candidates. Both Bamford and Nott gained a significant personal vote from among those who normally voted Labor. In Bamford's case, many electors seemed to have formed a sentimental attachment to the man, which remained unbroken when he changed parties. Bamford was respected even by his political enemies. This is what the left-wing Labor politician Frank Anstey said about Bamford, when the latter retired from parliament in 1925:

[He is] the most gentlemanly type of individual that enters the public life of this country. He is one of those men, who amid divergence of opinion and in a great crisis, could choose without venom between his own convictions and the party with which he had been associated with for a lifetime...Whom can we respect more highly than a man who, when his conscience called him to separate from political friends, did it without showing hatred, hostility, or recrimination?

Another Labor member, Dr. Maloney, declared:

To me he epitomises what a French poet has put in the fewest of words - L'amitie c'est l'amour sans ailes...I do not know any honourable member who has not a kindly word and a kindly thought for him whom we know as 'dear Freddy Bamford'.

Dr. Nott also proved to be a vivacious and energetic candidate, whose success was enhanced by the prevalence of working-class dissatisfaction with his opponent. Theodore's biographer also considers the personal element in the 1925 election to be an important factor. [I. Young, Theodore - His Life and Times, p. 62]

Another reason for the contrasting fortunes of Labor in state and federal politics seems to have been the popularity and ability of the state Labor members. Politicians like Jack Dash [Townsville], Charlie Collins [Bowen], Percy Pease [Innisfail] and Bill Forgan-Smith [Mackay]
were admired and respected men, with strong local member holds on their constituencies. Thus, while not wholly endorsing the emphasis placed on personality by some observers of the North Queensland political scene, I will suggest that North Queenslanders were perhaps less concerned than other Australians about crossing party boundaries and renouncing traditional party allegiances. If they did not so much "choose a man irrespective of his label", as Bolton suggests, they did look at the man every bit as intently as at the label.

FURTHER READING
Bertei, J.M., Non Labour Politics in North Queensland, 1907-1929,
Higgins, E.M., "Queensland Labor : Trade Unionists versus Premiers",
Historical Studies, IX, No. 34, May 1960.
Hunt, D.W., Politics in the Federal Electorate of Herbert 1915-1925,
Jones, A.E., Electoral Support for the Communist Party in North Queensland: a study of Fred Paterson's victory in Bowen, 1944,
Kennedy, K.H., The Public Life of William McCormack, 1907-1932,
Young, I., Theodore - His Life and Times, Sydney, 1971.
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR II

Associate Professor I.N. Moles

Shortly before midnight on Saturday, 25 July 1942, four Japanese raiders bombed Townsville.\(^1\) Most people were in bed, but in Flinders Street there were still a few chattering groups - those who had earlier debouched from the Roxy Theatre and stayed in town for a cup of coffee and a toasted sandwich.\(^2\) It was three nights before full moon, the entire city was bathed in bright moonlight, and only a few white clouds flecked the sky.\(^3\) At one of the armed forces' dances still in progress, someone at the door shouted 'Air Raid, the sirens are going', whereupon lights were extinguished and people exited from the hall, some to drive away unconcernedly in their cars, others to seek the safety of slit trenches.\(^4\) In Flinders Street, police and air-raid wardens directed pedestrians with quiet efficiency and within ten minutes the main street was deserted.\(^5\) From trenches and concrete "pill-box" shelters, Townsvilleans strained to hear the drone of approaching planes which seemed a long time coming. It wasn't until twenty minutes after the initial wailing of the sirens that searchlights finally picked up the planes through the "thin, feathery layer of scudding cloud".\(^6\) Inexplicably, the planes circled the town for more than half an hour, leisurely inspecting their targets, before making their bombing runs. Then there was "a swish, a swoosh, and a krunk krunk krunk; it was one shattering blast and the ground shook momentarily....

1. Commonwealth Archives Office (Brisbane), BP/361, Item 5-2 (GHQ Communiques), 26/7/1942 [CAO, BP/361, 5-2].
2. CAO, BP 257/1, Box 2 (Australian Broadcasting Commission, Queensland: Transcripts of Talks, Speeches, Broadcasts, etc., 1938-59) [BP 257/1, Box 2], 27/7/1942, p. 1.
4. BP 257/1, Box 2, op.cit., p. 1.
5. Loc. cit.
The sound of the planes gradually died away and it was all over."

Thus the residents of "Australia's only area with city status to be bombed by the Japs" experienced their first taste of front-line warfare. Two more raids followed within a week. No damage was done and no-one was hurt, but admittedly it was the ineptness of the Japanese bombardiers rather than the efficiency of Townsville's defence which was the main reason for the citizens' lucky escape. A month before the raids the General Officer Commanding (North Queensland Area), General Milford, had bluntly described air-raid precautions in the city as "frankly unsatisfactory": there were "no adequate lighting restrictions and the people are quite uneducated as to the position generally. The local press refuses ARP publicity matter for fear of creating a scare.... With the lack of organization, over-crowding and great fire risk from wooden buildings, a raid would certainly have the most serious conseq-

---

7. Ibid., p. 2. See also TDB, 27/7/1942, where, to Sergeant T.C. Goode, a member of the Garrison Battalion, it seemed that "there were three bombs which dropped", hissing and exploding in "one long blast." Cf. CRS A816, 49/301/217, op. cit., where the Camoufleur-in-Charge, North Queensland Area, reported that the bombs "dropped some distance to the east of the wharves and landed in the sea" - actually, in the tidal flats near the old Power House and the mouth of the Ross River.

8. See L.A. Watson, The Townsville Story, op. cit., p. 28, whose account of the first raid tallies with official sources. However, the dates given by this writer for the second and third raids are inaccurate. Cf. also Austin Donnelly, The Port of Townsville: The Townsville Harbour Board (Sydney, 1959), esp. Chapter XIX, pp. 144-149, who reports the dates accurately but not the size of the attacking force. There were three raids altogether: the first on Saturday night-Sunday morning, 25-26 July, the second at about 2 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, 28 July, and the third "just after midnight" the following night, i.e., on Wednesday, 29 July (see CAO, BP/361, 5-2, op. cit.). The Bulletin was inexact when it described the third raid as taking place "late on Tuesday evening" (see TDB, 27/7/1942; 29/7/1942; 30/7/1942; and cf. NQR, 1/8/1942).

9. See above fn. 8. The second and third raids were carried out by single flying boats (see CAO, BP/361, 5-2, op. cit.). On the second occasion bombs were dropped near the Animal Health Station at Oonoonba, on the outskirts of the city, "harmlessly" lopping some palm trees. On the third occasion, the raider was intercepted by allied fighters and jettisoned its bombs in the sea near Cape Pallarenda; after being "hit repeatedly" it was "last seen losing height and [was] believed to have been destroyed" (CAO, BP/361, 5-2, op. cit.).
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR II

ences for which the Army will not escape a share of responsibility. 10

The first raiders, despite their taunting presence over the city of at least thirty-five minutes, went completely unchallenged except for some sporadic machine-gun fire which, however, was "apparently a mistake." 11 The second raid, at least according to the local newspaper, provoked "heavy opposition from the anti-aircraft defences", "skilful searchlight spotting" and "accurate fire" which must have caused the occupants of the "carrier of death and destruction a certain jolt"; but since Townsville's anti-aircraft defences as late as May 1942 consisted of no more than one heavy battery of eight guns, 12 the "jolt" was very likely much less serious than journalistic enthusiasm allowed. More realistically, Townsville's Camouflage-in-Charge pondered that at least army and civilian defence organizations had had "another excellent practice." 13

Only the third raid met with the rather more determined resistance of a number of allied fighters which managed to get airborne before the Jap disappeared out to sea, and the pilot of one of the interceptors, a Captain John Mainwaring, thought that they might have made a kill "if only we had been a bit less excited." 14 At least the dogfight provided some spectacular fireworks for the populace, "looking up from their cold slit trenches": "the course of the fighters' tracer bullets was plainly outlined, and when a hit was seen on the tail of the bomber groups of onlookers cheered the fighters. The tail actually caught fire, but for some reason it did not spread. The raider appeared to lose height temporarily, but then regained it, and the flying boat passed out of the range of the lights." 15

One enthralled observer of the "Guy Fawkes display" was Tom Aikens who had been working a train to Townsville when it was flagged down at

10. CRS A816, 49/301/217 (Report to Secretary, Department of the Army, 9/6/1942).
11. CRS A816, 49/301/217 (Report on Air Raid at Townsville), op. cit.
12. CRS A1608, AJ 27/1/1 (Prime Minister to Premier of Queensland, 15/5/1942).
14. TDB, 30/7/1942.
15. Loc. cit.
Oonoonba. Ordered into a slit trench by a local ARP warden, he objected that if he was going to be killed by a Japanese bomb he would go under while still "reasonably warm" and stayed where he was on the footplate of the engine. His attitude was not atypical of that all over the town. There was no panic; there was, on the contrary, an air of "eerie" unreality about the whole experience. Some took precautions "because you feel a little scared; but you can't do anything, so there is no need to panic: it's no use." Others remained in high spirits; there were even some who expressed disappointment when, on the first raid, "only one stick of bombs was dropped." Everywhere there was calm, patience and cheerfulness.

Townsville's phlegm under fire was remarkable because the initial reaction of her citizens to the outbreak of war had bordered very close on panic. Soon after Pearl Harbour, blackout regulations were enforced and all radio stations from Townsville north were ordered off the air after sunset; finally, after the fall of Lae in March 1942, schools were closed down. A hurried exodus to the south began, and by the middle of 1942 Townsville had lost nearly one-quarter of her population - some 5,000-7,000 souls. "People were scared stiff; you couldn't book a plane flight - not that there were many planes flying - you couldn't even make a trunk-line telephone call without first getting the permission of the military authorities. People just flocked away; they couldn't get on trains out of Townsville quick enough. They leased their homes for long periods - if they could find anyone to walk in and take a lease - or they just walked out and left their homes empty. Some simply gave their homes away."

Mass flight from North Queensland was unquestionably encouraged by official unwillingness (or unpreparedness) to prevent it - indeed,

17. CAO, BP 257/1, Box 2, op. cit.
18. CRS A816, 49/301/217 (Report on Air Raid at Townsville), op. cit.
by the apparent readiness of Government to condone it. In February 1942, for example, local police and ARP wardens, acting under instructions from the State Police Commissioner, carried out a house to house door-knock in North Queensland towns to estimate the number of women and children who might have to be evacuated. Householders were told that they were at liberty then to evacuate their families to any part of Queensland, but that later on, if conditions deteriorated, they might be ordered to specific evacuation centres without themselves being permitted to exercise any option. When North Queenslanders were confronted on their very doorsteps with such evidence of official concern - indeed, of overt preparations to evacuate the North - it was scarcely surprising that dejection and consternation should have spread. Not that North Queenslanders were alone in reacting thus to the threat of invasion. On 2 January 1942 the Minister for Home Security (Mr. H.P. Lazzarini) had contrasted the behaviour of Singapore under siege with that of the much less accessible if not wholly untouchable Sydney: "Singapore remained calm, there was no sign of panic and every man and woman was ready to fight; while in Sydney everybody worried, hundreds were going away to the mountains and country evacuation areas. Are the people of Australia more interested in taking cover than in getting on with the job of winning the war?".

Australian leaders may have deplored the mass eagerness to decamp, but in fact at the root of incipient panic was the absence of leadership. Where the national government did not actually appear, as in North Queensland, to be actively preparing for evacuation, it gave the impression of vacillating indecision. Despite innumerable pleas for the explicit

22. CRS A1608, AD 39/1/3 (Acting Secretary, Department of Home Security to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department). The Secretary of the Ayr (North Queensland) Chamber of Commerce had sent a telegram to the Department of Home Security asking for an official explanation of government policy on evacuation.

23. CRS A1608, AD 39/1/3 (Minister for Home Security to Prime Minister, 2/1/1942).
I.N. MOLES

definition of government policy on evacuation, the fledging Labor Government in Canberra floundered in a sea of uncertainty. On some occasions it gave the appearance of moving towards the final enunciation of a policy opposed to evacuation, only later to compound public confusion by retreating to its former equivocal position. As late as July and August 1942, when so many thousands had already evacuated themselves, the government still remained silent. After the third Japanese raid on Townsville, the Mayor, J.S. Gill, vainly begged the Prime Minister to "utilize" his "influence" to preserve what was left of "normal life" in the city by preventing the wholesale evacuation which was "believed" to be "imminent." The compulsory evacuation of Townsville would mean "the dislocation of all services now rendered by civilians to the whole population extending into the Gulf and the Northern Territory which was dependent on Townsville for its existence." The main cause of official irresolution over the question of evacuation was that "urgent military need" seemed likely to require the sort of mass abandonment of homes that a government of civilians instinctively opposed. Military authorities in Townsville, for instance, wanted the evacuation of the city because the influx of soldiers had made the city "congested and overpopulated", and civilian life was "interfering with the military control." As early as May 1942 the commander of the

24. See, for example, CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (Premier of Queensland to Prime Minister, 22/5/1942): "Shall be glad to have your views...if Townsville evacuation effected a general evacuation from the north would undoubtedly result."

25. One indication of a movement within the Curtin Government towards the formulation of a policy opposed to evacuation was contained in the Prime Minister's reply to a letter from the Deputy Premier of Queensland (F.A. Cooper) on 19 June 1942 in which Cooper drew attention to the vast stocks of non-perishable commodities that merchants and retailers were removing from "all vulnerable coastal areas" between Cairns and Rockhampton. Curtin advised that "no further stocks of supplies should be removed from coastal areas" (see CRS A1608, AD 39/1/3 [Deputy Premier of Queensland to Prime Minister, 19/6/1942; Prime Minister to Deputy Premier of Queensland, 18/7/1942]).

26. CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (Mayor of Townsville to Prime Minister, 30/7/1942).

27. Loc. cit. Similar telegrams were sent by the Townsville Chamber of Commerce and the North Queensland Employers' Association.

28. See CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (J. Hackett to A.W. Fadden, 31/7/1942).
First Australian Army sought the compulsory evacuation from Townsville of "at least another 10,000 people" whom it was proposed to relocate in southern Queensland in the homes of people living between Southport and Redcliffe.\(^9\) When the Army Minister, Frank Forde, visited Townsville early in 1942, he admitted to one local resident that "the prospect of an evacuation" arose from the "severe" pressure being exerted on the Federal Government by military authorities.\(^9\) To civilians remaining in Townsville the threatened expulsion from their homes would be "a grave blunder, a serious injustice, even a tragedy."\(^9\) That evacuation did not in the end come about was not the result of any purposeful intervention by Government: the Commander-in-Chief merely decided that "the present strategical situation" for the time being did not justify evacuation and the Federal Government gratefully acquiesced.\(^9\)

Canberra did not finally formulate its policy on evacuation until September 1942 - seven months after its initial consideration at a conference of State Premiers on 4 February 1942 - by which time, of course, the flood tide of war had receded from Australian shores and most evacuees had returned to their homes. Wholesale evacuation was belatedly pronounced "not feasible" and "undesirable", both "in the interests of the people themselves and in the interests of the fighting forces."\(^9\) The people could not be guaranteed adequate accommodation nor even "life's necessities" unless they remained in their homes; evacuation, moreover, could not be countenanced because of "the interference with the production of war equipment" which it would entail. Only the limited evacuation of young children "from areas contiguous

---

29. CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (Premier of Queensland to Prime Minister, 22/5/1942; and see another letter to Secretary, Department of the Army, 11/6/1942).
30. CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (J. Hackett to A.W. Fadden), op. cit.
32. CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (Secretary, Department of the Army to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 25/5/1942). See also ibid., Prime Minister to Premier of Queensland, 25/5/1942; and Army Minister to Commander-in-Chief, 27/5/1942. Cf. ibid., Prime Minister to Premier of Queensland, 25/7/1942.
33. CRS A1608, AD 39/1/3 (Prime Minister to Premiers of all States, 7/9/1942).
I.N. MOLES

to likely targets for bombing or shelling" might take place, but even
then "only when the occasion arises"; otherwise, the people had to be
educated by propaganda to remain in their homes and to establish a force
capable of checking the possible spread of panic. Australia's successful
defence "presupposed" that the morale of the people would remain firm. 34

The spontaneous and voluntary evacuation of North Queensland
immediately after Pearl Harbour was not the only indication that the
"morale" of the people had in fact already plunged to a nadir of despon-
dency that boded ill for the successful prosecution of a protracted war.
There were hysterical outbursts against "aliens" - the settlers of Italian
descent who formed such a large component of the regional population - who,
whether "naturalized or unnaturalized", suddenly found themselves sub-
ject to an organized campaign of vilification, denunciation and
internment.

The ripples of hatred even reached Canberra where, on 19 June 1942,
War Cabinet felt constrained to consider the "trouble" that had arisen in
regard to the employment of Italians on the North Queensland canefields. 35
In Tully, north of Townsville, an "Empire Protestant Defence League" had
been formed by a prominent member of the Protestant Labor Party, Ernest
Henry Malin, to foment disaffection among employees in the sugar industry
and specifically to counsel "Britishers" not to work alongside Italians. 36
Xenophobia took the form of concerted efforts by unionists to force Italian
workers out of the sugar industry; Army Headquarters, Northern Command,
expressed disquiet that "there was trouble in this direction everywhere." 37
Fortunately for the Italians, considerations of military security were
found to clash with the persecution of aliens: such actions "endangered
rather than assisted" the safety of the Commonwealth because they antagon-
ized people "who would otherwise be at least neutral in their attitude,
or, by depriving them of their occupations, make them particularly

34. Loc. cit.
35. See CRS A2671, 174/1940 (War Cabinet Minute No. 350, 19/6/1942).
36. See ibid., (Secretary, Department of Defence Co-ordination to
Secretary, Department of the Army, 25/7/1940).
37. Loc. cit.
susceptible to subversive influences." On military advice, War Cabinet therefore decided that preference in employment should be granted to all British subjects (who might be either British born or naturalized), though unnaturalized Italians would not be given employment to the exclusion of British subjects. Indeed, beyond expressing the pious hope "that our people will not deny friendly aliens the right of employment and the ordinary privileges of our social life", War Cabinet decided that nothing further need be done for the protection of friendly aliens.

On one occasion, Townsville's Deputy Mayor, Tom Aikens, convened a public meeting in the Theatre Royal in an attempt to discredit some of the "incredible" stories in circulation concerning the "disloyalty" of the Italian population. "I had two of Townsville's most prominent businessmen come to see me and complain that one fellow was out in Ross Creek in a rowing boat sending morse code messages to Japanese submarines off the coast. When I said 'Oh, really, has he got dry batteries; he must have some power to transmit', they merely stared at me blankly and replied 'He must have something: he's out there tapping away.' By the time of the actual air raids on Townsville, vague accusations of "disloyalty" had burgeoned into positive allegations of active espionage: an official report on the second raid alluded to the prevalence of "rumours" that "flares and signal lights" had illuminated the raider's approach. To Aikens, the continuing internment of aliens and of naturalized British subjects "with an anti-British history" seemed "the most putrid scandal" associated with the war.

38. Loc. cit.
40. Loc. cit., (War Cabinet Communique issued in Brisbane on 2 August 1940).
42. See CRS A816, 49/301/217 (Report on Air Raid at Townsville, op. cit.
43. See Aikens Mem. (3), p. 123. There is scope for a most interesting study of the internment issue in North Queensland. Details of individual internments may be found in Department of the Army files held in the Commonwealth Archives Office, Brisbane (see CAO, BP/176, Series 3, Folio 28/1/42, 29/308/42 [Aliens Control]).
Of course, General Milford's gloomy assessment of Townsville's defence capability early in June was hardly calculated to dissipate the jumpy suspicions and nervous anxiety of her citizens. At the beginning of 1942 Colonel Frank North, Aikens' sometime nemesis on the City Council, commanded a "Garrison Battalion" consisting of a handful of regulars who manned rifle pits around the perimeter of Castle Hill. A Volunteer Defence Corps trained with jam tins full of sand and rifles made of wood. One story which swept the town faster than a guinea-grass fire told of the VDC sentry who timorously challenged a stranger approaching one of the defence installations: "Halt," he said, "give the pass word or I'll fill you full of bloody white ants." There were indeed scant grounds for even sardonic optimism of this kind. When the Acting Secretary of the Department of Home Security, A.W. Welch, visited Townsville for five days (10-15 June 1942) to check on the accuracy of General Milford's reports, he could only confirm the GOC's worst fears. The twelve electrically operated sirens in the city were "insufficient"; there was no street lighting; provisions for fire-fighting were "inadequate"; the water supply was "strained"; the mobility of Air Raid Post Wardens was "doubtful" because of the shortage of tubes and tyres; the sewerage system was "vulnerable"; there was "no satisfactory response" to his inquiry "as to who would be responsible in the event of a raid for the co-ordination of civil defence services or for any special measures required"; there was "no arrangement for the essential services to be represented at the Control Room"; the Control Room itself, as set up in the Police Station, "did not appear adequate"; no authority in Townsville, not even the GOC himself, had the power to require a blackout; the press in Townsville was "not very helpful". Only the shelter facilities - fifteen of the pill-box type in the business part of the town, 147 four-man slit trenches in the main street, and some 50 twenty-man covered trenches in the various parks and along the bus routes - appeared "reasonably satisfactory." On the occasion of the first
raid, administrative chaos of the kind reported by Welch resulted in
the harbour installations, undoubtedly the prime target of the Japanese
attack, appearing to the incoming raiders as a fairyland of lights.
"Apparently some difficulty was experienced in ascertaining the location
of the switches and determining who was responsible for the switching off
of the lights. It is understood that finally the lights were either
smashed or shot off by the American Army." 47

Indeed the "calm" pervading Townsville during the raids proved to
be no more than a shocked lull in a continuing process of deteriorating
morale which the preceding months had unfolded. In particular, Australian
and American armed forces began to arrive in the city virtually from the
moment the civilian exodus began, and, after a brief interlude of comfort
and reassurance provided by the flexing of military muscle, a whole host
of new problems created by military preponderance soon made Townsvilleans
sigh for a return of the old and much less tangible fears of military
under-presence. The military build-up lifted Townsville's population
to an eventual peak of about 90,000 by the middle of 1943; soldiers
outnumbered civilians by almost three to one. 48

The demands of the armed services coupled with a dearth of
civilian manpower brought widespread inconvenience and embarrassment
through the sudden disappearance of many basic commodities. 49 Such
shortages, of course, were common to all nations at war and to the whole
of Australia, but nowhere in Australia was the disparity in numbers
between soldiers and civilians so great as in Townsville; the
privations of her citizens were consequently more real. 50

47. CRS A816, 49/301/217 (from the report of a Chief Clerk, Department
This report followed a three-day visit (1-3 August 1942) to Townsville
by its author in order to observe the effects of the raids.
48. See CRS A461, L356/5/2 (Secretary, Department of Labour and National
Service to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 22/6/1944).
49. See above, Chapter 2.
50. This was not only in the opinion of Townsvilleans themselves. At a
public meeting in Townsville in July 1944, one of the Federal
Government's leading academic advisers, Professor Copeland, "admitted"
that North Queensland had "suffered more disabilities during the war
than probably any other part of the Commonwealth" (see CRS A816,
31/301/311 [Secretary, Townsville Chamber of Commerce to Private
Secretary to the Prime Minister, 17/7/1944]).
numbers of householders were completely deprived of supplies of ice and milk - the two "most serious" shortages; tinned and dried fruits, biscuits, alcohol, and especially fresh fruit and vegetables were scarce and exorbitantly expensive. All fruit and vegetables arriving in Townsville, usually from markets a thousand miles away in the south, were distributed either through local wholesalers or a military "Committee of Directions". The latter body attempted to indent all army requirements but frequently requisitioned from town wholesale merchants if military supplies fell short. There were no specific quota allocations to civilians nor indeed any military consideration of the townspeople's specific needs. Fruit became even more of a rarity than vegetables because of the individual purchases of soldiers in the town, with the result that "the ordinary householder and his children [were] forced to go without." Profiteering was also rife. Early in 1943 watermelons fetched £1 each in Cairns and Townsville; tropical pineapples and pawpaws cost more than they did in Sydney. Persistent shortages eventually tried the patience of Towns-villians who became "fed up" with "the raw deal and shabby treatment extended to the people of this city." When beer quotas not only failed to improve but actually fell after 1 August 1944 (from 81,512 to 76,120 gallons), the Townsville Trades and Labour Council contemplated, threatened and finally held a one day strike to call attention to the "unrest" among the people of Townsville.

52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. See CAO, BP 18/2, CRC 30 (President, Townsville Trades and Labour Council to Chairman, Emergency Food Supply Committee, Townsville, 15/10/1944). This letter was prompted by continuing bread shortages, a short beer quota, the lack of ham, bacon, "dainties", lollies and chocolates. Earlier and subsequent correspondence referred to shortages of "biscuits, condensed milk, full cream milk, tinned fruit, pepper, macaroni, wax matches, household utensils, fencing wire and netting, starch, clothes pegs and millet brooms", and to the "pernicious practice" of "blackmarketing and back door selling at exorbitant rates."
56. Loc. cit. See also TDB, 6/12/1944 ("Townsville's One Day Strike").
No preparations had been made for the accommodation of any considerable number of troops in Townsville and the military simply acquired, whether by official impressment or private treaty, large numbers of private homes as well as hotels, cinemas, public halls and schools. Early in 1943, 177 private residences had been taken over. Hotel accommodation was at a premium; parks and railway waiting rooms served as popular if uncomfortable alternatives. Manpower problems forced most of the remaining hotels to close their kitchens and dining rooms. The guest who had been fortunate enough to find a bed in one usually ended up at the tail of a long queue into a city cafe already packed with servicemen. Although the Comforts Fund and other canteens served men in uniform with excellent meals at 1/6d, many preferred to eat at a higher price in a city restaurant. Twelve months later, when the military population had passed its peak, the housing situation still showed no improvement: 170 dwellings were occupied by the military. By then, Townsville's shortage of housing, "serious" even before the arrival of the troops, had become "pressing" and "acute."

The acquisition of premises by private treaty curiously provoked just as much citizen ire as peremptory impressment. Perhaps this was sometimes warranted, as when one incensed burgher wrote his member of Parliament: "I might say that during the past couple of days since the raids have been on, approaches are being made to people owning decent homes here, that they be leased to American officers with rental no

58. Ibid.
59. There was a similar situation in regard to milk bars where, to some observers, the presence of so many soldiers seemed "extraordinary". In the canteens a man in uniform could buy a milkshake "containing pasteurized milk" for 4d, whereas in cafes the price ranged from 6d to 2/-. "The most common price appears to be 9d or 1/-, depending on the country of origin of the soldier, the temper of the attendant, and the supply of milk" (ibid.).
60. Of these, 42 houses and 8 flats were occupied by Air Force personnel (see CRS A461, L356/5/2, op. cit.
61. Ibid. (Acting Premier of Queensland to Prime Minister, 15/2/1944; and Premier of Queensland to Acting Prime Minister, 8/5/1944). See also CRS A461, K356/5/2 (Housing, Queensland: Policy).
object; and the statement is being made to the owners of these homes that it would be wise for them to take advantage of such offers, as plans are in hand by the Australian military authorities for the evacuation of Townsville and no rental return will be made for them...." For the most part, however, the opprobrium earned by the armed forces was not only unjustified but cynically bestowed: it was a "common habit" of property owners leasing premises "to represent to the citizens that they have been forced out of business" whereas in fact the army contracts had been voluntarily solicited, eagerly entered into and lucratively discharged. For example, the owners of Townsville's architectural pride, the quaintly neo-Byzantine Queen's Hotel on the Strand, had their cake and ate it too. They agreed of their own free will to lead the residential portion of the hotel to the U.S. forces at a rental of £50 per day, while still retaining the hotel's principal money-spinner, the bar trade.

The citizens' growing realization that with or without the armed forces Townsville was "in a sad way" - the feeling of being caught between Scylla and Charybdis - was only strengthened by the strains which an exigent military placed on the city's public utilities. Water was the main problem: how to educate a huge transient population to the necessity of conserving a deficient and rigorously rationed supply? The Townsville City Council became so concerned with wastage that it maintained inspection patrols on the large military encampments ringing the city such as that at Armstrong's Paddock. "The soldiers, not being used to water restrictions, would clean their clothes by throwing them down on the floor and turning the showers on them; every shower would be turned on, with a heap of dirty clothes on the ablutions' floor." Indeed, Townsville's water shortage was a problem of such sheer physical magnitude and public emotional entanglement that the full story of various City Council's efforts to

62. CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (J. Jackett to A.W. Fadden), op. cit.
64. Ibid.
65. CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (J. Huckett to A.W. Fadden), op. cit.
67. The site of today's James Cook University's Pimlico campus.
solve it was assuming the dimensions of a spellbinding saga. Nor were commercial laundries any salve to the citizens' sartorial seaminess; soon after their arrival American troops took over the Townsville Steam Laundry, the only enterprise capable of handling large quantities of linen, and military priorities placed the civilian last. One hotel proprietor even feared that a military threat of refusal to accept his laundry was being used as a weapon to make him surrender all his accommodation to the forces. But of all the public utilities which failed to function satisfactorily, at least from the citizens' point of view, none was more annoying or demoralizing than the practical impossibility of communicating or conversing by telephone. It was "no uncommon experience" for a telephone caller to wait up to half an hour before raising the exchange; one man watched his house burn to the ground while he vainly tried to ring the fire station from a neighbour's house."

Unable to obtain many basic commodities; unable to phone his friends or even call for assistance in an emergency; unable to contact his relatives outside the city because of a military embargo on all civilian long-distance telephone calls; sequestered at night in his blacked-out home "whilst wharves and prisoner-of-war camps were brilliantly illuminated"; unable to visit his friends or go to the pictures after dark because of the "disorderly elements among the troops" who roamed the streets after nightfall "in hundreds"; unable to attend other entertainments because most of the seats were occupied by troops; unable

69. See below, Chapter 5.
71. Ibid.
72. See CRS A816, 31/301/311 (Military Security, North Queensland). The embargo was partially lifted towards the end of 1944 when, under continuing pressure from civilians in North Queensland, the Australian Commander-in-Chief, General Blamey, decided that permission to make "urgent private calls and urgent business calls" should be granted "more freely." This resulted in "a large number of urgent private calls and genuine business calls being permitted from and to the area to which the restrictions apply, subject of course to monitoring" (see Ibid. [Secretary, Department of the Army to Secretary, Department of Defence, 26/10/1944]).
74. Ibid.
even to forget his misfortunes in the hotel bars which opened for only an hour or two before lunch - the Townsvillean could not help but give in to a rising sense of isolation, irritation and abandonment. Morale in fact plummeted so low that, in January 1943, the national government appointed two academic investigators, a physiologist and an anthropologist, to examine the causes and cures of civilian disaffection in North Queensland. According to their report, it was "by no means certain" how the civilians would react to a protracted war effort, so "resentful" were they of their treatment. "Should their complaints remain unheard and their legitimate grievances unadjusted, they may well prove easy dupes for enemy propaganda. A refusal to co-operate with the Services could easily follow, together with opposition to any Government which aimed at continuing the war." These were pretty dire apprehensions.

The pessimism, if not quite yet defeatism, of North Queenslanders, was attributable not merely to the material deprivations following in the wake of military occupation but also to the proliferation of unfamiliar social problems with which they increasingly felt unable to cope - prostitution, venereal disease, pugnacity and violence among the troops themselves, especially arising out of the real and imagined differences between Australian and American national traits. Indeed "the most serious source of civilian distrust" was brawling between Australian and American servicemen, leading to the citizens' taking sides with one side or the other, usually their own, or branding all servicemen as barbarians.

On the Australian side, the diggers' truculence towards Americans stemmed mainly from the pampered softness, even mounting to cowardice, with GIs supposedly exhibited, or from simple envy of his supposed sexual

---

75. See CRS A816, 37/301/199 (A.A. Conlon, Chairman, Prime Minister's Committee on National Morale, to Prime Minister, 1/4/1943; and encl., Report on Civilian Morale in North Queensland, by Professor R.D. Wright, Professor of Physiology in the University of Melbourne, and Dr. Ian Hogbin, Lecturer in Anthropology in the University of Sydney, pp. 15 (typewritten unpaginated) + appendices. The two academics visited North Queensland from 6 January to 26 January 1943.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.
TOWNSVILLE DURING WORLD WAR II

prowess, his high pay, free spending and superior military appurtenances. On the American side, "peevish GIs tended to magnify the discomforts of life in a new land; in their eagerness to spend their folding green, they invited the overcharge of waiters, landlords, florists and taxi-drivers, who called their profits 'Yankee cream'." Veterans were not nearly so conspicuous in street fighting as those who had not yet faced the enemy. The men of Australia's Ninth Division, for example, long absent in the deserts of North Africa, returned to Australia "breathing fire and brimstone", convinced by German propaganda that the Yanks had stolen their wives and sweethearts. When they landed in Sydney, American soldiers were instructed to keep to their quarters and the windows of the American Centre were boarded up; but not a single incident occurred. Similarly,

78. See D. Wecter, "The Aussie and the Yank", Atlantic Monthly, 177 (May 1946), pp. 52-56, in N. Harper, Australia and the United States (Melbourne, 1971), pp. 154-155. Cf. J.H. Moore, The American-Australian Alliance (Melbourne, 1970), p. 55. See also Report on Civilian Morale, op. cit.: "The conduct of soldiers towards girls is another source of criticism. Civilians have very definite views on the behaviour proper between the sexes, and transgression is looked upon with disfavour. The very free association between the members of the American forces and so many of our girls gives rise, therefore, to adverse comment. The woman is usually absolved, blame being attributed to either the subtlety or the crudity of the American, depending on the inclination of the observer." See also CRS A1608, AS 39/1/3 (J. Hackett to A.W. Fadden), op. cit.: "It is comforting to have so many of the U.S.A. forces here, without them we would undoubtedly be in a sad way, but their manner of living is in very sharp contrast to the conditions under which our own military men are existing."

79. See D. Wecter, "The Aussie and the Yank", op. cit.: "High pay and free spending of our men yielded no more than the usual toll of inflation in civilian circles, envy in military ones. GIs with a grudge against overcharging...will readily endorse these sentiments of an expeditionary force member long ago: 'They fleece us piteously; the price of everything is exorbitant; in all dealings that we have with them they treat us more like enemies than friends.' These words were written in 1782 by Count Fersen, staff officer to Lafayette, after a winter among the Yankees. Curiously enough, the GIs reputation in Australia - that of a stalwart and efficient soldier, with too much money and a devastating way with the girls, is almost exactly that gained in 1915-19 by the Anzacs in England."


81. Loc. cit.
diggers in transit through Townsville on their way home from New Guinea showed little inclination for argument. Whilst there was not much fraternization between Australian and American veterans, each was ready with "unsolicited testimonials for the heroism and fighting ability" of the other. On the other hand, many ugly encounters undoubtedly took place between rear-echelon troops - to Townsvilleans, the holders of the "Flinders Street Star" - and it was these who tended to repeat the stories of American cowardice with greatest gusto. Not even stifling censorship - occasionally of the sort of obscurantist intensity which led to the banning throughout Queensland of all broadcasts of Boccherini's Minuet and Vienne's Tick Tock Entr'acte could conceal from civilians the street "disturbances" which bore "an inter-allied aspect" and which showed neither side "in a very attractive light", but least of all the Australians.

If seasoned diggers on the whole treated stories of their loved ones' infidelity with the aloofness they usually deserved, their civilian counterparts were decidedly less inclined to forgive innumerable other instances of what seemed to them rampant immorality. In Townsville there was a "marked" increase in the incidence of venereal disease; it was also well known that the bordellos behind the Causeway Hotel were veritable mints for their resourceful entrepreneurs, one girl accumulating £3,800 in her savings' bank account over a period of twelve months. What the evidence of their own eyes did not confirm, some citizens were prone to leave to the embellishment of a prurient imagination. The Officers' Club in the Seaview Hotel, notwithstanding a two-hour limit on its bar trading hours, was commonly believed to be little more than a brothel, the scene of

83. Ibid.
84. See CAO, BP/361, 1-1, 1-1A (State Publicity Censor: Instruction to Broadcasting Stations, 13/5/1942).
85. See ibid. (State Publicity Censor to Chief Publicity Censor, Canberra, 31/7/1943). Probably the most infamous of these "inter-allied disturbances" was the so-called "Battle of Creek Street" (November 1942) when Australians and Americans brawled outside the American canteen in Creek Street, Brisbane. For details of similar if lesser conflicts in Townsville, see Report on Civilian Morale, op. cit.
"drunken debauches" and "depraved orgies." On one occasion, so a popular story went, 43 girls were forcibly removed from officers' beds and left to cool off in the city gaol; on another, an entire railway carriage filled with pregnant WAAAFs was supposed to have been surreptitiously sent south, with the legend 'Return when empty' scored in chalk on the side. In fact, the only evidence of bacchanalian revelries at the Seaview consisted in the sounds of laughter and singing which emanated from the premises each night; and in the six or seven months spanning the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943 only one WAAAF had become pregnant. Tom Aikens, with his unfailing instinct for sensing a mood, blowing it up into lifesize proportions, articulating it and thereby assisting it to coagulate, swore just as balefully that "soldiers were now pushing the girls whom they had impregnated under Army trucks to save themselves the expense of an illegal operation." And that was precisely the point: the jumpiness of civilians, the exaggerated stories of military rambunctiousness and lawlessness, the gnawing fears and sporadic hysterical outbursts were symptoms rather than causes of a deep-seated community malaise.

One other particularly unsettling source of civilian uneasiness was the presence of large numbers of American negro troops in and around Townsville. "What clearly impressed many Australians who saw the Negro was his magnificent physique...but [they also] saw him handling machinery, performing unusual tasks and at times working with or even directing the activities of whites." This had the effect of dislodging the citizens' stereotype of the black man as a primitive subhuman - irredeemably lazy, shiftless, dissolute, devoid of normal human motivations - and indeed

87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid. See also D. Wecter, "The Aussie and the Yank", op. cit.
91. Cf. Report on Civilian Morale, op. cit.: "We suggest that the eagerness with which charges are repeated may be an indication that they are more the excuse than the reason for irritation."
the shock to Australians of the arrival of Negroes on their shores was plainly schizophrenic. On the one hand, some residents of North Queensland were prepared to accept him for what he was, though admittedly with condescending surprise: "I like some of the black Americans. The negroes, those I have met further inland, seemed real people." On the other hand, Australian officialdom agreed "reluctantly to accept negro soldiers, and then only on the condition that they would be withdrawn "at the end of the Australian emergency." When one Federal Minister heard that negro troops were actually being permitted to patronize brothels in Brisbane and Townsville, and that the prostitutes were white Australian girls, he recoiled in horror at the thought: "This seems to me to be something so outrageous to Australian psychology that it is likely to become thegravest possible menace to Australia's war effort.... Perhaps nothing embittered the German people more and provided such a fertile field of exploitation by Hitler in the early days of the rise of National Socialism, than the compelling of the German people to provide white German woman to satisfy the lust of American Negroes." In deference to such sensitivities, the American Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Theatre, General MacArthur, advised the Australian Government that he "respected" Australia's racial views and would assign Negroes to "bases far from urban centres." Townsville, of course, was just such a base "far from urban centres", and most of the early arrivals of American troops in the city were indeed Negroes. By mid-1942 there were 6,394 negro GIs in Australia (representing nearly 40% of all U.S. black troops stationed overseas at the time), most of whom finished up in North Queensland where they

93. Ibid. (quoting Jean Devanny in Bird of Paradise).
94. Ibid.
95. CRS A816, 37/301/199 (Minister for Home Security to Prime Minister, 14/4/1943).
97. Ibid.: "Only in Northwest Africa and the British Isles were they as numerous as in the southwest Pacific.... The most important concentration...was at Mt. Isa where by mid-1942 some 5,000 U.S. Personnel - 3,500 of them coloured - manned 1,482 vehicles."
they laboured for Australians and built airstrips at places like Woodstock and Giru. They had to use hand tools, build wheelbarrows out of boxes, clear the scrub with machetes and hire equipment from local farmers. Although "far from urban centres" in the south, Woodstock and Giru were still about thirty miles outside Townsville. Not only the people of Sydney and Melbourne but also those of remote Townsville apparently had to be protected from nameless subversion, and even 'out of sight out of mind' was deemed inadequate insulation: Queensland newspapers were forbidden to carry either letterpress or photographs reporting coloured troops, and any reference at all to the colour of U.S. soldiers was ordered to be struck out. The terms "negro" or "black" or "coloured" were officially regarded as being "detrimental". In these circumstances of almost Siberian segregation, the wonder is that the first negro regiments found their reception in Townsville "quite hospitable", though this may have been partly due to the efforts of the Townsville City Council to accommodate their biological urge by providing land, water and lighting for "a rather large bordello" if the American authorities undertook to erect it. When that particular proposal foundered, some hundreds of Negroes from a large holding encampment just outside the suburb of Wulguru demonstrated their frustration by marching on the city "in a solid phalanx";

99. Ibid., p. 603: The 91st Engineer General Service Regiment, primarily a labour battalion, had no surveying equipment. "With only a carpenter's level, the field could not be properly laid out; drainage, slopes, grades and alignments could not be accurately plotted. With hand tools, the unit began clearing the area for three landing strips. Only machetes were available for cutting the high grass covering the area. With all men available for hand work, hand tools soon ran out, for there were not enough to go around. The unit rented equipment from nearby farmers, including a horse-drawn mowing machine and a farm tractor. Using an empty beer case, a section of a 14" log (felled by the farm tractor) as a wheel, a driftpin for an axle, and slender 6' poles for handles, the 91st devised homemade wheelbarrows. These were augmented by beer boxes rigged with wooden runners and drawn by two men holding a wooden pole on the end of a wire attached to the improvised sled."
103. See Aikens Mem. (3), p. 120.
only the determined intervention by military police who were grimly armed, so one rumour went, with machine guns, finally turned them back.104 The morale of the negro troops thereafter went rapidly to pieces. It wasn't restored by having to return to work twenty-four hours a day, "without making notable progress", in the arid desolation of the countryside south and west of Townsville. 105 "For all the work accomplished by the 91st in its first four months in Australia, it was stated to the battalion both orally and in writing that the unit might as well have stayed in the U.S. 106 - sentiments which were no doubt echoed by the GIs themselves when, in August 1942, as a result on increasing support provided by the influx of Australian servicemen, the last negro units left Townsville. 107

The fact that the morale of Townsville citizens did not completely disintegrate under the incubus of military occupation - though it came perilously close to doing so - was in large measure due to the resourcefulness and leadership of their municipal fathers. Far from being intimidated by the military or succumbing, as they must surely have been tempted, to the sheer mind-boggling enormity of totally unfamiliar problems, they took up the challenge in a vigilant and even imaginative way. The proving time was in February 1942 when Aikens called a public meeting in the Town Hall "to counteract distrust, defeatism and panic."108 After forming a "Help Australia Committee", it was decided to appeal to the Council to send the Mayor to Canberra with a public plea for deliverance.109 At a special meeting of the Council two days later, the Mayor saw his "bounden duty" as remaining in Townsville and Aikens was sent

---

104. See J.H. Moore, "Australians learn to live with big black bucks", op. cit. Cf. also Aikens Mem. (3), p. 120. Later, the American army apparently relented and set up several brothels for the exclusive use of negro troops, "much to the disgust of many civilians" (see Report on Civilian Morale, op. cit.).
106. Ibid., p. 604.
108. TDB, 23/2/1942.
109. See TDB, 24/2/1942: "There appeared to be some panic, and silly rumours had gained credence. There was also a looseness of thinking and looseness of talking...a spirit of defeatism in Townsville."
This was the time when North Queenslanders were demanding the internment of "fascists", when Townsville's Volunteer Defence Corps of some 300 unarmed men were practically all that stood between North Queensland shores and a Japanese invasion, when rumours of sabotage swept the city, when police awakened people in the late hours of the night and the early hours of the morning, "causing the residents to believe that they were on the eve of an evacuation." It was cold comfort to the citizens of Townsville to learn from Aikens that, although the North lay undefended, ministers of the government in Canberra wanted them to remain where they were "as had occurred in Russia, because the people left behind the enemy lines were the ones who were contributing most to the Nazi defeat." Perhaps, however, Aikens' mission had not been all that futile: at least on 12 March the distribution of rifles to the VDC commenced.

As 1942 drew on, troops arrived, and shortages became ever more stringent, the North Queenslander became fixed in his conviction that the Federal Government was mostly to blame for his depressing plight. He argued that civilian interests ought to have been given some measure of protection and that, in its failure to provide this, Canberra had been guilty of gross negligence and dereliction of duty. Again, the Townsville City Council stepped in to fill the void of leadership. On 9 November 1942 Aikens was elected Chairman of a "Special Committee" set up by the Council "to consider matters arising out of the war situation."

10. TDB, 27/2/1942. See also TCC Mins. [24], p. 1618.
11. See Aikens' report to Council, given verbatim in TDB, 19/3/1942. See also TCC Mins. [24], p. 1619.
13. Ibid.
15. The Committee was originally constituted in May on a motion of Aikens'. See TCC Mins. [24], p. 1641: It was successfully moved "that a Special Committee consisting of the Deputy Mayor, Alderman Murgatroyd and Alderman Paterson to into the matter of the protection of the civilian population in Townsville: firstly, the position of the civilians in respect of civil defence; secondly, profiteering by the various business houses; thirdly, traffic control. At an Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 15 October 1942, the Mayor and Alderman Corcoran were added to the committee, which would also "deal with all matters arising out of the war situation excepting those which are already the functions of the present statutory committees" (see Ibid., pp. 1689, 1690; and see TCC Reports [1942-1943], Vol. 18, unpaginated).
Within a month the Special Committee had ordered an investigation into the shortage of ice; recommended that the Price Fixing Commissioners fix the price of ice and bread; demanded that children receive priority quotas of milk; recommended that the Minister for War Organization of Industry institute a zoning system in Townsville for the distribution of meat, milk, ice and bread; instigated legal action against the "rack" selling of essential goods - the refusal to sell a tube, for example, unless the customer also purchased a tyre; ordered an investigation into the shortage of wood fuel; called for controls on the sale and distribution of fruit and vegetables; recommended the establishment of a Legal Aid Department "for the guidance of citizens as to their main rights as tenants under the Landlord and Tenants Regulations."\(^{116}\) Most of the recommendations were presently endorsed by the Prime Minister's Committee on National Morale;\(^ {117}\) not only that, they were promptly implemented by the Townsville City Council.\(^ {118}\)

Some might think that it stretches historical analogy too far to compare the membership and functions of Townsville's war-time Special Committee with those of the Committee of Public Safety during the French Revolution, to see the three fiery Jacobins of Townsville - Aikens, Murgatroyd and Paterson - as modern counterparts of Robespierre, St. Just and Couthon. Yet both committees set out to achieve similar ends: to win the war by a determined mobilization of people and resources, and to repress civil strife and counter-revolution at home. For there was civil recrimination in Townsville. Like Robespierre's Laws of Maximum, the Special Committee's programme of "municipalizing" essential services and utilities provoked the dismay and antagonism of a section of Townsville's citizenry who were utterly opposed on ideological grounds to what they saw as the "red anting" of local government. Not all was sweetness, harmony and light among Townsville's civilian population, and there were times when the Jacobinism of Hermit Park Labour aroused the fierce

\(^{116}\) TCC Reports (1942-1943), op. cit.
\(^{117}\) See Appendix II.
\(^{118}\) See above, Chapter 3. Both the Municipal Ice Works and the Fruit and Vegetable Mart were placed under the control of the Special Committee at the beginning of 1944 (see TCC Reports [1942-1943], op. cit.)

236
resentment of the constituency of the Right. The Townsville Chamber of Commerce, for example, protested against the "wasteful expenditure" and "futility" of the Council's activities.\textsuperscript{119} For its part, the Council deplored that "a sprinkling of persons with fascist tendencies" should have monopolized the city's militia, the VDC;\textsuperscript{120} it was alleged that "every officer of the VDC in Townsville had taken, at one time or another, an anti-labour political part" and that promotions in the VDC were causing "dissension" because of such "sectional control."\textsuperscript{121} This time the Returned Soldiers' League showed its disapproval by objecting to City Council representation at its farewells to recruits while a Communist, Paterson remained an alderman.\textsuperscript{122}

Dissension among civilians, however, was as nothing compared with the tension between civilians and the military, which made it all the more noteworthy when the Special Committee, at Aikens' prodding, successfully sponsored formal co-operation between the two. Indeed the only occasions on which City Council, State police, Australian and American military authorities ever acted in concert were at meetings of a Traffic Advisory Committee instigated and chaired by Aikens. In 1942 and 1943 the streets of Townsville were "busier than the principal thoroughfares of Sydney and Melbourne four years ago"; on one afternoon in January

\textsuperscript{119} See The Courier-Mail (Brisbane), 3/3/1942; also TCC Mins. [24], p. 1619. On 19 March Alderman Paterson moved in Council "that a letter be written to the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, that this Council regrets the publication of the Press item in the "Courier-Mail" and shall be pleased to know if such wire was sent to the Premier, and if so, whether it was approved of by the members of the Chamber, or, if it was not sent, the Council would be pleased if your Chamber would take steps to publish a denial in the "Courier-Mail" (TDB, 19/3/1942).

\textsuperscript{120} TDB, 19/3/1942.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{122} See, for example, TDB, 21/11/1941: "The draft which left to reinforce the AIF abroad on Thursday evening was enthusiastically farewelld, although on this occasion the City Council was not represented at any of the gatherings.... The President of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. asked the young recruits to have a parting glass with the old Diggers.... The troops after partaking of the excellent repast which is provided by the good women...there was community singing until such time as the troops marched off to the Central Station amid the usual enthusiastic scenes."
1943, 316 army trucks were counted in Flinders Street within the space of fifteen minutes. Military drivers were notorious for their "carelessness and utter disregard for the safety of other users of the roads", and in one two-month period 57 traffic accidents resulted in 13 fatalities. The Traffic Advisory Committee took the lead of recommending amendments to the motor vehicle regulations, which included the imposition of a 25 m.p.h. speed limit within the boundaries of Townsville. According to the Bulletin, the campaign bore good results, "despite the disregard of Townsville citizens who rode bikes at night without lights, sometimes two or three abreast, and who, in small-town fashion, paraded along Townsville's roadways in preference to the footpaths, walking in the direction of the traffic instead of against it." Thus, the Townsville City Council never once relaxed its efforts on behalf of a perplexed and sorely tried citizenry. However, in the absence of any sustained interest on the part of the national government in dispelling the effects of isolation and occupation, the people's spirits faltered and almost failed. At the beginning of 1943, the Prime Minister's Committee on National Morale wondered whether Townsvilleans still had their hearts in the military conflict. It couldn't find much ground for optimism: "contributions have been made to war loans...again, although there have been one or two very minor holdups on the waterfront, the indefatigable efforts of the railway workers have won the unbounded admiration of everyone." On the other hand, civilian vexation was so great that the Committee felt unable to guarantee, if the grievances of North Queenslanders remained unheard, that they would "still be willing to co-operate freely once the Japanese [had] been thrown out of New Guinea

124. Ibid.
127. See TDB, 7/1/1943, 12/1/1943.
128. See above, Chapter 3.
and their safety [was] no longer directly menaced."\textsuperscript{130}

By the end of 1943 there were few encouraging signs that civilian demoralization had been stanched; to the contrary, a mass meeting of Townsville's citizens on the Strand listened intently to Aikens' bodeful recitation of Government neglect which hung over Townsville like the sword of Damocles, threatening her citizens with disaster. As late as mid-1944, North Queenslanders still nurtured "an abiding sense" that southern governments in Brisbane and Canberra were ignorant of their "total war-time experiences" and indifferent to them.\textsuperscript{131} The chief spokesman of that mood was Tom Aikens; and Townsvillians now elected him to the Parliament in Brisbane to evoke it, to shame and bludgeon Government with it.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131} See CRS A816, 31/301/311, \textit{op. cit.}
NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

R.B. Brown is a History Honours student in his final year. His thesis will be written on the Gilberon goldfield.

Helen Brayshaw B.A. (Hons.) Dip.Ed. (New England) is a full time Postgraduate student in the second year of study for the degree of Ph.D. Her research topic is 'The material culture of Aborigines in the Herbert-Burdekin region.'

L.J. Colwell B.A. (Hons.) is a Tutor in the History Department. His Honours thesis 'Some aspects of social life in Charters Towers from 1872 to 1900' was presented in 1970.

P.P. Courtenay B.A., Ph.D. (London) is the Associate Professor of Geography and author of *Plantation Agriculture* (London 1965, 1969) and *A Geography of Trade and Development in Malaya* (London 1972).

M. Douman B.A. (Hons.) Dip.Lib. (Canberra) is a Tutor in the History Department. His Honours thesis, 'Townsville 1914 - 1919: a study of group attitudes and behaviour' was presented in 1970.

Jean Famfield M.A. (Oxford) Ph.D. (Queensland) is a Senior Lecturer in the History Department and author of *Frontiersman: a biography of George Elphinstone Dalrymple* (Melbourne 1968).

D.W. Hunt B.A. (Hons.) is in the first year of full time study for the degree of Ph.D. His Honours thesis, 'Federal politics in the Herbert electorate 1915 - 1925' was presented in 1973.

N. Loos B.A. (Queensland) is a Lecturer at Townsville Teachers College and a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in the History Department. His thesis, on Aboriginal-European relations in nineteenth century North Queensland will be submitted at about the end of 1974.

Cathie May B.A. (Hons.) (Western Australia) is in the second year of full time studies for the degree of Ph.D. in history. The subject of her research is the Chinese community of the Cairns district.


I.N. Moles M.A. (Queensland) is Associate Professor of history. His study of the North Queensland Labour Party and its principal member, Tom Aikens, is at an advanced stage of preparation.

C.R. Moore B.A. (Hons.) is a Tutor in South East Asian history. His Honours thesis, 'The transformation of the Mackay sugar industry, 1883 - 1900' was submitted in 1973.
H. Reynolds M.A. (Tasmania) is a Senior Lecturer in the History Department and author of *Aborigines and settlers: the Australian experience 1788 - 1939* (Melbourne 1972).

Ray Sumner B.A. (Hons.) is a Graduate student in the Geography Department, enrolled for the degree of M.A. Her research topic is the role of the environment in domestic architecture in North Queensland.