

*Extract from Chapter 5: The New Century (1894-1907)*  
pp.255-256

## 5.8 *Federation*

Queensland did not participate in the early June 1898 Referendum to approve the draft bill for a federal constitution, which not surprisingly failed, but did join in the following January (1899) at a Melbourne conference which considered amendments put forward by Premier Reid of NSW to draft a bill for a federal constitution.<sup>1</sup> From this, each Australian colony (with the exception of WA)<sup>2</sup> held a final referendum to consider whether it should federate or not.

In early August 1899 the Cairns *Morning Post* presented a thunderingly pro-federation editorial and identified that the:

Northern vote of September 2<sup>nd</sup> should be an almost unanimous one in favour of the Bill, because under its provisions the North will benefit more than any other colony in Australia. We are the producers of Australia, able and willing to supply raw products to the manufacturing South.<sup>3</sup>

In Cairns, Cook and Herbert, 90% of voters were in favour of establishing a Commonwealth of Australia, while further inland at the mining districts of Croydon and Woothakata the support was even greater.<sup>4</sup> This contrasted with Brisbane (36%) and the Southern region (49%), so that the overall Queensland vote in favour of federation dropped to 54% or 8.1% of the national

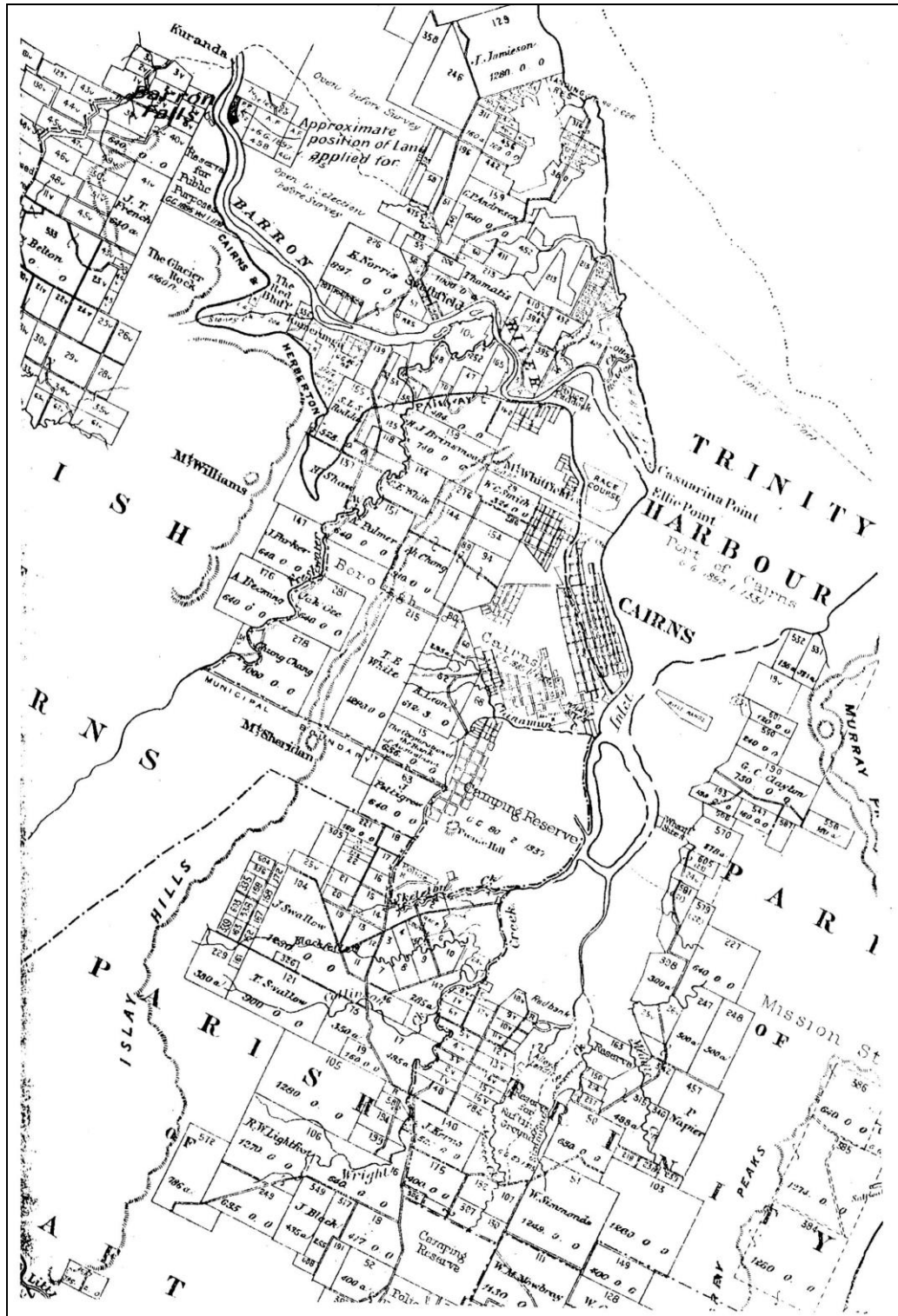
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<sup>1</sup> This was the mechanism for establishing the structure of the federal system of government. Aboriginal Australians were excluded from the federal constitution. It was not until 66 years later on 27 May 1967 that a referendum with 90.77% 'yes' vote, approved the deletion of the italicised words from Section 51 (xxvi): 'The people of any race, *other than the aboriginal race in any State*, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws'. Despite this rare approval of a referendum, the Federal Government was not to assume responsibility for Aboriginal people until the Whitlam Government in 1972. G. Souter, *Acts of Parliament – A narrative history of Australia's Federal Legislature*, MUP, Carlton, 1989, p.457; D. Horton (gen ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, Vol.2, AIATSIS, Canberra, 1994, pp.933-34.

<sup>2</sup> The Western Australian Government put the Constitutional Bill to Referendum in August 1900. W.G. Mann, *A Constitutional History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1979, p.118.

<sup>3</sup> *Morning Post*, 3 August 1899. Their rival the *Advocate*, was however, against federation. See R.Kirkpatrick, *Sworn to No Master*, Darling Downs Institute Press, Toowoomba, 1984, p.249. "Northern separatism was very much a part of the colonial era of Queensland. Politics were fairly informal, political groupings were largely personal, politicians were mainly amateur, and parties as we know them did not exist. The transformation brought about by the rise of the Labor Party and the achievement of federation left no room for movement with the aims, methods and range of support of the separationists." C.R. Doran, "North Queensland Separatism in the Nineteenth Century", PhD, JCU, Townsville, 1981, p.411.

<sup>4</sup> 95% and 94% respectively. In 1901, North Queensland had 22% of Queensland's population (with 110,000), and although the population has increased over the remainder of the twentieth century, the North's percentage of the overall Queensland population has dropped. So that in 1996, with 439,022 people, the North represented 13% of the state's population. Southern Queensland with 2,589,273 had 77%, which has steadily increased throughout the twentieth century, while Central Queensland has hovered around the same percentage (between 13% and 9%) over the same period. *Queensland Past & Present 100 Years of Statistics*, Government Statistician's Office, Brisbane, 1998, Table 3.2, p.66.



Map 17 – Cairns & District 1899

(Queensland Votes & Proceedings, Vol. III, 1899, p.95)

vote.<sup>5</sup> It was the 80 percent approval rating in North Queensland that swung Queensland to support the federation of Australia. Bolton observed that the “Federal vote in the sugar districts was largely a vote for interstate free trade and some form of protection against imported sugar on the Australian market.”<sup>6</sup>

The twentieth century dawned on a Tuesday: in Cairns it was ‘with a clear sky – the first fine day for a week.’ Like many other communities across the new nation the people of Cairns and district enthusiastically drew together to celebrate the inauguration of Australian Federation<sup>7</sup> (Commonwealth Day). Nearly 1200 people participated in the well-planned procession organised by John Forbes (Sub-Collector of Customs), who had become a federal employee overnight. The mounted police followed by a band and school children, led the procession and the town’s volunteer defence units. For some strange reason they were followed by six druids with long white beards and nightgowns, who were mistaken for the ‘honoured guests of the committee’ – the old pioneers, who completed the procession in a cab, hired for the occasion.

The Mayoress, Mrs R.A. Tills, after her husband’s well-spoken words, unfurled the new Federation flag for the first time on the flagpole at the Customs House reserve, amidst a rather ineffective royal salute that was due “to the disinclination of some of our uniformed defenders to dirty their rifles with a blank cartridge.”<sup>8</sup> With the formal proceedings completed, the crowd boarded the tramway to the showground for ‘eatables and drinkables’, and entertainment extending to fireworks on the Esplanade. As the editor of the *Morning Post* (F.C. Morton) proclaimed: “A national spirit was thoroughly aroused”.<sup>9</sup>

### ***5.9 Impact of Federation in the Cairns District***

Later, another spirit was aroused by those associated with the sugar industry who became particularly aggrieved at the passing of the Commonwealth’s *Pacific Island Labourers Act* of

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<sup>5</sup> Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.210. 38,488 Queenslander’s voted yes, and 30,996 (6.5% of the national vote) against. See P. Botsman, *The Great Constitutional Swindle*, Pluto Press, Annandale, 2000, Table 1, p.52.

<sup>6</sup> Bolton, *op.cit.*, p.209. Queensland developed along the regional basis of South, Central and Northern areas. Lewis has identified that “The federation decisions were made according to a calculation of regional interest. Townsville’s commercial links were more with Sydney than Brisbane.” [G. Lewis, *A History of the Ports of Queensland*, UQP, St. Lucia, 1973, p.240.] With regards to Cairns, the orientation up to 1897 was more with Melbourne, nevertheless, Lewis’ interpretation still has relevance.

<sup>7</sup> 1 January 1901. *Morning Post*, 4 January 1901

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, *In Memorium of A.J. Draper*, Pamphlet reprinted from the Cairns Post, March 1928, p.13. In 1907 the *Morning Post* became a daily costing 1d. an issue, and in 1907 Mr Ranwell became the editor. The following year (1908) W. Real became the editor until 1912.

1901.<sup>10</sup> This designated the cessation of imported labour after March 1904 and the conclusion of any more contracts, and that after December 1906 the majority of South Sea Islanders (Kanakas) had to be repatriated to their former island homes.<sup>11</sup> This was to change the face of the North Queensland sugar industry.

Nearly 1200 people participated in the procession to celebrate Australian Federation (Commonwealth Day). The procession started at the Railway Station led by the mounted police who cleared a path through some of the three hundred spectators. The band was followed by a myriad of school children, who were now not only Queenslanders but Australians, waving countless flags. Then came the town's volunteer defence units – the Naval Brigade and F Company Kennedy Regiment (under Captain A.J. Draper). After the Mayor's speech, his wife unfurled the new Federation flag for the first time on the flagpole at the Customs House reserve. With the formal proceedings completed, the children pictured above and the crowd boarded the tramway to the showground for 'eatables and drinkables', Punch and Judy, horse jumping and athletics. Later, a concert on the Esplanade played music and the evening concluded with a fireworks display launched from a punt moored rather too far off shore.

Locals, from the Chamber of Commerce, Planters' Associations and local government authorities began vocalising their objection to the demise of the South Sea Islander labour. There was even an attempt to secede from the Commonwealth.<sup>12</sup> Others, like Dr David Thomatis, an agricultural scientist living in North Queensland, wrote a series of articles regarding the potential for cotton growing and how black labour was a necessary pre-requisite in making the industry a success.<sup>13</sup> Tom Treston, a 32-year old Irish cane farmer, wrote to his younger brother in County Mayo in February 1906:

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<sup>10</sup> For example *Morning Post*, 24 April 1903: "With our sugar industry ruined by the abolition of the kanakas and our other tropical agricultural industries brought down below the level remuneration through the unjust tariff, North Queensland will shortly have just cause to look back and heartily curse the day it voted in favor of handing over its destinies to a crew of unprincipled political pirates as ever robbed a country and murdered its industries under the flag of 'Friendship, justice and honour.' "

<sup>11</sup> "Many Melanesians were upset by this decision. Having adapted to Queensland they wanted to stay permanently. Over 3000 petitioned King Edward VII to consider their pleas. A Pacific Islanders' Association was formed to press their cause. A royal commission in 1906 recommended that some more be allowed to stay – in cases of hardship or long residence in Australia. But even though over 1500 were allowed to remain, almost 4300 were deported in 1907." W.R. Johnston, *Call of the Land*, Jacaranda, Milton, 1982, p.131. D. Day, *Claiming a Continent – A New History of Australia*, Harper Collins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sydney, 1997, p.217.

<sup>12</sup> Jones, *Trinity Phoenix*, 1976, p.381. "In September 1902 Cairns joined with Townsville to strengthen the hands of Mr. Plunket, M.L.A. concerning his motion tabled in the House 'That it is desirable that Queensland withdraw from the Commonwealth.' "

<sup>13</sup> *Morning Post*, 9, 10, 11 January 1905. Thomatis first lived in Townsville for 5 years before moving north to Cairns. He then "established his 'Caravonica estate' on 1,000 acres just north of the Barron River in 1884. By 1895 he had 30 acres under rice, 10 acres under coffee, 1 each of cocoa and nutmeg and ¼ an acre of cloves. His most successful crop was cotton and, by crossing a long stapled variety of the best cotton grown in Mexico with Sea Island cotton of Peru, he succeeded in producing a new variety which he named 'Caravonica Cotton.'" P.J. Broughton, in Broughton & Stephens (eds), *Establishment Trinity Bay*, Historical Society of Cairns, Cairns, 1984,

All the Kanakas are to leave Queensland next year; none of us farmers like to see them go, even those of us who are working with white labour for years. We think it is downright tyranny on the part of the federal parliament, but of course numbers are against us so they must go.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, A.J. Draper and his newspaper took up the cause for the sugar industry, although many years later he was to openly admit that he had made a mistake and that “Those days are better dead. We’ve done a sight better since the Kanaka left.”<sup>15</sup>

The Federal Government paid a bounty to white cane-growers to employ white labour. North Queensland’s reliance on South Sea Islanders was reflected in the higher rate of bounty paid in the Cairns-Ingham area compared with other sugar producing areas moving progressively down the coast. In 1901, 5/- per ton was paid in the local district, compared with 4/- per ton in southern Queensland. Only 7.4% of the Cairns district’s cane was harvested by white labour, compared with Beenleigh-Maroochy where it was 91%, demonstrating that four years after the South Sea Islander legislation’s introduction, the plan was not being implemented very successfully.<sup>16</sup> Three years later (1907) there was still a 17% disparity with the southern-most sugar regions.<sup>17</sup> The situation was not to last, ‘for the Commonwealth was determined on a White Australia policy.’<sup>18</sup> This was what the Federal *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 was unofficially called, and it applied to the whole of the new nation of Australia.<sup>19</sup> The Act “virtually halted the expansion of Chinese agriculture, especially since it was passed at a time when Palmer [Goldfield] immigrants were returning home and younger men were required to replace them.”<sup>20</sup> The policy, nevertheless, was a falsehood, as the *Morning Post* observed:

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p.56.

<sup>14</sup> T. Treston, “Personal Letter – 1906”, *HSC*, Bulletin 241, December 1979.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by V. Kennedy, *The Life of A.J. Draper*, Cairns Post, Cairns, 1931, p.83. Kennedy cites being with A.J. Draper in 1927 in the Hambleton area where they stopped the car and viewed “the long stretch of swaying cane that swept to the foot of the range. ‘You see those pockets over there?’ he said. ‘They were dotted with Kanakas 30 years ago.’ After a pause: ‘What damned nigger drivers we all were in those days!’”

<sup>16</sup> K. Saunders, *Workers in Bondage*, UQP, St. Lucia, 1982, p. 166, Table 12 & 13. The overall percentage for Queensland was only 26.6%.

<sup>17</sup> D. Hunt, “A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, 1900-1920”, PhD, *JCU*, Townsville, 1979, p.33.

<sup>18</sup> M. Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, MUP, Melbourne, 1923, p.182. Mulgrave Central Mill figures “of kanakas under contract fell from 150 in 1905 to 39 in July 1906.” Morton, *By Strong Arms*, Gordonvale, 1995, p.65.

<sup>19</sup> ‘White Australians’ were not alone in the western world with their attitudes to coloured people. During the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) historian Thomas Pakenham identified that “The Africans were there to be useful to white men. When no longer useful, they must go back where they belonged, wherever that might be.” T. Pakenham, *The Boer War*, The Folio Society, London, 1999, p.521. Nevertheless, one cannot help but agree with Souter when he states “The debates on White Australia (for that was the subject) make dismal reading nowadays [1988]. There is a meanness of spirit about them, and from this distance it is not easy to understand the fear and prejudice which pervaded almost all speeches.” G. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, MUP, Carlton, 1988, p.62.

<sup>20</sup> C. May, *Topsawyers*, 1996, p.288, “But for this Act the influx of the late nineties may have continued for several

White Australia. What a silly, meaningless ‘parrot’ cry it is. The ‘white’ cane cutters employing a Japanese cook. The ‘white’ publican, pulling long beers all day long for thirsty ‘White Australians,’ employs Chinamen and Japs in his laundry and kitchen. The ‘White Australia’ land owner leases part of his land to Chinese and cultivates the balance with kanakas. The ‘White Australia’ candidate employs blacks to cut his firewood and wheel his perambulator.<sup>21</sup>

The general feeling in the district appeared to be that it was only the far North that was going to pay the price of the southern states’ wish to see the removal of South Sea Islander labour.<sup>22</sup> These discriminatory laws had their impact in the Cairns district, where Nubby Bux, an Indian sugar grower and his associate Abdul Hoosian leased 103 acres from William Cannon on the Mulgrave.<sup>23</sup> In order to buy this land Bux had to become an Australian citizen which required that he sit the dictation test. Nubby, like many of his contemporaries was illiterate and failed the test. He appealed through all the courts up to the Privy Council in England arguing that he was a British subject, but this was eventually rejected,<sup>24</sup> and both were forced to leave their farm(s), despite being recognised as “men of the right stamp.”<sup>25</sup>

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more years.”

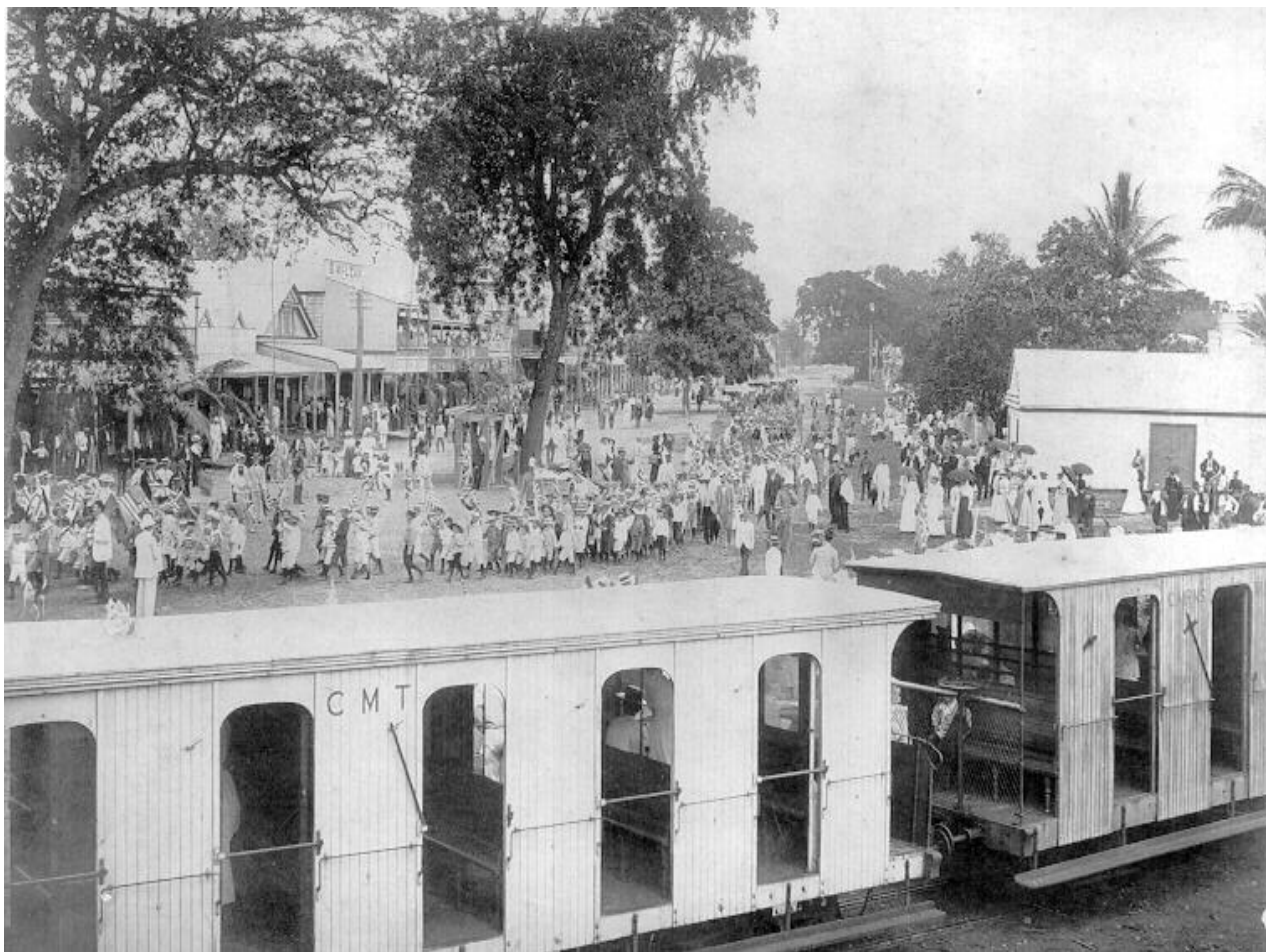
<sup>21</sup> *Morning Post*, 24 November 1903. This last reference is a snide dig at the local Labor candidate.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, “ ‘The kanaka must go’ and the other aliens may remain...The kanaka is a beast of burden, on a par with the horse or bullock. He makes work for the white farmer, mechanic, engine-driver, wharf laborer, and sailor; he does not trade or compete with the skilled laborer, and every penny he makes in the country he spends before he leaves. On the other hand the Chinaman, the Jap, and the Hindoo are traders, and frequently craftsmen. They compete with our country – women in kitchen and laundry. They have secured a monopoly of the market garden, the banana trade, and the cheap furniture trade. They enter into every class of industry and commerce. Their presence in the country, except as agricultural laborers, provides no employment for white workers, and every penny they can make in this country they send away to their native lands.” The federal *Immigration Restriction Act* had a component (Clause 4), known as the 50 word dictation test, which enabled any European language to be used to preclude immigrants who were not British or of an ‘acceptable’ ethnic background. G. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, MUP, Carlton, 1989, pp.64-65. For a coverage of legislation affecting Chinese see C. May, *Topsawyers*, 1996, pp.287-293.

<sup>23</sup> “The Mulgrave Sugar Lands”, *Cairns Argus*, 16 March 1895. Nearly six months later it was reported: “Mr Abdul Hoosian, a large shareholder in connection with the Mulgrave Central Mill Co., met with a piece of very bad luck on Sunday, when a splendid patch of 50 acres of cane was destroyed by fire. The cause of the catastrophe appears to have been the burning of a neighbouring belt of scrub, not the property of Mr Hoosian. Some ten months ago he lost 28 acres of standing cane through some unexplained cause.” *Cairns Argus*, 23 September 1895. How coincidental these occurrences were is open to debate. The *Argus* may have misspelt his name, as one A. Hoosain, was advertising in the *Cairns Post* (17 July 1911 +) as ‘The Oldest Established Store-keeper on the Field’ at Einasleigh and Kidston.

<sup>24</sup> H.K. MacDonnell, “Early Days In and Around Cairns – Sugar Industry”, *HSC*, Bulletin 196, March 1976. George Mayers bought out the two Indians. M. Mayers, *Life and Adventures of George Russell Mayers*, The Bookfellow, Sydney, 1932, p.106.

<sup>25</sup> “The Mulgrave Sugar Lands”, *Cairns Argus*, 16 March 1895. Abdul Hoosian remained in North Queensland, and by 1911 owned a shop at Oaks Rush which was some 260 kilometres from Cairns (as the crow flies [*Cairns Post*, 9 March, 1911; a fellow was sentenced for stealing from him.]). Oaks Rush was the last big alluvial goldrush in North Queensland and was located 32kms (20 miles) south of Einasleigh (c.40kms SW of Mount Surprise). Discovered in 1907/8, it appears to have reached its zenith in 1911. [See J. Wegner, *The Etheridge*, Studies in North Queensland History No.13, JCU, Townsville, 1990, pp.98-111.] Nubby Bux appears to have departed, *QSA*



[Courtesy of John Oxley Library]

Nearly 1200 people participated in the procession to celebrate Australian Federation (Commonwealth Day). The procession started at the Railway Station led by the mounted police who cleared a path through some of the three hundred spectators. The band was followed by a myriad of school children, who were now not only Queenslanders but Australians, waving countless flags. Then came the town's volunteer defence units – the Naval Brigade and F Company Kennedy Regiment (under Captain A.J. Draper). After the Mayor's speech, his wife unfurled the new Federation flag for the first time on the flagpole at the Customs House reserve. With the formal proceedings completed, the children pictured above and the crowd boarded the tramway to the showground for 'eatables and drinkables', Punch and Judy, horse jumping and athletics. Later, a concert on the Esplanade played music and the evening concluded with a fireworks display launched from a punt moored rather too far off shore.

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LAN/ DF 2087 File 2130 Gayndah, identifies Nubby Bux (signed for as Nobby Box) applying for a Prickly Pear lease for 318 acres at Ban Ban Springs in Gayndah on 1 July 1914. He was born in India in July 1883, and may be our character who was also variously referred to as Nabbi Bucks or Nabby Bux or N. Buck; *Morning Post*, 18 July 1895 & 24 September 1896.

Seven days after Cairns celebrated the inauguration of the new nation-state of Australia, a major riot occurred between inebriated South Sea Islanders and police in Chinatown. In the early hours of Tuesday morning 8 January 1901, Constable Gilmore arrested an Islander for assaulting a Sinhalese boarding-house keeper in Spence Street. On their way to the lock-up, ‘a number of half-drunken kanakas’ rushed him and took his prisoner away from him, and then chased him back to the police barracks in Abbott Street. The Islanders taunted police and threw a constant shower of missiles. The *Morning Post* asserted that there were some 50 to 60 ‘drunken savages’ within the building. Nevertheless, the riot was quelled with a total of 17 arrested, of whom four were hospitalised, one shot through the thigh and another had his eye removed.<sup>26</sup>

It should perhaps be remembered, as Docker has said, that:

They were mainly young men, ... sowing their wild oats, behaving much like any other army of young men stationed on foreign soil - like white Queenslanders in Cairo in 1916 for example. But they were not white, they were black, and they were expected to have more sense of how to behave in the presence of Europeans.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, their behaviour was bad enough for the management of the Mulgrave Central Mill at their 11<sup>th</sup> annual meeting (3 July 1906) to acknowledge, “that every encouragement would be given them to break their agreements and return to the islands.”<sup>28</sup>

Since the demise of the plantation system, a growing number of Pacific Islanders became what was termed ‘walk-about Kanakas’ - small groups of mobile and less easily controlled

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<sup>26</sup> *Morning Post*, 11 January 1901.

<sup>27</sup> E.W. Docker, *The Blackbirders*, Angus & Robertson, 1970, rpt.1981, p.258. However, the percentage of Islander’s convicted of criminal offences increased from 5.5% in 1898 to 7% in 1905; although, to what degree white official attitudes were hardening in relation to non-European crime and insubordination is somewhat difficult to judge. [See Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, 1972, pp.249-50.] Docker’s reference to Australians on leave in Cairo rings true. C.E.W. Bean (later the official Australian historian of World War I) noted the high incidence of VD and drunken misbehaviour among ANZAC’s in Egypt. MacIntyre observed: “In the most serious outbreak, the ‘Battle of the Wozzer’ [Wazzir], an altercation in a brothel escalated into an orgy of violence, destruction and arson which the military police were powerless to control.” [S. MacIntyre, *The Oxford History of Australia – The Succeeding Age 1901-1942*, OUP, Melbourne, 1993, p.147.] Survivors recalled that the raid (or battle) “took place for three reasons: a rise in price [for prostitutes], bad drink, and an ‘isolation compound full of our mates with V.D.’ ” [P. Adam-Smith, *The ANZACS*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1978, p.72.] Although, as Joan Beaumont has identified: “their behaviour towards the Egyptian population was arrogant, racially intolerant and on occasions violent”, which suggests it may not fit so comfortably with Docker’s analogy, particularly “as Bill Gammage, a historian generally very sympathetic to the mystique of Anzac, concedes, they were evidence of ‘some of the worst aspects of Australian character’.” J. Beaumont, *Australia’s WAR 1914-18*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, 1995, pp.9-10.

<sup>28</sup> Morton, *By Strong Arms*, 1995, p.238. Six months later a well-known nurse was assaulted while doing her rounds and the *Morning Post* (25 January 1907), reported that “There are a large number of unemployed kanakas camping in the vicinity of Parramatta and the soap works, awaiting deportation and while they are there, a special patrol should be in the vicinity at night time.”



workers.<sup>29</sup> The wages of the Islanders were also increasing and had reached 24/- a week, and by April 1903 they were taking a leaf out of the book of their white brother, the Trade Unionist, and strongly resented any undercutting of the prices fixed by themselves. The *Morning Post* reported:

It appears that Indians in this district have lately been taking contracts for cane work at prices the kanakas would not look at and much bitterness has been thereby caused. To such a pitch has feeling been aroused that the Indians work in fear of their lives. Wherever the kanakas meet them they assault them and looting of Indian camps is an everyday occurrence. Even in the daytime the Indians will not travel unless armed with heavy waddies with which to retaliate upon their enemies... Some little time ago an Indian who wished to reach his camp at Aloomba hired a cab to take him to his destination at a cost of £2 10s.<sup>30</sup>

From 1898 to 1902 North Queensland along with the rest of Australia experienced a severe drought. This impacted on work opportunities, particularly the unskilled and casual labourers who made up most of the North Queensland work force. However, with the breaking of the drought the unemployment situation began gradually to improve with the State government beginning to implement a variety of public works programs. Although with the collapse of the Chilligoe Railway and Mines Co. in 1901 unemployment soared, and Chilligoe overnight became almost deserted.

Working conditions were primitive and hiring opportunities erratic, with employers persistently claiming the right to employ non-union labour. Wharf labourers were employed under the Bull System, which basically involved 'lumpers' ('wharfies') turning up each morning hoping to be picked for work.<sup>31</sup> It often involved cronyism. It was hard, dirty and dangerous work, with little mechanisation and no insurance or health cover. By August 1901 the Cairns Waterside Workers Union had been established, and affiliation forged the following month with the Australian Labour Federation. Due to victimisation by the shipping companies,

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<sup>29</sup> R. Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland*, Vol.1, UQP, St. Lucia, 1982, p.255.

<sup>30</sup> *Morning Post*, 24 April 1903. Three years later the *Morning Post* (Thursday, 18 October 1906) complained that a 'Hindoo Camp' "at the intersection of [W]harf and Lake Streets [where] there have been a dozen Indians camped right in the middle of the roads since Tuesday afternoon [when they arrived on the *Kuranda*]. They have put up bedsteads covered with dirty blankets and have all their cooking apparatus strewed about the place. The place for yards round is covered with cabbage leaves and other food refuse and the men use the bank of a neighboring creek which is close to the road and which can be seen by persons passing to Howard Smith's or the Adelaide [Steamship] wharves, for sanitary purposes."

<sup>31</sup> "The individual lumper is a toiler. The man who carries 175 lbs. [79kg] bags of sugar on the skin of his back eight to twelve hours per day, with hardly a holiday in six months, needs to be something of a super-man. And the 'bull gangs' at Cairns and Townsville put in as much as 50 tons an hour per gang of six men. Which is over eight tons an hour per man!" *Northern Affairs*, 6 November 1931, p.11.

membership of the Cairns branch fell from 177 in November 1901 to 48 in August 1906.<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting that shipping was the life-blood for exporting and importing to the district, and any hindrance to this pivotal transport was not received well by local farmers and businessmen.

Philp's conservative government had been discredited for alleged economic mismanagement, and the elections of August 1905 saw the coalition of the liberal followers of Arthur Morgan and the Labor Party win 70% of the vote. John Mann (1904-1912)<sup>33</sup> replaced James Lyons (1902-04)<sup>34</sup> as the MLA for Cairns, but became an Independent after the 1907 Labor Party split.<sup>35</sup>

In 1907 the Commonwealth Industrial and Arbitration Court implemented the basic wage.<sup>36</sup> It was during this period that white labour, encouraged by advertisements placed in southern newspapers by the Mulgrave Central Mill,<sup>37</sup> flowed in to replace the exiting South Sea Islanders. As a result, the formation of sugar workers' unions began in 1905. By March 1907, there were 950 men in sugar unions in North Queensland and an agreed standard wage for them was reached at the 'Labor in Canefield Conference' in Townsville, where they were awarded '22s 6d in the off-season and 25s in harvest time', although many were disgruntled with this

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<sup>32</sup> D.W. Hunt, "A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland", PhD, JCU, Townsville, 1979, p.11-12.

<sup>33</sup> Mann was born in Scotland in 1869. First married to Janet King with whom he had three sons and two daughters. Arrived in Cairns in 1889, and later married Amy Stuart (no issue). He worked as a miner, navvy, wharf lumpner (Cairns, Bowen, Mackay and Gladstone). He became a dairy farmer at Edmonton. Secretary of the United Irish League of Cairns and representative at the 1903 conference for the Mulgrave Farmer's Association. Died 1 January 1939 in Brisbane. *ibid.*, p.123.

<sup>34</sup> Lyons was born in Ireland in 1842, and came to North Queensland in 1862. He was a miner on the Palmer River Goldfield and went on to haul timber on the Daintree River. Settled in Cairns in 1881 as a sawmiller and timber exporter and his business was successful. A founder of the Cairns Stock Exchange, and at various stages Alderman, Mayor, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Hospital and School of Arts, Jockey and Bowling Clubs. Married Ellen Murphy at Ravenswood and had six sons and three daughters. A Roman Catholic, he died 27 July 1915 in Cairns. [D. Waterson, *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament, 1860-1929*, ANUP, Canberra, 1972, p.111.] Lyons Street is named after him.

<sup>35</sup> Labor's William Kidston formed a coalition government in January 1906, however, he was beginning to distance himself from the newly named Queensland Labor Party (formed in May 1905). In February 1907, Kidston established a new party of labor moderates and other factions, some of whom were referred to as the Nationalist Country Party. The May 18 State election saw separate campaigns resulting in 29 Philipites, 24 Kidstonites and 18 Labor. By November, Kidston was forced to resign due to a hostile Council (Upper House) and a lack of support from Labor. Philp was appointed Premier by Governor Chelmsford. However he lacked the support of the House (the Legislative Assembly), and was granted a dissolution. In February 1908 another Kidston government was formed after fighting the election on the issues of Vice-Regal and Upper House powers. The results were: 25 Kidstonites, 22 Philp Ministerialists, 22 Labor, 2 Farmer's Representatives and an Independent: Cairns' John Mann. Fraser, & Atkinson, (Gen.Eds), *The Macquarie Encyclopaedia of Australian Events*, The Macquarie Library, Sydney, 1997, pp. 104-05.

<sup>36</sup> The hallmark decision by Justice Higgins in the Harvester Case, determined a minimum wage for men at "7 shillings a day to cover the basic needs for rent, food and fuel for himself, a wife and three children." A year later Higgins decreed "A wage that does not allow for the matrimonial condition for an adult man is not fair and reasonable,[and] is not a 'living wage'. So men's wages were set as a 'family wage'." Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath & Quartly, *Creating A Nation*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1996, p.200.

<sup>37</sup> Morton, *By Strong Arms*, 1995, p.65.

outcome.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, Italian workers, many of whom had originally arrived in 1890, had settled by 1899 at Aloomba Estate and as far north as Port Douglas.<sup>39</sup> The labour movement however, was permeated by an ethnocentricity which allowed them to group Italians and Greeks along with 'Kanakas, Japs and Chows' as undesirable elements.<sup>40</sup> Others in North Queensland, welcomed Italians as increasing the prosperity of the district.<sup>41</sup>

Federation acted as a catalyst for a variety of reforms, not the least of which was the abolition of the property and plural vote and the granting of the franchise for women and itinerant workers.

While women gained the right to vote federally in 1903, it was not until 1905 that Queensland extended the franchise,<sup>42</sup> but they could not be considered candidates for Parliament until 1915.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Morning Post*, 1 March 1907. The conference was held on Tuesday 27 February 1907. In the same month and also in Townsville, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association was formed to serve the interests of millers and growers. A.J. Draper was elected their first president. Mulgrave Central Mill, *50 Years in Retrospect*, 1947, p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> *North Queensland Herald*, 31 July 1899, p.54, cited in F. Galassi, *Sotto La Croce del Sud, Under the Southern Cross*, JCU, Townsville, 1991, p.140.

<sup>40</sup> D.W. Hunt, "A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland", PhD, JCU, Townsville, 1979, p.26, note 5 [*Worker* 24 August 1901, 10 July 1913].

<sup>41</sup> F. Galassi, *Sotto La Croce del Sud, Under the Southern Cross*, JCU, Townsville, 1991, p.140-1.

<sup>42</sup> Before this fewer than 104,000 Queenslanders could vote, while on the federal electoral roll there were 227,000 eligible Queensland voters. Johnston, *Call of the Land*, Jacaranda, Milton, 1982, p.122. MacIntyre, *The Oxford History of Australia – The Succeeding Age 1901-1942*, OUP, Melbourne, 1993, p.111; Ward, *A Concise History of Australia*, UQP, St. Lucia, 1992, p.165. Victoria was the last State to grant women the vote in 1908; SA in 1894, WA 1899, NSW 1902, Tas. 1903.

<sup>43</sup> McBride & Taylor, *Brisbane: One Hundred Stories*, Brisbane City Council, 1997, p.7. 1915 was also the year that saw women legally allowed to practice law. [p.15] It was not until 1929 that Irene Longman became the first woman in the Queensland Parliament for the electorate of Bulimba. Interestingly, none of the core Western countries (US, Britain, Germany and France) were full democracies in 1900. Ponting identified in relation to this, that "None allowed women to vote and most still restricted the number of males who could vote – for example only 60 per cent could do so in Britain." C. Ponting, *Progress and Barbarism – The World in the Twentieth Century*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1998, p.32.