CHAPTER 4

DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS, 1908-40

By 1908, the Pacific Islander population in North Queensland had shrunk to a tiny fraction of its previous size. This chapter is concerned with the demographic patterns of this population between 1908 and 1940: the Islanders' numbers, locations, mobility and demographic behaviour in terms of the three primary factors of marriage, birth and death. Statistical information derived from the censuses and also from nominal sources is used where possible, but there are limitations on the availability and reliability of data for such a small population. In addition, the only statistics available for comparative purposes concern the wider population as a whole, rather than a more strictly comparable group such as Aborigines or 'poor whites'.

The survival of an Islander population was clearly unforeseen; it was assumed, in view of the small number of women, that it would disappear entirely or be absorbed into the Aboriginal population. In the early 1900s it was often asserted that relaxing the strict exemption requirements would not threaten a 'White Australia': "they [Pacific Islanders] can only be an infinitesimal portion of the population and in a generation or two will have disappeared". In the years after deportation, observers continued to predict the Islanders' rapid disappearance and to emphasize their small numbers. Often it was claimed that all the 'kanakas' had been sent home - a

1. The censuses do not distinguish between different 'classes' in the population, and little is known about the demography of the Aboriginal population in the early twentieth century. C.D. Rowley, Outcasts in White Australia (Canberra, 1970; repr. Ringwood, Vic., 1972), p. 3.

2. AYB, 1905-6, p. 44. For similar comments, see Q 16 Jul. 1904, p. 3; BC 4 Jul. 1906; NM 5 Apr. 1906; Herbert River Express quoted in NM 11 Feb. 1907; Chermside to Sec. of State, 23 Jun. 1902, Al 03/1694, AA.
belief which still has wide currency. Within North Queensland, recognition of the increasing Islander population came in the early 1930s, at much the same time as a similar trend was observed in populations throughout the Pacific.

While it is clear that predictions of its disappearance were confounded, it is difficult to assess accurately the size and growth of the Islander population. The Commonwealth censuses of 1911, 1921, 1933 and 1947 provide the only figures available which illustrate change over time. These are useful for highlighting broad trends, although (as will be seen) they significantly understated the number of Islanders in North Queensland. In Table 4.1, the census figures for the Pacific Islander population in Queensland and Australia are shown. Clearly the great majority of Islanders (consistently over three-quarters) continued to live in Queensland. Significantly, an even greater proportion of the women lived there.

According to the censuses, the Islander population in Queensland increased rapidly between 1911 and 1921, at a rate of 1.28 per cent per annum. Between 1921 and 1933 the population declined significantly, and between 1933 and 1947 there was a further noticeable decrease. As will


5. Fijians and Maoris were often included as 'Polynesians', but where they were enumerated separately I have counted Fijians but not Maoris. In 1947 Torres Strait Islanders were counted as 'Polynesians', and only approximate estimates of their numbers were given.

6. Apart from New South Wales, there were tiny numbers of Islanders in the other States.
shortly be made evident, this decline in the total was due to the rapidly decreasing number of migrants, which tended to obscure the significant increase in the number of native-born Islanders.

**TABLE 4.1: Numbers of Pacific Islanders in Australia, according to the census**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year of Census</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Aust. Total</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Aust. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>2242</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>1476</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>2569</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>1482</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>2098</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>1582</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>1662</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>1255</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* including Fijians (but not Maoris)
* In 1947 Torres Strait Islanders were counted in with Pacific Islanders. This figure is obtained by subtracting approximate figures given for the number of Torres Strait Islanders from the Australian and Queensland totals.


The censuses (except in 1947) also provided figures on the number and locations of Islanders in North Queensland (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3). However, the 1911 census enumerated only the migrants and not the native-born, while the 1933 census understated numbers by excluding native-born who were 'half-castes'. Despite these omissions, the North Queensland proportion of the Queensland total remained roughly constant, ranging from...
TABLE 4.2: Numbers of Pacific Islanders in North Queensland, according to the census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Census</th>
<th>No. in North Qld(^*) M</th>
<th>No. in North Qld(^*) F</th>
<th>No. in North Qld Total</th>
<th>No. in North Qld as % of Qld total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>1075 136 1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1246 414 1660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>634 349 983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Papuans and those living in the Torres Strait are excluded. There is a significant discrepancy, for which no explanation is provided, between the totals given here for Queensland and those given in other census tables (see Table 4.1).


TABLE 4.3: Location of Pacific Islanders in North Queensland, according to the census

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1911 Census</th>
<th>1921 Census</th>
<th>1933 Census</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M  F Total</td>
<td>M  F Total</td>
<td>M  F Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pt Douglas</td>
<td>40 0 40</td>
<td>26 2 28</td>
<td>12 4 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>103 5 108</td>
<td>45 18 63</td>
<td>8 2 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atherton Tab.</td>
<td>15 0 15</td>
<td>33 12 45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnstone R.</td>
<td>-* -* -*</td>
<td>45 5 50</td>
<td>11 5 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert R.</td>
<td>71 12 83</td>
<td>65 36 101</td>
<td>31 24 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>27 3 30</td>
<td>13 3 16</td>
<td>6 4 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burdekin</td>
<td>-* -* -*</td>
<td>25 11 36</td>
<td>42 20 62</td>
</tr>
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<td>Charters Towers</td>
<td>6 2 8</td>
<td>11 6 17</td>
<td>3 1 4</td>
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<td>Hughenden &amp; west</td>
<td>10 0 10</td>
<td>13 8 21</td>
<td>6 4 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>49 5 54</td>
<td>33 14 47</td>
<td>33 22 55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proserpine</td>
<td>-* -* -*</td>
<td>28 22 50</td>
<td>8 4 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>208 22 230</td>
<td>234 81 315</td>
<td>169 93 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>529 49 578</td>
<td>571 218 789</td>
<td>334 183 517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Included in Cairns total.
+ Included in Townsville total.
\(\vdash\) Included in Bowen total.

forty-six per cent to fifty-two per cent. 7

These tables show that Pacific Islanders were chiefly resident in Queensland and here heavily concentrated in North Queensland. Other evidence, however, indicates that the censuses considerably underenumerated the Pacific Islander population, at least in North Queensland. The background to the censuses helps to explain why such undercounting might have occurred.

The Commonwealth Government decided that the census would collect statistical information on non-European 'races'. 8 Accordingly, from the first census in 1911 a 'race' question was included which non-Europeans only answered. Pacific Islanders were inaccurately categorized as 'Polynesians'. 9 In 1911 this information was analysed elaborately - tables on the number of each non-European group, their residential locations, nationality and birthplace, length of residence in Australia, occupations, education, conjugal condition and age were produced. Presumably for reasons of time and interest this exercise was not repeated. Information on 'race' in subsequent censuses was generally limited to essential information. 10

As the Commonwealth statistician admitted, the census data provided at best only a rough indication of the proportions and 'racial' compositions of the non-European groups in Australia. In part this related to the definitions employed. Until 1947 Aborigines were not counted in the census.

7. Pacific Islanders living in the Torres Strait were excluded from this total.


10. Such as numbers, locations, length of residence in Australia and ages. Only in 1911 was all this information provided for Islanders in North Queensland (as distinct from Islanders in Queensland).
'Half-castes' were classified according to the 'race' of which they were more than half. Since the concern was with Europeans as against non-Europeans, those with one-half European descent and one-half Aboriginal or other non-European descent, were classed as 'half-castes'. All those of Aboriginal and other non-European descent and also those whose parents were non-Europeans of different 'races' were classed as 'full-bloods' according to the 'race' of the father. Thus children of Islander and European descent would have been counted as 'half-castes', and those with Islander mothers and non-European fathers classed under their fathers' 'race'. In both cases they would not have been counted as Islanders, irrespective of their own social or psychological identification.

Islanders in the far north of North Queensland (Innisfail and north) may have been significantly undercounted because of their association with Aborigines. Families in these districts were generally of mixed (Aboriginal and Islander) descent rather than full (both parents Islanders). Census collectors, being ethnocentric Europeans, may have mistakenly identified such people as Aboriginals and therefore not counted them. A more general reason why the Islander population in North Queensland would have been undercounted was their lack of visibility. Their semi-rural and rural locations, discussed later in this chapter, made them easy to overlook. Moreover, the completion of a census schedule presupposed a basic literacy, and the migrants were predominantly illiterate.

For all these reasons, Pacific Islanders in North Queensland were a group whose numbers can be expected to have been consistently underestimated in the censuses. Further evidence of this is provided through other documentary evidence.

The 1911 census can be compared with applications made by Pacific

11. Commonwealth Census, Vol. III, 1933, Statistician's Report, p. 117. The Commonwealth definition of an Aboriginal was a person of more than half Aboriginal descent, but Queensland had a much more wide-reaching definition. Rowley, Outcasts in White Australia, pp. 38, 47.

12. As late as 1971, the number of Aborigines in North Queensland was undercounted very significantly in the census, due to the definitions used and identification problems. R.J. Pryor, 'The Aboriginal Population of North Queensland: A Demographic Profile', Oceania Vol. XLV, No. 1, Sep. 1974, pp. 28-29.
Islanders working in the sugar industry for exemption from a piece of discriminatory legislation, the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913. It can be estimated, and this is an overestimate rather than an underestimate, that 471 of the 529 migrant men counted in 1911 in North Queensland were in the sugar-growing districts. Two years later, in 1913, 446 male migrants in these same districts applied for exemption from the Sugar Cultivation Act, and this by no means represented all the migrants working in the sugar industry. At least twenty migrants had died since the 1911 census. Moreover, the applicants represented only the majority of those presently working in the sugar industry, whereas the 1911 figure included those out of work due to ill-health, old-age or inability to find employment. Finally, it must be noted that most but not all of the migrants in these districts were sugar workers. Clearly the 1911 census had undercounted the number of migrant men - and by extension the Islander population in general - in North Queensland.

The census figures therefore represent very conservative estimates of the Islander population. Less conservative, but by no means infallible, figures can be calculated from nominal sources. As noted in the previous chapter, these sources indicate that there were at least 1,096 migrant men and women in North Queensland (see Table 4.4). A very few of these people came to North Queensland from other parts of Australia during this period; the rest had been in the region by 1908. Yet the 1911 census counted only 578 migrant men and women in North Queensland (see Table 4.2).

Figures on the size of the total population (migrant and native-born

13. 4 Geo. V, No.4. See Table 4.3. This was calculated by totalling the number of migrant men in the Port Douglas, Cairns, Johnstone River, Herbert River, Townsville (which included the Burdekin) and Mackay districts.

14. See Table 5.1. This Act is discussed in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

15. This was calculated from nominal sources, the methodology of which is outlined in Appendix B.

16. The 1911 census was the only census in which the migrants (as opposed to the native-born) were enumerated separately.
### TABLE 4.4: Numbers, locations and islands of origin of Pacific Island migrants in North Queensland 1908-40, according to nominal sources

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total New Hebrides</th>
<th>Fiji</th>
<th>Samoa</th>
<th>New Britain &amp; New Ireland</th>
<th>Lord Howe</th>
<th>Malta</th>
<th>Gualdalcanal</th>
<th>Ngaheia</th>
<th>Santa Isabel</th>
<th>San Cristobal</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proserpine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Districts</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ab. Missions &amp; Reserves</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Island of origin not known

#principally loyalty Islanders

(number of women included in total

Sources: Nominal sources (see Appendices A and B)
including those of full and part Islander descent) in 1911 and 1933 can also be constructed from nominal sources for the Herbert River, Burdekin, Bowen (including Proserpine) and Mackay districts. This information is presented in Table 4.5. The number of migrants still alive in 1933 may have been slightly higher than given. With the exception of the Burdekin district in 1933, these totals are much higher than the census figures for both 1911 and 1933 (see Table 4.3). Presumably the Islander populations in other districts were similarly undercounted in the censuses.

TABLE 4.5: Numbers of native-born Pacific Islanders in selected North Queensland districts in 1911 and 1933, according to nominal sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1911 Migrant</th>
<th>1911 Native-Born</th>
<th>1933 Migrant</th>
<th>1933 Native-Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert R.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdekin</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen (incl.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proserpine)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Nominal sources (see Appendices A and B).

17 Information is most complete and reliable for these districts, and these years were chosen to compare with the censuses. The number of migrants in 1933 is probably an underestimation, since they were only counted if they were known to have still been alive at this period. In contrast, the number of native-born may be slightly over-estimated, since these were counted unless they were known to have died.
The censuses, however, did highlight an important trend - the decline in the Islander population in North Queensland between 1911 and 1933. As Table 4.5 shows, the numbers of migrants fell dramatically between 1911 and 1933. The rapid increase in the numbers of native-born was not sufficient to offset this, but it did indicate that the population would survive (see Plates 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). Presumably in the 1940s the total population size started to show an increase, and today there are several thousand Pacific Islanders in North Queensland. 18

Despite their undercounting, the censuses are also useful for highlighting the changes in the Islanders' population structure. In Figure 4.1(a)-(d), population pyramids have been drawn for the Islanders in Queensland based on the censuses of 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1933. 19 In 1901 the classic imbalances created by the predominance of young, unmarried males and the tiny numbers of females is strikingly evident. By 1911 deportation had reduced these imbalances. The female population now represented 20.6 per cent of the total. There were considerably more males than females amongst the children and young adults. While there was a striking imbalance in the number of men aged 30 and over, the male population was gradually ageing - 57.6 per cent of males were aged 35 years and over.

By 1921, the further broadening of the population base is apparent. There were slightly more female than male children, but noticeably more men than women aged between 15 and 29 years. The female population had risen to 29.4 per cent of the total. In the older age groups, the imbalance was centred on men aged 40 and over. By 1933, the population pyramid was closer to a 'normal' shape. The female population had reached 39.7 per cent of the total, and males and females aged between 0 and 49 years were roughly equal in number. The bulge was focussed on men aged 60 years and over, and especially over 65. 20 Although the only figures available on age

18. See Epilogue.

19. The figures are taken from the Queensland census (for 1901) and the Commonwealth censuses (for later years).

PLATE 4.1: Group of Islander boys and young men from the Fatnouma and Motto families, Mackay, c. 1930s. Note the cricket bat.

PLATE 4.2: Islander congregation (including the Cawoot, Darr, Henaway and Nahow families) with their European pastor and helpers at the newly-built Assembly of God Church in Ayr, c. 1930.
FIGURE 4.1 (a)-(d): AGE* AND SEX PYRAMIDS OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION IN QUEENSLAND, 1901 TO 1933

* NOT INCLUDING THOSE WHOSE AGES WERE NOT SPECIFIED

SOURCES —
structure in 1947 were Australia-wide and included Torres Strait Islanders, they highlighted the continuing process of normalisation. 21

The population structure had thus gradually assumed a more normal shape, of tapering from a broad base. The bulge in the population created by the predominance of unmarried men had formed a rolling wave pushing up the proportions in each age group over time. The equalisation between the sexes had obvious demographic implications, as also did the trend to a more youthful population. This was also reflected in the increasing numbers of native-born Islanders. The proportion of native-born in the total population increased dramatically: amongst the Islander population throughout Australia, it rose from 26.2 per cent in 1911, to 44.5 per cent in 1921, 51.3 per cent in 1933 and 75.8 per cent in 1947. 22 The Commonwealth statistician commented in 1933 and in 1947 that Pacific Islanders and Syrians were the groups with the largest proportions of native-born and the only non-European groups with approximate numerical equality between the sexes. 23

The population imbalance amongst the Islanders was not completely atypical. The Queensland population was also marked by an excess of males, especially in the later age groups, reflecting the influence of immigration to the State. 24 With the labour trade closed, the Islander population in Queensland gradually lost its severe imbalances.

21. The female population was now 46.7 per cent of the total, and men aged 45 and over represented only 13.6 per cent of the male population. Ibid., Vol.III, 1947, Statistician's Report, p.158.

22. These calculations could only be done for the Islander population in Australia as a whole. In the 1947 census, I deducted the number given for Torres Strait Islanders (whom it can be assumed were all born in Australia) from the number of native-born 'Polynesians'. Ibid., Vol.III, 1933, Statistician's Report, p.121, Vol.III, 1947, Statistician's Report, p.159.


THE GEOGRAPHICAL dispersion of Pacific Islanders in North Queensland between 1908 and 1940 was not substantially different from the nineteenth century pattern. As presented in Table 4.3, the censuses provide a broad outline of the distribution by districts, proceeding in rough geographical order from Cooktown to Mackay. The clustering in the sugar-growing districts - Port Douglas, Cairns, the Johnstone River, the Herbert River, the Burdekin, Proserpine and Mackay - is obvious. There was a heavy concentration of Islanders in the Mackay district, ranging from 40 per cent of the total Islander population in 1911 and 1921 to 51 per cent in 1933. In the Bowen, Cairns and Herbert River districts and, in later years, in the Burdekin, there were sizeable populations. Women were most numerous in the Mackay, Herbert River, Bowen and Burdekin districts.

The only non sugar-growing districts with sizeable Islander populations were Bowen, and to a lesser extent, Townsville and the Atherton Tableland. Inland there were tiny numbers of Islanders, scattered from the Gulf of Carpentaria down to Cloncurry and across to the coast; these are recorded under the Charters Towers and Hughenden districts. These men and women, and their children, had been brought to work in the pastoral industry in the 1870s. There were also small numbers of Islanders who chose to work or were taken to live on the Aboriginal missions and reserves such as Yarrabah, Mapan, Aurukun and Palm Island.

Geographically the Islanders were concentrated in the coastal sugar districts, especially in Mackay. Their principal locations in these districts (including Bowen) are illustrated in Maps 4.1 to 4.7. Another noticeable feature was the predominance of semi-rural and rural locations. This was highlighted in the censuses. A breakdown given for urban and rural residence in North Queensland stated that only 1.6 per cent of Islanders in 1921 and 2.2 per cent in 1933 were living in cities or

25. A similar distribution was shown in a list of Islanders compiled in 1913 for the police districts of North Queensland. See Returns of Coloured Residents, 7131 of 1913, PRE/A436, QSA.

**Sugar Mill MAP 4.1:** The Port Douglas district
- Town

**MAP 4.2:** The Cairns district
MAP 4.3: The Johnstone River district

MAP 4.4: The Herbert River district
towns. Those few Islanders living in the urban centres were predominantly unmarried migrant men who ran boarding houses. Many, however, lived within walking distance of the towns or hamlets. Some led a completely rural life, often in very isolated surroundings. As will be seen, this rural and semi-rural existence was largely imposed upon the Islanders by the employment available to them and the attitudes and actions of the wider community.

Within this broad distribution, there were also internal residential patterns. Often, residence in a particular district and sometimes in a particular area within a district was correlated with island of origin. The tendency was for migrants from one island to cluster in a district. Amongst those from two particular islands of origin, Tanna and Malaita, this clannishness further extended to choosing to live in communities formed principally of their own countrymen and women.

In Table 4.4, residential location is correlated with island of origin for all migrant men and women known to have lived in North Queensland between 1908 and 1940. Although the island of origin cannot be identified for some twenty-five per cent, this table indicates, at least in broad terms, the proportions which each island and island group formed of the total. The patterns which had characterised the nineteenth century population were

27. The proportion of Islanders who were urban residents was much higher in the rest of the State; the State average for Pacific Islanders resident in cities or towns was 8.9 per cent in 1921 and 13.3 per cent in 1933. Commonwealth Census, Vol.1, 1921, pp.858-67, Vol.1, 1933, pp.306-11. In 1947 the urban/rural breakdown was given for the total Queensland population of 'Polynesians' only and included Torres Strait Islanders, a predominantly rural group; 15.3 per cent lived in urban centres. Ibid., Vol.1, 1947, pp.834-35.

28. See Chapter 8. This rural existence was apparent to contemporaries. See Asboe, History of Presbyterianism in Walkerston, p.3; NOR 23 Sep.1912; E. Denman to Mfn. for Agric., 4 Dec.1913, No.7069, 13G, ACS/N96, QSA; Norman, Life's Varied Scenes, p.75.

29. Where Islanders lived in more than one district, they have been counted under the district in which they appear to have settled (i.e. spent the longest amount of time). The only other possible source of information on residence and island of origin is contained in the 1911 census. The drawbacks here are that the migrants in North Queensland census districts were identified only under such broad categories as 'New Hebridean', 'New Caledonian', 'Other Polynesian British Possession' (principally the Solomon Islands) and 'Other Polynesian Islands'. Commonwealth Census, Vol.11, 1911, pp.338-51.
still evident. Nearly forty-nine per cent were from the New Hebrides. The only other major island group, the Solomons, comprised nearly twenty-four per cent of the total. Less than three per cent had come from the other island groups - New Caledonia (presumably the Loyalty Islands), Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. In relation to individual islands, the most numerous groups were the Malaitans and Tannese, representing eleven and nine per cent of the total, respectively.

This table also correlates island of origin with residential location. In the most northerly district of Port Douglas, Tannese and Solomon Islanders (from Nggela, Guadalcanal and Malaita) predominated. Solomon Islanders (principally Malaitans) represented over a third of the population in the adjoining Cairns district, but New Hebrideans, especially Tannese, were still the majority. On the Atherton Tableland, New Hebrideans well outnumbered Solomon Islanders. In the final district in the far north, the Johnstone River, the proportion of Solomon Islanders (mostly Malaitans) was again over one-third of the total. Amongst the New Hebridean majority, there were concentrations of Tannese and to a lesser extent Pentecost Islanders.

By contrast, Solomon Islanders made up just over one-tenth of the Herbert River Islander population. Amongst the New Hebrideans, Islanders from Tanna, Epi and Erromango, predominated. Some of the Tannese lived in a settlement known locally as 'The Gardens', just outside Halifax on J.A. Anderssen's farm. There were also small numbers from other island groups - Fiji, New Caledonia and Samoa. In the Burdekin district, a chief element amongst the New Hebridean majority was also the Tannese, but Solomon Islanders, notably Malaitans, represented a larger proportion

30. See also ibid., Census district of Cook, pp.340-41.
31. See also ibid., Census district of Cairns, pp.340-41. Many of the Tannese lived in close proximity to one another. T5Bsa:2.
32. See also Commonwealth Census, Vol.II, 1911, Census district of Herberton, pp.344-45.
33. See also ibid., Census district of Cardwell, pp.340-41. Originally there were 4 families and 1 childless widower at 'The Gardens', all of whom were Tannese in origin or descent. The last Islanders left there only in the 1970s. See T528sa:3; T59Bsa:3.
34. See also Commonwealth Census, Vol.II, 1911, pp.340-41.
35. The Tannese here also lived very close to one another. See T68Bsb:1.
(over a fifth) of the population. Further down the coast, in the Bowen district, Tannese formed nearly half of the New Hebridean majority, and Ambrymese and Valua Islanders were also numerous. In nearby Proserpine, Malekulans and Valua Islanders made up nearly half of the small, largely New Hebridean, population. There were only a few Solomon Islanders (mostly from Nggela) in Bowen and Proserpine.

Mackay, the district with the largest population, could boast men and women from all the island groups. There were Fijians, Tongans, Samoans, and Loyalty Islanders. The district was also the home of the largest number of Solomon Islanders. Over half the Solomon Islanders in North Queensland lived here, where they made up one-quarter of the district's population. New Hebrideans made up about two-fifths of the population. The chief groups amongst the New Hebrideans were Aobans, Malekulans and Epi Islanders and there were also substantial numbers from Santo, Valua, Malo, Tanna and Gaua. Amongst the Solomon Islanders, Nggela and Guadalcanal were well-represented and some had come from islands which had supplied few recruits, such as Santa Isabel (see Plate 9.2), San Cristobal, Santa Cruz and Buka near Bougainville. Nearly half of these Solomon Islanders, however, were Malaitans.

Within Mackay, there was a distinct although not rigid residential division between New Hebrideans and Solomon Islanders. This is evident in Table 4.6 which correlates island of origin with location in the five main areas for those applicants for exemption under the previously mentioned Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 (see also Map 4.7). Solomon Islanders lived

36. Once again the Tannese lived near to one another. See T62Bsa:1.

37. In the 1911 census, only 39 of the 230 Islanders resident in the Mackay census district were given as New Hebridean, whereas there were 76 Solomon Islanders ('Other Polynesian British Possession'). However, a very large number (67) were only identified as 'South Sea Islanders', and presumably a majority of these were New Hebrideans. Commonwealth Census. Vol.TI, 1911, pp.346-47.

38. Very few recruits came from Santa Isabel Island, and there is no evidence that any other migrants from this island remained in North Queensland after 1908.
predominantly to the north of the Pioneer River, known as the north side. Malaitans especially were clustered around Farleigh and on the surrounding ridges. There were also some New Hebrideans. On the other side of the river, the south side, and in the Eungella area to the north-west of the town, there were some Solomon Islanders but more New Hebrideans. Malekulans clustered along the river on the south side. Further south, in the Homebush and Sarina areas, there were large numbers of New Hebrideans but virtually no Solomon Islanders. Around Homebush, there was a concentration of Aobans.

TABLE 4.6: Island group and location of Pacific Island migrants who applied for exemption from the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island Group</th>
<th>North Side</th>
<th>South Side</th>
<th>Eungella</th>
<th>Mackay Town</th>
<th>Homebush</th>
<th>Sarina</th>
<th>Not Identified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solomons</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hebrides</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27†</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34²</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fijian and New Caledonian
† includes 20 Malaitans
² includes 7 Malekulans

Source: AGS/NS7, AGS/N100-108, AGS/N354-357, QSA.

The Islanders today are aware of this residential split which existed beyond World War II. As they see it, New Hebrideans constituted the Homebush 'mob', which included Sarina; the river people on the south side were largely made up of New Hebrideans with some Solomon Islanders; and the 'salt-water mob' on the north side was almost totally Solomon Islander.

39. See T21Bsa:1; T27Bsb:2; T29Bsa:1; T33Bsb:2; T37Bsa:2; T51Bsb:1.
The Pioneer River formed the important dividing line. As later chapters will demonstrate, this division was one reflection of important differences which continued to distinguish these two groups.

ISLAND or island group of origin was an influential factor in determining geographical mobility. Islanders in North Queensland were a geographically mobile population. This mobility can be divided into two distinct parts: long-range migration to other centres, either temporarily or permanently; and short-range mobility as expressed in movement within a district. Mobility was prompted by a variety of factors, including economic necessity, the desire to visit or live near kin or friends, marriage and the urge to travel or to escape family pressures. It is important to distinguish between mobility by the migrants and by the native-born.

By 1908, most of the migrants were in the districts in which they had chosen to live permanently. Yet in the previous century there had been considerable long-range mobility. Both single men and married couples (especially when their children were young) had moved around the colony. This is well illustrated by the number of children born before 1907 in districts other than that in which their parents eventually settled. Some had been born in southern Queensland. More commonly, children had been born in other parts of North Queensland. For example, Joy and Lucy Fatnowna were born in the Johnstone River district whereas their three younger siblings were born on Palms plantation in the Mackay district, where their parents had settled. There was also, of course, considerable immobility;


41. See Amy Sippie. AMR, Mackay, 22 Feb. 1919; Tommy Eduard Yasso, ABR, Bowen, 9 Dec. 1900: T608sa:1.

42. Joy Kwau, AMR, Mackay, 13 Nov. 1906; Lucy Coquasua. ibid., 25 Feb. 1911; Cirely Fatnowna. ibid., 26 Nov. 1918; Harry Norman Fatnowna, ibid., 20 Feb. 1918; Eva Fatnowna. ABR, Mackay, 17 Nov. 1901. For other such examples, see Benjamin Viti, AMR, Mackay. 16 Nov. 1918; Annie Elizabeth Tallis, AMR, Bowen, 1 Feb. 1908; Fred John Thomas and Phyllis Taiters, ibid., 3 Sep. 1927; Applic. No.1203E. George Palmer. AGS/N104, QSA.
many remained in the district, sometimes even on the same plantation or station, to which they had been introduced.

The trends in mobility up to 1913 can be identified through information on previous places of residence provided by applicants under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913.43 In Mackay, many had previously resided in central and southern Queensland, but most said that they had not been outside the district. In nearby Proserpine, an overwhelming majority had recently come from other parts of Queensland, principally Mackay and centres in southern and central Queensland and to a lesser extent Bowen and other northerly coastal districts. Since the sugar industry was only established in this district in the late 1890s, this pattern is not surprising. In contrast, roughly one-third of the applicants in both the Burdekin and Herbert River districts stated that they had not lived elsewhere.

In the far north, mobility had been greater. In the Johnstone River, Cairns and Port Douglas districts, few had lived only in the district in which they were now resident. Many had lived in the Herbert River or Mackay districts, or in southern Queensland. While the majority of those who had been in the Torres Strait were now living in the more northerly districts of Port Douglas, Cairns and the Herbert River, a number were in the Mackay area.

Certain patterns in this mobility can be recognized. Throughout North Queensland, a common feature was the high proportion who had lived in Maryborough, Bundaberg and other southern Queensland districts. In Mackay and Proserpine there were also a considerable number who had come from central Queensland. Islanders in Mackay tended to move to other North Queensland districts, but the reverse flow into Mackay was very small.

43. The evidence is not sufficiently reliable for quantification purposes, since from other evidence it is clear that some of those who claimed not to have lived in other districts had in fact done so. However, those who did name previous residences seem to have given a complete list, from the evidence of other nominal sources.
In the years after 1913 few of the migrants were mobile in the long-range sense, as a list compiled in 1937 of elderly Pacific Islanders illustrates: amongst the ninety resident in North Queensland, only four had moved to another district since 1913.\(^44\) This immobility is not surprising, since the migrants had entered the age groups when migration is both less desirable and possible. Normally young people, and particularly men, are the most mobile.\(^45\)

Highly mobile individuals can be hard to trace.\(^46\) Where a high proportion of the migrant men went under quasi-generic names, such as 'Sam Solomon', their movements are hard to follow. This was especially so in the districts in the far north. Nevertheless, the combination of oral and written evidence indicates that between 1908 and 1940 very few of the Islanders in North Queensland, both migrants and native-born, moved further south than Mackay.\(^47\)

\(^44\) James Okania had moved from Mackay to Cairns, Dick Tongai Naratta from Mackay to Innisfail, Tom Nehow from Ingham to Ayr and Tom Barmenas from Mackay to Bowen; none of the recipients in southern Queensland can be identified as having ever been resident in North Queensland. List of Natives of Pacific Islands in Receipt of Indigence Allowance, 28 Feb. 1937, COL/71, QSA.

\(^45\) See Bennett, Wealth of the Solomons, p.266; Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, p.16.

\(^46\) Tracing mobility requires following people across boundaries (for example, between regions). Oral evidence is very useful for this, as also are written records which are State-wide, such as the applications under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, lists of those receiving the indigence allowance and inquests.

\(^47\) The following are the only cases which have come to light of migration into southern Queensland: Robert Tallis, born in Bowen in 1906, was in Childers by 1916; Lewis Lammon, his sister Norah and their mother Annie all moved to Nambour; and Frank Fewquandie was living in Nambour in 1933 but later returned to Mackay. Appli. No. 22836, Robert Tallis, ACS/N357, QSA; T6585s:2; T7685s:2; Joan Lammon, AMR, Ingham, 20 Oct. 1951; Appli. by Frank Fewquandie, encl. with J. Munro to Sec. for Agric., 14 Sep. 1933, memo., 4250 of 1933, ACS/J872, QSA. Corris commented that after deportation some Islanders drifted from Queensland into the Tweed River district of New South Wales. In fact, there was already a sizeable community in this district. Corris, 'White Australia' in action', p.249; Australian Board of Missions. Report to General Synod, 1905 (Sydney, 1906), p.15; Australian Board of Missions. Report to General Synod, 1910 (Sydney, 1911), p.16; BC 29 Jan. 1907.
Migration into North Queensland continued after 1913, but it was generally the native-born who moved into the region, especially to Mackay, Proserpine and Bowen. Six of the forty-three native-born applicants under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 had come from southern and central Queensland. Usually, siblings or close kin migrated together or at different times. For example, James Power arrived in Bowen from Rockhampton in 1926, and was later joined by his brother Frederick and their niece Caroline. Such young people tended to arrive in North Queensland without partners and subsequently marry Islanders.

What attracted Islanders to North Queensland? In the nineteenth century the principal factor, and one beyond their control, was the shift during the 1880s of the focus of the sugar industry from southern districts to the northern littoral. The demographic concentration of Pacific Islanders altered accordingly. However, those time-expired Islanders who voluntarily shifted to North Queensland may have been motivated by the prospect of employment in a town or on a plantation with a good reputation, higher wages or reunion with countrymen. Malaitans especially were drawn to Mackay, apparently because the largest numbers of their countrymen were there.

48. Applic. No.643E, Phillip Choppy, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.611E, Sandy Buka Buka, ibid.; Applic. No.1074E, Albert Woolwool, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No.1234E, Henry Wais Miller, AGS/N104, QSA; Applic. No.1236E, George Williams, ibid.; Applic.No.1235E, George Walters, ibid. Four were in Mackay, one in Proserpine and one in the Herbert River. See also Table 5.1.

49. Bl 29 May 1926; Olive Rose Power, Bowen DHAR, 3 Sep.1933; Caroline Rose Power, AMR, Bowen, 18 Mar.1936. For other such examples, see Bl 29 May 1926; John Tanna, Bowen DHAR, 23 Apr.1936; Petronella Ambertel, PBR, Walkerston, 8 Aug.1929; Alfred James Corowa, No.911, Ayr Division, Mundingburra, State of Queensland Electoral Roll, 1935; Tl0hsa:2; T60Bsb:1; Ty3Bp.2.

50. This was especially noticeable in regard to women who came from Rockhampton to Mackay. For examples, see Phillip Choppy, AMR, Mackay, 18 Sep.1909; Louie Bosso, ibid., 15 Mar.1911; Cecilia Lowe, ibid., 24 Nov.1923; James Power, AMR, Bowen, 6 Oct.1930; Ernest Henry Byquar, AMR, Ingham, 14 Dec.1927; Peter Tanna, AMR, Cairns, 23 Jul.1932.

51. See Chapter 1, pp.58-59.
The tropical climate may also have attracted the migrants to North Queensland. Nineteenth century observers noted the unfavourable reaction of the Islanders to cold weather and their reluctance to adapt. This may also explain the continued concentration of the Islander population in the wet, humid coastal strip rather than inland, where hot, dry days and cool nights prevailed. Yet within coastal North Queensland itself, climatic considerations apparently did not determine residential dispersion: the greatest number of Islanders were located in Mackay, where the winter is very cool compared with more northerly districts.

Apart from migration into North Queensland after 1908, there were significant shifts, principally by the native-born, within the region's coastal strip. The districts of Mackay, Cairns, Innisfail and Port Douglas lost rather than gained through this internal migration. The Herbert River district drew Islanders from the far north, the Burdekin and Bowen districts, but mostly they came for work and then returned to their former districts.

The small Islander populations in the Burdekin and Bowen districts grew considerably by internal migration. By 1940, it was not unusual in these districts for one or both parents in a family to be newcomers. In the Burdekin, most had come from the Herbert River and Bowen districts. Movement from the Herbert River resembled chain migration: in 1926 Esther Backo married Alfred Henaway and returned with him to the Burdekin, and over the following years her six siblings joined her, to attend school or find work; three of them settled permanently. Other Herbert River

52. See Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p.84; Saunders, Uncertain Bondage, pp.285, 289, 304.
53. For examples of migration to these districts, see Charlie Mow, AMR, Innisfail, 4 Dec.1922; Clerk of Petty Sessions, Ayr, to Clerk of Petty Sessions, Cairns, 12 May 1914, 127C, AGS/N99, QSA; Statement of Harry Covic, Inquest No. 884 of 1932, JUS/N956, QSA; Applic. No.1253E, Harry Sippie, AGS/N104, QSA.
54. See Martha Cole, Halifax SSAR, 19 Apr.1922; T56Bsa:2; T64Bsb:3; Walter Trieve, AMR, Mackay, 25 Nov.1922; Jack Boslam, No.2395, Herbert Division, Ingham, State of Queensland Electoral Roll, 1930.
families also moved down to the Burdekin in the late 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{56} There were greater opportunities here for regular employment, in contrast to the more farflung and irregular nature of work in the Herbert River.\textsuperscript{57} This may also have motivated the shift to the Burdekin, largely in the early 1920s, of many young people from Bowen.\textsuperscript{58}

Those Islanders who left Bowen were more than replaced by the number who, as described, arrived there from central and southern Queensland. There was also a gradual shift to Bowen, from the 1920s, of families and single migrants from nearby Proserpine.\textsuperscript{59} They may have been attracted by the greater employment opportunities in Bowen, through the meatworks, saltworks and tomato industry, or by the opportunity to live amongst a larger Islander community. Some Islanders spent several years in Proserpine but eventually returned to Bowen, and there was also a temporary movement down to Proserpine in the crushing season to cut cane.\textsuperscript{60}

Mackay, the district with the largest Islander population, attracted few Islanders from the rest of the region and few of these stayed permanently.\textsuperscript{61}

Two important factors apparently discouraging migration were the district's reputation for sorcery and the bellicosity of its Solomon Islander

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{56} The Nehows, Santos and Malayatas were other families who moved down to the Burdekin. See T24Bs:1; T65Bsb:3; T68Bsb:1; Ted Nehow, Ayr SSAR, 28 Jan. 1929; Peter Malayta, \textit{ibid.}, 27 Apr.1932; Lottie Charlotte Malayta, AMR, Ayr, 3 Sep.1932.
\bibitem{57} One interviewee offered this explanation. See T25Bs:2. Certainly the Burdekin district was fast-growing in these years.
\bibitem{58} Family connections were not such an important influence behind this migration. For examples, see T57Bsa:2; T62Bsb:1: Andrew Pollar, AMR, Ayr, 29 Mar.1928; Albert Taiters, Brandon SSAR, 1 Sep.1919; Charles Tallis, Ayr SSAR, 16 Feb.1925.
\bibitem{60} T62Bsb:3: Birth Certificate of Alfred John Yasso, No.97472, 9 Sep.1912, Bowen; Appl. No.1339E, Peter Better, AGS/N105, QSA; Peter Bato, Bowen DHAR, 6 Dec.1932; Appl. No.1423E. Robert Moses, AGS/N105, QSA; OGC CXXII, 1924, p.858.
\bibitem{61} For examples, see Appl. No.1173E, George Dudley, AGS/N104, QSA; Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mackay, to Under Sec. for Agric., 5 Oct.1915, 147G, AGS/N558, QSA; Ivy Yasserie, Te Kowai SSAR, 17 Feb.1925; Ivy Tallis, AMR, Mackay, 27 Apr.1935.
\end{thebibliography}
(particularly Malaitan) population. However, as in the nineteenth century, some Malaitans from other districts were drawn to Mackay. 62

There was some long-range mobility of a temporary kind, for holidaying or visiting. Occasionally children were taken to visit friends or relatives in other districts. More often it was the men who made these visits within or even outside the region. 63 For example, a special feast held at Tweed Heads in northern New South Wales during the 1920s was attended by Erromangan and Tannese men from Cairns. 64

Short-range mobility was prompted by many of the same reasons as long-range mobility. Earning a livelihood was a very important factor. The work available in the sugar districts could involve considerable travel. In the Herbert River district, for example, many Islanders were employed during the slack season in the distant wood-cutting camps in the hills and near the beaches. 65 Throughout North Queensland, farm labourers usually lived on their employers' farms, shifting with each new job. 66 Those who were farming for themselves tended to move, either by choice or involuntarily,

62. This reputation is discussed in Chapter 9. For examples of Malaitans who came to Mackay, see T18sa:1; T37Bsa:1+2; T51Bsa:1; Fred Guyah, MMR, Cairns, 29 Dec.1914; Applic. No.747E, Thomas Kowmi, AGS/N102, QSA.

63. T27Bsb:1; T43Bsa:2; T60Bsb:1-2; T62Bsb:1.

64. T66Bsb:1. For other examples, see T5Bsa:1; T43Bsa:3; T66Bsb:1, 3; Insp. to Director of State Children's Dept., 15 Nov.1932, forw. to Director of Education, 23 Nov.1932, 48162, EDU/22247, QSA; Applic. No.2249, Jimmy Thomas, AGS/N357, QSA.

65. T57Bsa:1. Many of the applicants under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 revealed that they travelled considerable distances from their residences for work during the slack and/or crushing seasons. See Applic. No.302E, J. Noie, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No.343E, Jimmy Butler, ibid.; Applic. No.652E, Benjamin Dorkon, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.934E, William Santo, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No.1025E, David Tooroo, ibid.; Applic. No.2065E, Horimbo, AGS/N356, QSA; Applic. No.2248E, Blooranta, AGS/N357, QSA.

from one leasehold to another. 67

The importance of living close to countrymen and women also encouraged intra-district migration. In Mackay, New Hebrideans on the north side tended to shift to the south side and Homebush areas, whereas Solomon Islanders moved from these latter areas to the north side. 68 Proximity to relatives increased the feeling of security: in 1912, for instance, the brutal murder of Chinese friends influenced Katie Marlla to take her younger children from Alligator Creek to Homebush, to live near her married daughter. 69

Marriage prompted short- and long-range mobility, notably of women. As the case of Esther Backo showed, marriage took some women to another district. More commonly marriage led to a change of residence within a district. In the Herbert River district, Esther's sister Rhoda shifted from Cordelia to Victoria Estate when she married Harry Lammon in 1924. 70 In Mackay, marriage sometimes involved crossing the imaginary line separating Solomon Islanders and New Hebrideans: in the late 1930s Winifred Fatnowna, of Solomon Island descent, moved from Eimeo on the north side to Sandy Creek near Homebush with her New Hebridean husband, Edward Tass. 71

67. For examples, see B. Lynn to Manager, Victoria, 14 Dec.1918, encl. in V. Hayley to General Manager, 27 Feb.1919, P No.104, 142/3151, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Victoria, to General Manager, 20 Mar.1919, P No.110, ibid.; Statement of Nick Tanna, 25 Nov.1912, Rex vs Nick Tanna, A/18475, QSA; Applic. No. 742E, Robert Kia, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.340E, Andrew Bobongie, AGS/N100, QSA; A. Bobongie, Farm Records 1925-34, p.11, Pleystowe Mill; T485b:2; T758b:1.

68. For examples, see T33Bsb:2; Jack Manjack, AMR, Mackay, 17 Sep.1915; Jacob Penola, ibid., 30 Aug.1920; Willie Roofie, ibid., 5 Feb.1922; Applic. No. 418E, Tom Penola, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No.994E, Harry Tarryango, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No.1859E, Kehba Ki-Kee, AGS/N107, QSA; Willie Ruby, No.1761. Townsville, Return of Coloured Residents of the Townsville District, 7131 of 1913, PRE/A436, QSA.


70. For this and other examples, see T51b:3; T52b:1; T56b:1; T63Bbs:1; Esther Juana May Lammon, ABR, Ingham, 3 Aug.1924; Norah Madeline Lammon, ibid., 14 Dec.1927.

71. T40Bbs:1. 2-3. For an example of a New Hebridean man who came to the north side when he married a Solomon Island woman, see Eileen Lucy Querro, ABR, Mackay, 5 May 1922; Harry Querro, AMR, Mackay, 25 May 1935.
Between 1908 and 1940 Pacific Islanders in North Queensland, especially the native-born, were a mobile population. Migration from outside the region increased the population in many districts, especially Mackay, Proserpine and Bowen, and inter-district movement augmented the populations in the Bowen and Burdekin districts. Such mobility ensured that contacts were established or maintained between Islander groups and reduced the sense of isolation.

Against this picture of the size, structure, dispersion and mobility of the Islander population in North Queensland, the chief demographic factors responsible for change - marriage, birth and death - can be discussed. In relation to the first factor, marriage, the chief issues are the proportions ever married and never married, the choice of marriage partners and age at marriage. Once again, it is important to distinguish between the migrants and the native-born.

The marriage patterns amongst the migrants up to 1907 were described in Chapter 2. As illustrated in Table 4.7, there was little change in the years after this. Most marriages were not legalized. Almost all the women but only a tiny proportion of the men were married, mostly to other Pacific Islanders. Many had recruited together but others had married in Australia. Even where couples were from the same island, many of these partnerships would not have satisfied the rules governing marriage in their village societies. Often the men and women came from different islands of origin, and also different island groups. Many Islander men had contracted relationships with Aboriginals, and less commonly with other non-Europeans and, in a few cases, Europeans.
TABLE 4.7: Proportions ever married and never married of Pacific Island migrants in selected districts of North Queensland, and ethnic origin of partners, 1908-40, according to nominal sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Pacific Islanders</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Marr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herbert R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdekin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ including Torres Strait Islanders
* those who married more than once are only counted once in this total

Sources: Nominal sources (see Appendices A and B)
A striking feature of marriage patterns after 1907, was the much higher proportion of married men amongst the migrants. Table 4.7 presents the information from nominal sources on the marital status of the migrant men and women in the districts from the Herbert River to Mackay. In Mackay, slightly more than one-tenth of the migrant men were ever married. The proportion was much higher in the Bowen (including Proserpine), Burdekin and Herbert River districts, where over one-third of the men were married. Information on migrants in the more northerly districts is too incomplete to tabulate, but it would appear that the proportion who were married was much smaller, although still above that in the period before 1908. As in the nineteenth century, spinstership amongst the migrant women (in all districts) was virtually unknown. 72

Some migrant men married for the first time or re-married in the years after 1907. Where they married migrants, the latter were usually widows who were approaching or past the age of menopause and these unions were therefore childless, although the women often had children from their earlier marriages. 73 Four marriages of Islander men to European women between 1908 and 1940 have been discovered. 74 Although there were no official sanctions against such liaisons, both the European and Islander communities disapproved of them. 75

72. Only one possible case of an unmarried migrant woman has been found. See Applic. No.2063E, Mary Hoona, AGS/N356, QSA.
73. For an example, see Norman, Life's Varied Scenes, p.77.
74. There were two marriages to Irish women (of working-class backgrounds), and two to native-born European women. Sargoo Nago, MNR, Ingham, 15 Jan.1914; James Tongon, MNR, Cairns, 3 Jun.1909; Jack Manjack, MNR, Mackay, 7 Sep.1915; Evidence of Alice Barney, 3 Feb.1941, Rex vs Jack Bobbert, No.7 of 1941, A/18434, QSA.
75. See Tl9Bsb:2; T42Bsb:2; T58Bsa:2; T66Bsb:1; Patterson to Director for State Children's Dept. 15 Nov.1932, forw. to Director for Education, 23 Nov.1932, 48162, EDU/22247, QSA; McKenna to Min. for Public Instruction, The Walkerston Kanaka School Question, 11 Apr.1933, memo., ibid.; QPD CVII, 1910, p.2488.
The principal non-Melanesian group with whom the migrant men conducted relationships, however, were Aborigines (see Table 4.7). Migrant men continued to take Aboriginal women from the camps, either forcibly or with the consent of their relatives. Sometimes these liaisons were not long-lasting, but in most cases the men and women formed enduring relationships, even if they did not receive any legal sanction. In Mackay, it was noticeable that the Nggela and Guadalcanal men tended to take Aboriginal women as their partners. Pacific Islanders were regarded by the chief protector of Aborigines as good husbands for Aboriginal women, because of their clean-living and hard-working habits. Permission was readily given for such marriages until the late 1910s, when a new policy was implemented of restricting where possible marriages of 'full-blood' Aboriginal women to men of their own 'race'. However, Islander men continued to form a high proportion of those who married 'half-caste' Aborigines, for which permission was still readily given.

76. See T36Bsa:3; T43Bsb:3; T59Bsa:1; CMP 27 Apr. 1909, Circuit Court; QPP III, 1912, p. 1019; Statement of William Tangawa, 8 Jun. 1908, Rex vs Jimmy Chisholm, A/18476, QSA; Statement of Rosie, 8 Apr. 1909, Rex vs Micky Tanna, A/18365, QSA. This had been the pattern in the nineteenth century. See Chapter 2.

77. See T43Bsa:1; T43Bsb:3; T57Bsb:2; Evidence of Maria, Inquest No. 548 of 1916, Sam Solomon, JUS/N616, QSA; Evidence of Johnny Lefu, Inquest No. 654 of 1934, Nellie Lefu, JUS/N987, QSA; Evidence of Rosie, Inquest No. 681 of 1939, Anamboon, JUS/N1071, QSA.

78. Ty4BP.2; T36Bsa:3; T43Bsb:3; Moses William, AMR, Mackay, 4 Mar. 1910; Charley Dombeni, ibid., 17 Apr. 1928.


There were also a number of migrant men in this period who married native-born women of Islander descent. Such marriages were most common in districts with established Islander populations, where native-born women were relatively numerous: in Mackay, Bowen (including Proserpine), and to a lesser extent the Burdekin and Herbert River districts (see Table 4.7). They were rare in the far north. Predictably, the men were considerably older than the women. Since the number of native-born women in the early twentieth century was small in proportion to the number of migrant men, the former were seldom of the same descent (that is, island of origin) as their partners.

Married men were still a minority, albeit a substantial minority, of the male migrants. In contrast, bachelors were a tiny minority amongst the native-born, while once again spinsters were virtually unknown. This is highlighted in Table 4.8. The low proportion of bachelors and spinsters is noteworthy, since the proportions of those who never married in the total Australian population in the 1920s were higher than in Britain and the United States. Moreover, the proportion of males in Australia who did marry was directly related to occupational and social and economic status, with proportions ever marrying being highest for professionals, managers and executives and lowest for labourers and rural workers (the category in which Pacific Islander men, it will be seen, fell almost without exception). Remarriage was also common for Islander widows and

81. In all the following examples, the men were much older than the women. Harold Oba and Ruby Sima, AMR, Mackay, 2 Jul. 1908; Peter Bickey and Elizabeth Kia, ibid., 20 Oct. 1930; Paul and Agnes Bobbert, AMR, Proserpine, 22 Nov. 1921; George Marty and Eliza Heepe, AMR, Bowen, 16 Oct. 1915; Jimmy Abook Palmer and Eliza, AMR, Ingham, 13 Sep. 1908.

82. The women were of the same descent, for example, in the following cases. Billie Sindown and Annie Sewaggy, MMR, Mackay, 24 Sep. 1921; Harold Oba and Ruby Sima, AMR, Mackay, 2 Jul. 1908; Stephen Quaytucker and Lucy Fatnowna, ibid., 25 Feb. 1911; Andrew Bobongie and Emma Fewquandie, ibid., 20 Jan. 1917.

83. Evidence on other districts is again too incomplete to include.

84. McDonald, Marriage in Australia. pp. 133, 248.
widowers and in some cases the second spouse was a close relative (such as the brother or sister) of the deceased. 85

TABLE 4.8: Proportions ever married and never married of native-born Pacific Islanders in selected districts of North Queensland, and ethnic origin of partners, 1908-40, according to nominal sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Ethnic Origin of Partners</th>
<th>Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total marr.</th>
<th>No. never marr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herbert R.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burdekin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen (incl. Proserpine)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Including Torres Strait Islanders

# only those definitely known to have never married, are included

Sources: Nominal sources (see Appendices A and B)

85. See T368sa:3; T438sa:142; T688sb:3; Egbert Choppy and Eileen Quakawoot, AMR, Mackay, 29 Jun. 1935; Stanley Choppy and Muriel Eileen Choppy, ibid., 9 Dec. 1939.
Table 4.8 also provides details of the ethnic origin of the men and women whom the native-born married. This highlights the degree of inmarriage, that is of marriages in which both partners were of Islander or part Islander descent, especially in Mackay. Amongst the minority who chose partners of a different ethnic origin, a small number married Europeans. A further small number married Asians, principally Malays and Chinese. The largest number, however, married Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders; this was unusual in Mackay but very common in the far north.

Islander parents exerted considerable influence over their children's choice of marriage partners, as was customary in Melanesian societies. Marriage to Europeans was strongly opposed. So also, in some cases, was marriage to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, although the tendency was to accept such unions grudgingly. Parental preference was that children should at least marry those of 'South Sea' descent and preferably those from the same island of origin: "it's better to marry your own".

86. See Frank Gosling, Ingham DHAR, 2 Feb. 1933; Federica Garlando, ibid., 15 Sep. 1934; George Henry Gosling, MMR, Ingham, 2 Aug. 1930; Winifred Mooney, AMR, Mackay, 20 Nov. 1920; T11Bsa:2; T55Bsb:2; Swiss Davies to Crown Prosecutor of Townsville, 10 Feb. 1941, Rex vs Jack Robbert, No. 7 of 1941, A/18434, QSA.

87. These were mostly native-born Asians. See T44Bsb:1; T47Bsa:1; T61Bsa:1; Charles Ah Kee and Elizabeth Mow, MMR, Cairns, Dec. 1927; John Hemmett and Evelyn Gosling, AMR, Ingham, 31 Mar. 1912.


89. See T1Bsa:1; T16Bsa:1; T21Bsa:1; T41Bsb:1; T60Bsb:1; T70Bsb:3.

This tenet was most strongly held by the more clannish groups, notably the Malaitans, Tannese and Epi Islanders. 91

Occasionally parents 'arranged' marriages for their children 92, but more often the actual choice was left to the children. There were some cases in which couples eloped to marry, or married despite parental opposition. 93 Yet the incidence of marriages which incurred parental disapproval was low, since parental approbation was highly valued and the native-born, through geographical propinquity and close community interaction, were usually well-acquainted with their future marriage partners. 94

Nevertheless, marriage to a partner from the same island of origin was not always possible. Many, if not most, of the native-born had parents who were themselves from different islands of origin, even different island groups. By the second and third generations, descent for all but a few 'pure' families could be traced back to several islands of origin. The choice of marital partners was also closely restricted by the small size of the communities and their geographical isolation. Men and women of marriageable age had to look to other areas of a district or even to other districts for eligible members of the opposite sex. While few families in the early twentieth century were interrelated by marriage, this situation changed rapidly in the following decades and by 1940 (and since) the avoidance of marriage with close kin was a very real problem, especially in the smaller communities outside Mackay. Marriage between first cousins drew

91. See T1Bsa:1; T1OBsb:1; T15Bsb:1; T4OBsb:1; T47Bsa:1; T60Bsa:3.

92. See T27Bsa:2; T48Bsb:1; T49Bsa:1; T72Bsa:2. This was common in the islands. Allen, The Nduindui, p.152; Humhreys, The Southern New Hebrides, pp.48, 141; Layard, Stone Men of Malekula, p.192.

93. See T49Bsa:1; T65Bsa:1; T80Bsa:2; T80Bsb:3; George Hunter, 20 Feb. 1923, POL 12E/08, QSA.

94. See T1OBsb:1; T15Bsb:1; T16Bsa:1; T31Bsa:2; T52Bsb:1.
strong community disapproval. 95

These factors ensured that most of the native-born chose partners of Islander descent but who were from a different island or islands of origin and sometimes from a different island group. 96 Another marriage custom, bride-price, was not commonly practised, although in some cases there were reciprocal exchanges of food and gifts between families who wished their children to marry. 97 In general, marriages were conducted in church, although there were some civil ceremonies; de facto relationships were uncommon. 98

Age at marriage is a demographic feature which is related to the supply of persons of the opposite sex and to community customs dictating the 'proper time to marry'. Amongst Europeans in this period, the marriage pattern was one of a slow decline in age at marriage, with women marrying perhaps six, seven or more years after puberty. By contrast, the marriage pattern in Malanesian societies was for women to marry at or very soon after puberty. 99 In North Queensland between 1908 and 1940, men (migrants and native-born) always considerably outnumbered women in the marriageable age groups (see Figure 4.1(b)-(d)). Together with the custom of young marriage, this could have been expected to produce a lower age at marriage for Islander women than that for their European contemporaries.

95. See T15Bsa:1; T16Bsa:1; T27Bsa:2; T41Bsb:1; T70Bsb:3. This aversion was strong in the islands, and also amongst Australian Aborigines. Rivers, The History of Melanesian Society, Vol.1, pp.47-48; Humphreys, The Southern New Hebrides, pp.130, 141; Tvens, Melanesians of the Solomon Islands, p.66; Barwick, 'The Aboriginal Family in South-Eastern Australia', p.158.

96. For examples, see T1Bsa:1; T2Bsa:3; T40Bsa:3; T50Bsa:3.

97. T27Bsb:2; T60Bsa:3. See also Chapter 2, pp.80, 81.

98. In 1932 it was contended that de facto relationships were common amongst Islanders in Mackay, but the evidence from marriage registers demonstrates the reverse. See McKenna to Min. for Public Instruction, The Walkerston Kanaka School Question, 11 Apr.1933. memo., EDU/Z2247, QSA.

99. McDonald, Marriage in Australia, pp.1, 3, 247, 249; Humphreys, The Southern New Hebrides, pp.50, 141; Layard, Stone Men of Malekula, p.192; Keesing, 'Elota's Story', p.44.
Some Islander women married very young, at ages ranging from fourteen to sixteen. Men were usually older than their brides. The median age at marriage for thirty-six native-born women and twenty-eight native-born men who were married in the Mackay district between 1908 and 1940 was 20 for the females and 24 for the males. This was considerably lower than the median age at marriage in Queensland in 1911 and 1921 which was, respectively, 23.6 and 24.0 for women and 27.3 and 27.6 for men. A comparison can also be made with an investigation of tropically-born women in the Cairns and Townsville districts carried out by Cilento for the Commonwealth Department of Health in 1925: the average age at marriage of 77 such women in Cairns and 153 in Townsville was 21 years and 9 months and 21 years and 5 months, respectively. This was slightly higher than the average (not the median) age at marriage for the thirty-six Islander women in the Mackay district which was 20.9 years. It would appear that while Islander women did marry at a younger age than their European contemporaries, they had also been influenced by the European custom of postponing marriage.

THE NEXT population factor is the birth rate. A high birth rate characterised the Pacific Islander population between 1908 and 1940. The size of families will be considered before the factors which promoted a high birth rate are discussed.

100. For examples, see Ruby Sima, AMR, Mackay, 2 Jul.1908; Helen Williams, ibid., 20 Nov.1924; Molly Rebecca Backo, AMR, Ingham, 18 Nov.1926; Hannah Bluebell Palmer, HNR, Ingham, 31 Jan.1933; Rebecca Blooranta, AMR, Innisfail, 17 Jul.1936.

101. McDonald, Marriage in Australia, p.140. The sources for my calculations were the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist marriage registers; ages were only given in years. Access to State marriage registers was denied, and there would have been many more from the 1920s who were married in the Assembly of God and Seventh-day Adventist churches, for which evidence is not available. See Appendix A.

A sophisticated demographic analysis of family size is precluded by the small size of the population and the flawed nature of the data. Nominal sources, both oral and written, are invaluable but nevertheless deficient in some important respects. For instance, when questioned about the size of a family, people will generally neglect to mention stillborn children or those who died shortly after birth or in early infancy. Nor do written records such as cemetery registers provide full information on such children, since they were often buried without official knowledge. Illegitimate children can also be hard to identify, as often they were adopted by the mother's parents. Therefore information on family size is necessarily incomplete, and the figures for this should be regarded as a conservative estimate.

In Table 4.9, the evidence on family size compiled from nominal sources for the Herbert River, Burdekin, Bowen (including Proserpine) and Mackay districts is presented. Once again, the evidence for districts in the far north where the Islanders tended to intermarry with the Aboriginal population, is too incomplete to use. To highlight the changes in family size over time, there is a division into five different groups. First, there are those cases where both partners were migrants, while the second group encompasses those migrants who married non-Melanesian women (principally Aborigines but also Torres Strait Islanders and Europeans). Both these groups had largely completed their families

103. For example, in 1932 Harry Fatnowna said he had six children, but did not mention a further five children who had died. MH 12 Oct. 1932, letter to Ed. by H. Fatnowna.

104. For an example, see H. Fatnowna, Notebook 1923-28, Mackay Funerals Records, 2 Sep. 1926.

105. Only those families for whom information is reasonably reliable and complete are included. Where a woman re-married and bore children, this was treated as a second family. Illegitimate children were only included where their parents lived together or were married.
by the early twentieth century. Thirdly, there are those migrant men who married native-born women; most of these couples were still completing their families in the first two decades of this century. The last two groups cover the native-born (including those of full and part Islander descent) exclusively. The fourth group includes those people born by 1907, and the fifth group comprises those born after 1907 (in some cases being the children of those in the fourth group) who had largely completed their families by 1940.\textsuperscript{106} While there is some overlap between these two groups, most in the fourth group had completed their families by the late 1920s. Roughly speaking, these five groups can be divided into three chronological periods: the first and second groups had largely completed their families by the early 1900s, the third and fourth groups by the late 1920s and the fifth by 1940.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Ethnic Origin of Partners & Ni\textsuperscript{a}r. (M) & Ni\textsuperscript{a}r. (F) & Non-Melanesian (F) & Native-Born (F)
\hline
No. of couples & 77 & 41 & 34 & 70 & 23
\hline
No. of children & 141 & 66 & 136 & 321 & 151
\hline
Average completed family size & 1.83 & 1.61 & 4.0 & 4.59 & 6.56
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Average completed family size amongst Pacific Islanders in selected districts of North Queensland 1908-40, according to nominal sources}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{+} Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders and Europeans

\textsuperscript{\#} those of full or part Islander descent who were born by 1907

\textsuperscript{*} those of full or part Islander descent who were born after 1907 and had largely completed their families by 1940

Sources: Nominal sources (see Appendices A and B)

\textsuperscript{106} Those born after the late 1910s tended to have most or all of their children after 1940. In some cases the native-born married non-Melanesians, but in most cases they married other native-born (of full or part Islander descent).
Table 4.9 thus provides a crude indication of completed family size. Amongst the first and second groups, family size was noticeably small (less than two children), although this was partly skewed by the large number of childless couples. Where migrants married native-born, in the third group, family size was much larger, with about four children in each family. It was slightly larger (over four children) amongst the fourth group, those of Islander descent born by 1907, and noticeably larger amongst the fifth group, who were born after 1907. It can be presumed that family size was larger still in the 1940s and 1950s. The family size of the native-born was larger than the European average, as a comparison with the survey conducted by Cilento in 1925 shows. The average number of children born to tropically-born European women was 4.2 for 139 women in Cairns and 3.8 for 215 women in Townsville. The average issue for women in Queensland as a whole, according to the censuses, was 3.78 in 1921 and 2.56 in 1947.

The overall Australian birth rate declined sharply between 1911 and 1921 and only gradually rose in the 1930s. This decline was certainly not reflected amongst the Islanders. Moreover, in contrast to the pattern in other European countries, the average size of Australian families was greater amongst non-manual workers than amongst manual workers. There was

107. If childless couples are excluded, the average family size was 3.06 for the first, and 2.87 for the second group.


also a marked reduction in average family size between 1911 and 1940.  
Again, the Islanders, who were almost exclusively manual workers, were atypical.

There was considerable variation in the size of families within the Islander population. Some marriages in all five groups were childless, and this was particularly common where the migrant men married Aboriginal women. Many childless couples adopted children of Islander or Aboriginal descent. At the other extreme there were very large families: by 1940, and even more so in the 1940s and 1950s, families of ten or more children were not unusual (see Plate 4.4).

The Commonwealth statistician noted in 1921 and again in 1947 that Pacific Islanders were more than able to reproduce themselves. This is convincingly demonstrated by examining one family: in Mackay the Malaitan migrants, John Kwailu and Orrani, had five children (see Plate 2.1); their only son, Harry Fatnowna, married Grace Kwasi, also native-born; they had fifteen children and the ten who survived produced altogether sixty-nine children.


112. See T19Bs:3; T43Bsa:1; T69Bsa:1; T80Bsa:2; Johnny Veelee, Bowen DHAR, 18 Mar.1927; Thomas Quetta, Ingham DHAR, 30 Nov.1927; Evidence of Johnny Lefu, Inquest No.654 of 1934, Nellie Lefu, JUS/N987, QSA. This had been the pattern in the nineteenth century also. See Chapter 2.

113. See Chapter 9, p.427.

114. For examples, see Tyl2B; T52Bsa:2; T58Bsa:1; T68Bsa:3.

PLATE 4.4: Alfred and Esther Henaway with their eleven children (Shirlin, Shirma, Shiradeen, Shireen, Shirelle, Shirley, Brian, Shiradelle, Shirvanne, Michael and John), Ayr, late 1950s.
This high birth rate can be related to such factors as the proportion ever married, age at menarche, at first child and at menopause, illegitimacy, re-marriage and family planning techniques. It has been shown that the proportion of those ever married was very high amongst the native-born and that widows and widowers usually re-married. A high birth rate was also promoted by the youthfulness of the female population. There was always a very high proportion within the fertile age range (15 to 49), who were thus able to reproduce (see Figure 4.1(b)-(d)).

Information on the age at menarche is not available. According to Cilento's survey in 1925, the average age for the onset of menstruation amongst European girls in North Queensland was 13 years and 9 months. 116 Certainly the age at first child was often young for Islander girls, being as early as 15. 117 Where age at first child is young, there is often a connection with illegitimacy or prenuptial conception. There were certainly many cases of illegitimacy amongst the Islander population. 118 However, in


118. Altogether fifty-seven cases of illegitimate children have been discovered, and this is obviously only part of the real total, since to discover cases of illegitimacy or conception out of wedlock it is necessary to know if and when the parents married. Church registers, court cases for maintenance claims and oral sources provide evidence on this, but (as noted earlier) records for the Assembly of God and Seventh-day Adventist churches were not available and access was denied to the State marriage registers. No precise references are given, in order to protect present-day descendants. It was not considered unusual for Aboriginal women and the migrant men to live together and have children before they married. See OPP III, 1915-16, p.1684.
Nearly half the cases discovered, the mother later married the father of her child or children. Generally these were young women in their late teens and early twenties, and the fathers were also young and usually, but not always, of Islander descent. Conception out of wedlock was also relatively common amongst Islander women.

Such ex-nuptial and prenuptial conception is not evidence of promiscuity. Despite some assertions to the contrary, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the Islanders had a strict sense of Christian morality and disapproved strongly of intercourse outside marriage. Chastity was emphasized as a virtue to pubescent girls and their relationships with the opposite sex were closely regulated. Ex-nuptial and prenuptial intercourse and pregnancy did occur but was usually followed by marriage, as the virtual absence of long-term unmarried mothers and the number of cases in which women subsequently married the fathers of their illegitimate children demonstrates.

Family size is directly related to the length of the child-rearing span. The age at menopause is important here, but there is no direct evidence available for Islander women. However, the survey in 1925 found that the age at menopause amongst tropically-born European women was forty-five in Cairns and forty-four in Townsville. Certainly there is evidence to demonstrate

119. At least fifteen children were conceived outside marriage, and this would only have represented a proportion of the full number, as discussed above. For an example, see Bl 14 Jul.1914, Bowen Police Court.

120. See T1Bsb:2; T2Bsa:2; T9Bsa:1; T15Bsb:2; T23Bsa:2; T51Bsa:3; T68Bsa:2.


that the childrearing span for Islander women was long. For example, Grace Fatnowna was married in 1918 at the age of twenty and was forty-one when the last of her fifteen children was born in 1939. In more than one case, a mother had not completed her family before her oldest daughter bore her first child.

The techniques of birth control, including contraception and abortion, also have an important bearing on the birth rate. Here there was an important difference between the migrant women and the native-born. The former clearly knew of methods to prevent pregnancy and to produce miscarriages and abortions. The extent to which they practised these is a matter for conjecture, but clearly they did not pass on these techniques to their children. Moreover, the fundamentalist religious sects which attracted the native-born women in particular were strongly opposed to family limitation practices.

The rapid increase in the size of the native-born Pacific Islander population (as shown in Table 4.5) was promoted by a high birth rate. The native-born women tended to have large families, with the first child born at an early age and the last when the woman was at or approaching menopause. These families were larger than both the Queensland average and the average in Melanesia. In Melanesia, the practice of contraception, abortion, infanticide and taboos on intercourse during the post-partum period and at other times effectively reduced the size of families.

123. Grace Kwasi, AMR, Mackay, 20 Feb.1918; Ty12B.


125. See T19Bsa:3; T22Bsa:2; T47Bsa:3; T67Bsa:2.

126. See T26Bsa:1. One case has been found of an abortion performed on a native-born Islander woman; the source is not given to preserve confidentiality.

A high birth rate does not in itself assure a population of rapid natural growth. It must be matched by a reduction in death rates, especially in relation to mortality in infancy and early childhood. The last primary demographic factor to be considered is the death rate. This will include a general discussion of death and sickness amongst the Islander population.

Statistics on the age at and cause of death cannot be constructed for the Pacific Islander population. To tabulate cause of death requires a scientific and consistent system of classification, with a clear distinction between main and subsidiary causes. Cause of death was seldom given for Pacific Islanders, or death was attributed to such vague causes as 'senility' and 'senile decay'.

Statistics on age at death are not valid, since the ages given for the migrants were only approximate - there were often glaring discrepancies between the ages claimed for individuals at different times.

A quantitative approach to mortality rates is therefore not possible. Mortality and sickness will be considered in terms of first, environmental influences affecting health, secondly, the Islanders' attitudes to physical and mental illness and thirdly, four broad categories: infectious and other diseases, accidents, the general wearing out of the body and infant and maternal mortality.

Before federation Queensland had the highest mortality rate amongst the Australian colonies. Yet by the 1920s and 1930s the State had one of the lowest death rates in Australia. Nor was North Queensland left

128. P.R. Cox, Demography (Aberdeen, 1970), pp.130, 132. Cause of death was recorded at inquests, in hospital records and occasionally in the cemetery registers, and oral sources also provide some evidence.

129. Interviewees also say that it was hard to tell the ages of the migrants, and that they themselves did not know their ages. T568sa:2; T588sa:3; T608sa:1; T678sa:1. This has also been noted in the Pacific. Ross, Baepu, p.104; Cuppy, The Solomon Islands, p.55; N. McArthur, Introducing Population Statistics (Melbourne, 1961), p.24.

behind in this rapid improvement in health. During the first three decades of this century, there was a concerted campaign to gather evidence to demonstrate that Europeans could not only live and work in the tropical north but also produce healthy offspring. With the establishment of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine in Townsville in 1909, North Queensland became a centre for research into tropical diseases. Dr Anton Breinl, the Institute's first director, and Cilento of the Commonwealth Department of Health, were foremost in presenting medical evidence demonstrating that the birth rate was higher and mortality and infant mortality rates lower in the tropics than in the rest of Australia and in many European countries.

As the following discussion will highlight, it can be expected that the mortality rate for Pacific Islanders would not have been as low as that for Europeans, but it was presumably below that amongst the Aboriginal population, whose numbers only began to increase again in the 1930s. The rate would also have been considerably lower than that in Melanesia, where mortality for all age groups remained high.

131 For examples of those who were confident that this tropical experiment would succeed, see MOR 29 Apr.1912, p.1, 27 Aug.1923, p.15, 12 Apr.1926, p.62; Wickens, 'Vitality of White Races in Low Latitudes', pp.117-26; Price, 'The White Man in the Tropics', pp.106-10.


133 The small Pacific Islander population on Moa Island in the Torres Strait had a mortality rate above the Queensland average, but the mortality rate amongst Torres Strait Islanders was much higher. Australian Board of Missions, Report of the Executive Council for financial year ending March 31st, 1913 (Sydney, 1913), pp.22-23.

134 W.B., 'Problem of Depopulation in the Pacific Islands', p.35.
European medical knowledge in these years was focussed on prevention rather than cure. Climatically, however, North Queensland was a relatively healthy region, and well-serviced in terms of hospital, ambulance and medical research facilities. According to contemporary medical evidence, the healthiest people in North Queensland were those who performed hard manual work — the chief occupation of Islander men. Drinking to excess, however, was a serious problem amongst Europeans (especially the migratory sugar workers) in North Queensland, and mortality due to alcoholism was higher in the north than in the rest of the State. Both smoking and drinking (sometimes to excess) were regular habits amongst the Islander men but were almost unknown amongst the women.

Other important environmental factors are diet, housing standards and hygiene. Leading a rural and semi-rural lifestyle, Pacific Islanders were able to produce their own fruit and vegetables, keep livestock and catch fish. Their diet appears to have been reasonably nutritious, if heavily starchy and lacking in protein. European housing standards in North Queensland, including adjustments for climate, improved noticeably in the twentieth century. Yet there were still many, particularly manual workers and small farmers, who lived in hot, poorly ventilated wood and iron humpies. Nor were the Islanders' housing standards high: the typical house was made of grass and wood, poorly ventilated, small and made additionally unhealthy by the practice of burning woodfires inside both

135. Hospital admission rates were much higher in coastal North Queensland than in the rest of the State. Brienl, "A Comparative Statistical Inquiry", p.182.


138. In the islands, the diet had a heavy starchy vegetable content. Ross, Baegu, p.78; W.B., 'Problem of Depopulation in the Pacific Islands', p.38. See also Chapter 9.
for heating and to destroy insects. There were noticeable improvements in European sanitation facilities in the 1920s. While the sanitation standards of the Islanders are not known, their homes both inside and out were generally kept scrupulously clean.

Social and psychological factors, embracing the Islanders' own methods of preventing or curing sickness and disease and also their attitudes towards illness and European medical techniques, were also important. In their village societies, there were both commonly known and secret remedies for different illnesses, using a wide variety of plants (some localised, others pan-tropical). In Queensland the migrants presumably discovered or learnt from friendly Aborigines about plants with similar medicinal properties, and they shared this knowledge with others. Medicinal plants were used for a wide variety of complaints, including coughs, colds, fevers, gastric and digestive complaints, burns, itches, bad cuts, sores and rheumatism: for example, one family in the Herbert River district would treat a fever by bathing the patient in water in which the tops of saltbush had been boiled. These remedies for relatively minor ailments were used extensively by the migrants and also by some of their children.

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140. MM 17 Apr.1920, 14 Sep.1932, letter to Ed. by M.A. McColl; QPP III, 1910, p.960, III, 1911-12, p.1300; Patterson to Director, State Children's Dept., 15 Nov.1932, forw. to Director of Education, 23 Nov.1932, 48162, EDU/Z2247, QSA; T40Bsa:3; T43Bsb:1; T51Bsa:2.


142. Apparently particular remedies were localised; for example, informants in Mackay, Bowen and the Herbert River each gave different cures for diarrhoea. See T8Bsa:1; T10Bsa:1; T16Bsa:3.

143. T19Bsb:3. For other examples, see T7Bsa:3; T10Bsa:1; T11Bsa:2; T16Bsa:3; T24Bsa:2; T47Bsa:3; T67Bsa:2; T70Bsa:1.
For more serious illnesses, there were treatments (often secret) known to and practised by a few specialists amongst the migrants. For example, there were cures for venereal diseases and methods to induce abortions. These specialists, both men and women, were also consulted if it was believed that illness had been caused by sorcery.

Standard European treatments such as castor oil doses and hot lemon drinks were also employed, and the Islanders consulted local pharmacists for medicines such as cough preparations. When necessary, they were attended by European doctors either in their own homes or in surgeries or hospitals. The records of local hospitals indicate that the Islanders, particularly the native-born, readily used these facilities. Many of the elderly migrant men died in hospital.

Yet, like many contemporary Europeans, the Islanders and especially the migrants, consulted medical practitioners only for major complaints. Some of the migrants rejected European medicine altogether. Most, as in the plantation period, had a strong aversion to being admitted to hospital. For example, Sam Solomon who died of tuberculosis at Hawkins Creek.

144. T41Bsa:3.
145. See Chapter 9.
146. See T70Bsa:1; T72Bsb:1; T74Bsb:2; Evidence of George Siy Now, Inquest No.799 of 1938, Tom Obah, JUS/N1054, QSA.
147. See T40Bsa:2+3; T58Bsa:3; MM 28 Jan.1929, 12 Apr.1933; PDNR 2 Mar.1910; Registrar of Pensions, Halifax, to Police Magistrate, Ingham, 5 Mar.1934, p.119, CPS 12H/G2, QSA.
148. The records of the district hospitals at Bowen and Ingham clearly show this. Access was denied to the records of the Mackay district hospital, but regular reports in the Daily Mercury on the hospital committee's meetings indicate that there were Islander patients.
150. See T6Bsa:2; T47Bsa:2; T72Bsa:2; Evidence of Georgina Kawoot, Inquest No.310 of 1936, Carmen Mary Kawoot, JUS/N1011, QSA; Evidence of Frank Bong, Inquest No.377 of 1938, David Roy Bong, JUS/N1046, QSA.
near Ingham in 1916, had refused to be taken to hospital because he could not pay and because, in his own words, "more better me die here where me stop". Europeans continued to believe that the Islanders readily succumbed to sickness. Canon James Norman, for instance, considered that Luke Logomier's death in the influenza epidemic of 1919 in Mackay was partly attributable to the loss of his dearly loved step-daughter some three years earlier.

There is little information about the mental health of the Islanders, but the obvious manifestations of such ill-health are suicides and insanity. Where suicides had been common on the plantations, this was an insignificant cause of death between 1908 and 1940: only two suicides and one attempted suicide amongst Pacific Islanders in North Queensland have come to light. There were also very few cases of insanity amongst Islanders in North Queensland between 1908 and 1940. Some Islanders brought before the courts on suspicion of being of unsound mind, were discharged after medical examination. Only four instances of Islanders being committed to mental asylums have been discovered: and there was also a case in which an Islander who committed murder was alleged to have been insane. The infrequency of suicides and insanity suggests that mental ill-health amongst the Islander population was not pronounced.

151. Evidence of Tom Solomon, Inquest No.548 of 1916, Sam Solomon, JUS/N616, QSA. For other examples, see NM 10 Sep.1919; Interview with Mr E. Denman, Mackay, 12 Jul.1979; Daisy Wake, Bowen DHAR, 8 Aug.1921. Aborigines were similarly averse to hospitalization. M. Reay, 'A Half-Caste Aboriginal Community', pp.316-17.


153. In one case, an Islander was in ill-health and dependent on the support of other Islanders; in the second, an Islander shot himself after shooting a European woman. Another Islander attempted to drown and also hang himself, because of a bad marital relationship. Evidence of Johnny Massing, Inquest No.138 of 1914; Jack Tully, JUS/N584, QSA; Evidence of Amy Webber, Inquest No.430 of 1915, Harry Tanna, JUS/N588, QSA; Evidence of Const. Parker, 17 Jun.1913, Rex vs Maneboro, No.44 of 1913, A/18381, QSA.


The first of the four broad categories of mortality and sickness concerns infectious and other diseases, which were responsible for the greatest part of illness and death amongst the Islander population. By the twentieth century the Islanders had largely adjusted to the different diet, conditions of work and environment of Australia. They had built up resistance to the big killer diseases of the plantation era such as smallpox and measles. However, deficiencies in their diet and housing, as mentioned previously, rendered them susceptible to such complaints as scabies, sores and rashes. Some of these were highly contagious and despite careful hygiene spread rapidly through the Islander population, particularly amongst the children. 156

Two debilitating diseases from which the Islanders suffered were filariasis (often manifested in elephantiasis) and hookworm, whose prevalence in nineteenth century tropical Queensland had been blamed on the 'kanakas' and other non-European groups. 157 The incidence of filariasis, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, declined significantly in the twentieth century. 158 Hookworm was still endemic, with the commonest symptom being anaemia. Children were particularly susceptible due to their habits of playing, and going to and from school, barefooted. 159 Its prevalence in tropical Australia prompted a vigorous eradication campaign in the late 1910s and 1920s. 160 Aborigines, and to a lesser extent other non-European

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156. See McKenna to Min. for Public Instruction, The Walkerston Kanaka School Question, 11 Apr.1933, memo., EDU/Z2247, QSA; Patterson to Director for State Children's Dept, 15 Nov.1932, forw. to Director for Education, 23 Nov.1932, 48162. ibid.; Rachel Boslam, Bowen DHAR, 6 Oct.1932; Edna Thomas, ibid., 30 Oct.1933; Gladys Addo, Ingham DHAR, 12 Jun.1934.

157. Sir Raphael Cilento (compiler), Tropical Diseases in Australasia (Brisbane, 1940), pp.58, 224; Cilento, Triumph in the Tropics, pp.293 n141, 434.


159. The hookworm larvae can enter by penetrating unbroken skin. Ibid., pp.226-27; CPP IV, 1913, p.1236. Dr P.S. Clarke; Patterson to Director for State Children's Dept, 15 Nov.1932, forw. to Director for Education, 23 Nov.1932, 48162, EDU/Z2247, QSA.

160. This was conducted by the Rockefeller Institute in conjunction with the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, and was part of a world-wide campaign against hookworm. 20 30 Aug.1919, p.12; NUR 27 Jan.1919, p.33.
groups and Italians, were most heavily infected and, to reduce the number of carriers, a major focus in this and later campaigns was the treatment of Aborigines and also Islanders. Overall, the extent of hookworm infestation declined dramatically and the general health of the community improved correspondingly.

The incidence of leprosy in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was also attributed falsely to the presence of the Islanders and other non-Europeans. Between 1908 and 1940, at least fourteen (including three native-born) Islanders in North Queensland were diagnosed as lepers and shipped off to lazarets. It is possible that in some cases ringworm or yaws (framboesia), which were very prevalent in Melanesia, were wrongly interpreted as leprosy.

Islanders often suffered from dysentery and diarrhoea, both in the mild and more virulent forms. On the plantations these had produced heavy mortality. With outdoor sanitation facilities, they continued, predictably, to be prevalent amongst the Islanders, and it is significant to note that there were many indigenous cures for dysentery and diarrhoea.

161. Of those people examined, 76 per cent of Aborigines and 44 per cent of Italians, in contrast to only 19 per cent of those of British origin, were infected. Ibid.


165. Cuppy, the Solomon Islands, p.171; Cilento, Tropical Diseases in Australasia, p.275. For examples of what was probably yaws, see T63Bsb:1; Interview with Mr E. Denman, Mackay, 12 Jul.1979; Evidence of Const. Davis, Inquest No.83 of 1934, Bessie Uba, JUS/N975, QSA.

166. T108sa:1; Cilento, Tropical Diseases in Australasia, p.187. See also Chapter 1.
Measles had also caused many deaths on the plantations. By the twentieth century, the migrants were immune and their children do not appear to have been more severely affected by this disease than their European contemporaries. Other diseases such as whooping cough and chicken pox were also now restricted to children and were therefore less dangerous. 167

Pacific Islanders seem very susceptible to respiratory diseases. 168 In North Queensland, their conditions of housing, notably the crowding, poor ventilation and indoor fires, increased their susceptibility to such diseases and promoted their spread. Colds and catarrhal conditions were very widespread, especially amongst the Islanders in Mackay. 169 Serious respiratory complaints such as bronchitis and asthma were common: in the Herbert River district, for example, Jack and Mary Tanna and three of their children suffered from asthmatic and bronchial attacks.

Tuberculosis (also known as phthisis and consumption) had been prevalent on the plantations. In the twentieth century, this serious respiratory disease was on the decline amongst Europeans, but continued to affect the Islanders severely. Their housing standards and the degree of community interaction promoted the spread of such a communicable disease.

167. See Henry Edward Gosling, Ingham DHAR, 5 Jul.1927; Julius Cassidy, ibid., 5 Jan.1934; Rennie Cassidy, ibid., 1 Sep.1934; Annual Return of the Polynesian School for 1933, EDU/AB1616, QSA; Evidence of Frank Bong, Inquest No.377 of 1938, David Roy Bong, JUS/N1046, QSA. See also Chapter 1.

168. Ross, Baegu, p.42; Guppy, The Solomon Islands, p.176. See also Chapter 1.

169. These were promoted in Mackay by the humidity and low-lying nature of the coastal flat country. CPP IV, 1913, p.1569, Dr W.W. Hoare; McKenna to Min. for Public Instruction, The Walkerston Kanaka School Question, 11 Apr.1933, memo., EDU/Z2247, QSA.

170. T591bsa:3; T691bsb:2; Mary Tanna, Ingham DHAR, 1 May 1928, 11 Jan.1931, 1 Jan.1932; Jack Tanna, ibid., 20 Dec.1930; Ada Tanna, ibid., 2 Feb.1932; Ernest Tanna, ibid. For other cases, see Tim, ibid., 11 Oct.1930; Rody Cassidy, ibid., 5 Feb.1932; Jimmy Coconut, Bowen DHAR, 6 May 1925; Myra Thomas, ibid., 8 Nov.1932.
amongst the population. According to the government medical officer in Mackay, Dr Stuart Kay, the incidence of tuberculosis was very high amongst Islanders in the district, producing as many cases each year as amongst the rest of the community. In one family, six members were said to have died from tuberculosis.

Pleurisy and pneumonia were also serious illnesses, from which the very young and the very old Islanders especially suffered. Often pleurisy or pneumonia was the actual cause of death for asthmatic bronchial or tubercular persons, and also during influenza epidemics. Influenza was the other serious respiratory disease to which the Islanders were especially vulnerable. The most serious influenza epidemic was the pandemic of 1918-19, popularly known as the 'Spanish 'flu'.

The Spanish 'flu was brought to Australia by soldiers returning from the Great War in 1918-19. Throughout Australia, New Zealand and especially in the Pacific Islands, this extremely virulent form of pneumonic influenza wreaked a heavy toll. But while whole populations were susceptible to infection, not all outbreaks of the disease were of equal severity. This was certainly the case in North Queensland, where the worst


172. MN 10 Sep.1919. Moreover, the death rate from tuberculosis was higher in North Queensland than in the rest of the State. Breinl, 'A Comparative Statistical Inquiry', p.182.

173. T47Bsa:2; T54Bsa:3. For other cases of tuberculosis amongst the Islanders, see T36Bsa:3; T63Bsa:1; T71Bsa:1; Certificate of Particulars, Inquest No.548 of 1916, Sam Solomon, JUS/N616, QSA; Claude Fraser, Ingham DIAR, 5 Aug.1933; George Palmer, Ingham CR, 24 Oct.1928.

174. For example, see T1Bsb:1; T59Bsa:1; Certificate of Particulars, Inquest No.328 of 1931, Johnny Lamon, JUS/N927, QSA; Certificate of Death, Charlie Tass, Ecclesiastical File No.3 of 1914, A/16887, QSA; Ronie Booka Booka, Ingham CR, 16 Jul.1923; NOR 3 Oct.1921, p.71; Charles Tallis, Bowen DIAR, 6 Oct.1920; Gladys Addo, Ingham DIAR, 22 Sep.1933.

outbreak was in Mackay 176 — unfortunately the district with the largest Islander population.

The first wave of Spanish 'flu struck Mackay between May and July of 1919. In June, regulations were gazetted for the isolation of the district: schools were closed and temporary isolation hospitals set up in some of them. By late July the temporary hospitals had been closed; mortality had been relatively light and the epidemic had spread from the city to country areas. 177 This second wave hit the Islander population severely. In August and September 1919, nineteen deaths of Islanders were reported, mainly of elderly and middle-aged men and women. The real total was undoubtedly much higher, since this only represented the deaths of those who had been hospitalised. 178 The epidemic's centre was in the Farleigh area, where large numbers of Islanders were resident. 179 Aborigines in the area were also very severely affected. 180


178. NOR 15 Sep.1919, p.36. There were, for instance, no reported deaths of infants or children. Of this nineteen, thirteen were married and eleven had families; in three cases, both parents died and in one of these cases two young children were orphaned. The women ranged in age from twenty-six to seventy and the men from forty to seventy. The sources for this were the Daily Mercury, the cemetery registers for Mackay and Walkerston, oral sources and the church burial registers. Oral sources indicate that at least one other person died. See T37Bsa:1.

179. Solomon Islanders (and especially Malaitans) comprised the great majority of the recorded deaths. They had been resident either in Farleigh or in the surrounding areas of Habana, Wallingford and Nindarroo. For examples, see MM 25 Aug., 1 Sep., 13 Sep., 28 Sep.1919. The epidemic's impact is vividly recalled by interviewees. T1Bsa:1; T12Bsa:1; T33Bsb:1; T37Bsa:1.

It was claimed that the Islanders and Aborigines tended to contract the most virulent form of the disease, because they had not been inoculated; yet even today the protection provided by 'flu injections is suspect. The real reason for the epidemic's severity became evident, in August, during several inspections by Dr Kay of the homes of affected Islanders at Farleigh. Kay reported that the lack of ventilation and most importantly the Islanders' habit of visiting sick countrymen had contributed to the disease's sudden spread, while their generally poorer health produced more deaths than amongst the European population. The sick were cared for by their relatives or countrymen and no preventive measures were observed. There was also a lack of nourishing food for invalids. Despite their objections, some of the Islanders at Farleigh were taken to hospital.

Other districts suffered under the epidemic, but much less severely. In Bowen, influenza raged in the town and district between June and July, and there were many deaths, especially amongst the Aboriginal population. Many Islanders were 'flu victims, and at least three elderly and middle-aged Islanders died. Captain John Hof of the Salvation Army cared for his stricken Islander 'comrades' by visiting them and bringing them scented tea. In the Burdekin district, the influenza epidemic also raged during July, and mortality amongst Aborigines was very high. At an isolation hospital set up in the Ayr State School, 'coloured' patients were housed in

181. A free inoculation campaign had been conducted in Mackay on the eve of the epidemic, but few of the Islanders and Aborigines were inoculated. MM 16 May, 17 May, 18 Aug., 27 Aug., 10 Sep. 1919; NOR 15 Sep. 1919, p. 36.

182. MM 10 Sep. 1919; NOR 15 Sep. 1919, p. 36.


185. Hof reported that practically all of his flock were stricken at the same time. War Cry 20 Sep. 1919, p. 7; BI 25 Jun. 1919; T62Bsa:2.
the playsheds which had been covered with hessian. Some of the Islanders were stricken and at least one, and possibly two, died.

In the Herbert River district, the epidemic was severe in the town and its immediate vicinity, and mortality was high amongst Aborigines in this area. However, Halifax and Cordelia, where most Islanders lived, were not hard-hit and the Islanders tended to contract only the mild form of influenza. The only known death was that of an elderly Islander who lived near Ingham. In the far north, the influenza epidemic was relatively mild. The heavy death toll occurred, once again, amongst Aborigines. Since the Islanders were closely involved with the Aboriginal communities, it is possible that there were Islanders amongst these victims.

Influenza periodically re-visited North Queensland but never again with such severity. In Cairns there was a second outbreak, mainly amongst the 'coloured' population, in January 1920. Both in Mackay and the Herbert River district in late 1933, there was a minor influenza epidemic amongst the Islanders.

187. NOR 28 Jul.1919, p.50; T68Bsb:1; T71Bsa:1+2.
188. This district was also closed by regulation. NOR 21 Jul., p.17, 28 Jul., p.19, 4 Aug., pp. 3, 49, 11 Aug., p.78, 25 Aug.1919, p.7.
191. OPP II, 1920, pp.229, 231-32; CMP 11 Aug., 30 Aug.1919; NM 19 Aug. 1919. I was unable to locate cemetery registers for Cairns for 1919, to check this possibility.
Apart from infectious diseases, there was a miscellany of other diseases from which the Islanders suffered. Amongst the men, there were a few cases of gonorrhoea. In 1933 it was alleged that venereal disease was common amongst Islanders in the Cairns and Innisfail districts, but the presence of large Islander families would tend to discount this. Cases of heart disease (such as myocarditis and pericarditis) and cardiac failure were not uncommon amongst the middle-aged and elderly.

While infectious and other diseases were the major cause of sickness and death amongst the Islanders, another important cause was accidents. One common cause of accidents was falls from or kicks by horses, which resulted in concussion, fractures and even death. Snake bites were another perennial hazard, but no fatalities amongst the Islander population have been discovered. There were some cases of accidental drowning: for instance, an Islander woman and two boys were drowned during a record flood in the Herbert River district in 1927.

There were a few accidental shootings, sometimes fatal. Dynamiting for fish was a dangerous exercise, in which some Islanders lost limbs or


195. There were also two cases of young native-born men dying from heart disease. Alfred Cole, Ayr CR, 5 Nov.1916; NM 24 Feb.1925; PDFR 19 Apr.1910; Harry Arramanga, Halifax CR, 16 Aug.1922; Certificate of Particulars, Inquest No.4 of 1935, Boate Santo, JUS/N989, QSA.


suffered other injuries. Violence, in the form of fights, assaults and attacks, was a more frequent cause of injuries and even death, notably among the Islander men. Yet the incidence of violence amongst the Islanders was certainly not as high as that amongst the general population.

The third category of sickness and death concerns the general wearing out of the body. Longevity is related to resistance to infections and accidents, the rate of decay and to some extent biological inheritance. Age at death cannot be quantified for the migrants because of the unreliability in the estimates of their age. As Table 4.5 showed, the migrant population had declined very significantly by 1933. Many, however, lived to a 'good old age': the last of the 'kanakas' died only in the 1960s.

Certain specific illnesses and degenerative diseases are associated with old age. For instance, the older Islanders suffered from hernias, blindness and rheumatism. Injuries from accidents could precipitate death amongst the elderly. General infirmity and poor health was to be expected, and very often 'infirmity', 'senile decay' or 'senility' was given as the cause of death.

198. Evidence of Joseph Sydney, Inquest No.689 of 1938, Maurice Obah, JUS/N1052, QSA; Evidence of Tommy Samuels, Inquest No.710 of 1938, Nesseo, JUS/N1053, QSA; NOR 8 Nov.1915, p.9; CMR 3 Sep.1912; PDMR 19 Apr.1910.

199. See Breinl, 'A Comparative Statistical Inquiry', p.182. See also Chapter 8.


203. See NM 22 Oct.1935; Tommy Unson, Bowen DHAR, 7 Jan.1932; Certificate of Particulars, Inquest No.175 of 1934, Peter Motlop, JUS/N977, QSA.
The fourth and final category is infant and maternal mortality, which is crucial in determining the size of the new generation. Infant mortality is defined as the rate of death of children aged under two years. In North Queensland, infant mortality rates had decreased steadily from the 1880s and compared favourably with those throughout Queensland and in other States. The evidence available is too flawed to calculate a rate for infant mortality for the Islander population. Of 286 recorded deaths of Islanders in the Mackay district between 1908 and 1940, 12 per cent were of children aged under two years, but this probably significantly underestimates infant mortality, since the deaths of children under two often went unrecorded. Evidence suggesting that the infant mortality rate was above the North Queensland average can be found in the fact that it continued to be quite common for one or more children in a family to die in early infancy. The living conditions of the Islanders, their large families and low income would have contributed to a high mortality rate. Many new-born infants were stillborn or died shortly after birth. Pneumonia was the most common cause of death in children aged under two.


205. The sources were the cemetery registers, church burial records and the records of the local undertaker, Mackay Funerals. Similar calculations were not performed for other districts because such a full range of sources without gaps was not available.

206. For examples, see Daisy Wake, Bowen DHAR, 6 Aug.1921; Lizzie Womal, ibid., 15 Jan.1938; MM 18 Nov.1926; Peggy Yasserie, Notebook 1923-28, Mackay Funerals Records, 18 Dec.1925; T47Bsa:2; T56Bsa:1. This was becoming less common amongst European households. Gandevia, Tears Often Shed, p.93.


208. See Raymond Yow Yeh, Bowen DHAR, 12 Dec.1936; Certificate of Particulars. Inquest No.310 of 1936, Carmen Mary Kawoot, JUS/NI011, QSA; Certificate of Particulars. Inquest No.377 of 1938, David Ray Bong, JUS/NI046, QSA.
According to one Islander woman, it was rare for Islander women to miscarry. However, the risks of both infant and maternal mortality were increased through children being born at home. Three cases have been found where both Islander women and their young infants died. As was common in the wider society, local midwives, usually other Islander women, and relatives or friends, assisted at the birth. In the 1930s, Islander women began to attend their local hospitals or nursing homes for parturition; this was no doubt related to an Australia-wide campaign from the 1920s to increase the number of maternity hospitals and wards and thereby reduce maternal and infant mortality.

Childbirth can impair a woman's health permanently, and with large families this probability increases. Amongst the deaths recorded in the Mackay district, there were twenty-six women or nine per cent who died in the prime of their life (between sixteen and thirty-five years); in contrast, there were only twenty-one men in this age group (or seven per cent) who died, despite the greater risks to life faced by men through their occupations and habits.


210. See Rosie Manaway, Mackay CR, 1 Sep.1915; George Manaway, ibid., 21 Jul.1916; Edith Fewquandie, ibid., 7 Aug.1930; Edward Fewquandie, ibid., 5 Nov.1930; May Ambertel, ibid., 27 Jul.1932; Thomas Ambertel, ibid., 12 Oct.1932. An Islander woman at Halifax who gave birth at home, was admitted to hospital suffering from sepsis. Rose Elizabeth Garlando, Ingham DHAR, 12 May 1929.

211. See T22Bsa:1; T43Bsa:1; T62Bsa:2; T67Bsa:1; Birth Certificate of Alfred John Yasso, No.97472, 9 Sep.1912, Bowen.

212. K. Daniels and M. Murnane (compilers), Uphill All The Way. A Documentary History of Women in Australia (Brisbane, 1980), pp.90-92; T37Bsa:1; T58Bsb:1; T72Bsa:2; Ruby Yow Yeh, Bowen DHAR, 8 Dec.1932; Elsie Martie, ibid., 5 Sep.1934.

213. For examples from other districts of women who died young, see Ada Boslem, Bowen CR, 15 Aug.1909; Nancy Leo, Ayr CR, 20 Nov.1936; Doris Romelo, ABR, Innisfail, 26 Oct.1929.
In summary, the evidence on sickness and mortality suggests that both adult and infant mortality amongst Pacific Islanders in North Queensland was higher than that amongst the European community, but considerably lower than that in their native islands and also in comparison with mortality on the plantations. The population continued to be susceptible to many of the same diseases which had affected Islanders on the plantations, chiefly dysentery, tuberculosis and influenza. However, as in the European population, death came mainly to the old. It was not usual for young adults to die in the prime of life.

Greater life expectation contributed to the growth of the Islander population in two ways. First, it increased the number of infants and children who survived to adulthood, and secondly it added to the number of fertile years through which women lived.214

THIS CHAPTER has presented a picture of the Islander population in North Queensland between 1908 and 1940 - its size, structure, residential dispersion, physical mobility and the chief demographic factors promoting change. At the beginning of this period, predictions were made that this population would rapidly disappear; by its conclusion, it was clear even to Europeans that these prophecies had not been and would not be fulfilled.

Demographic factors have been discussed in terms of marriage, birth and death. These indicate that Pacific Islanders, like most minority groups, did not share the demographic patterns of the wider community.215 In Australia this was a period of declining fertility in which the growth

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215. For parallels, see ibid., pp.72-73; Pool, The Maori Population, pp.197-98.
rate was only maintained by immigration. Pacific Islanders, in contrast, were a closed population whose survival was dependent on a high rate of natural increase. The prerequisites for such an increase were all present: a high degree of inmarriage, a very high rate of marriage and re-marriage, a relatively young age at marriage and a narrow gap in this age between spouses, conception before or soon after marriage for all but the unfecund, the absence of family planning practices, strong social pressure to bear and raise large families, a long child-rearing span and declining mortality and infant mortality rates. By 1940 the population, through the growth of the native-born element, was assured of physical survival. In the final three chapters, the concomitant issues of economic, social and cultural survival are examined. The next two chapters, however, are concerned with the discrimination practised against Pacific Islanders and other non-Europeans and serve to provide a wider perspective on the attitudes and actions of Europeans towards those non-Europeans who remained in 'White Australia'.
CHAPTER 5

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NON-EUROPEANS IN QUEENSLAND, 1901-14

PACIFIC Islanders who remained in Queensland after 1908 were no longer subject to special legislation governing their activities. Henceforth there was little distinction between them and other non-Europeans, but the distinctions between non-Europeans and Europeans were intensified. In 1906 Premier Kidston had declared that those Islanders exempted from deportation "must be allowed to work for a living in any honest way they choose ...". This chapter, and the next, will demonstrate that the reality over the next three decades was very different. The 'White Australia' policy involved not only closing the doors to non-European immigration but also conserving the advantages of living within the Commonwealth to people of 'our own race'. Non-European residents, as in the nineteenth century, were subjected to numerous legislative restrictions and to various unofficial discriminatory practices. Australia was not unique in this regard; such legislation and practices were present to a greater or lesser degree in virtually every English-speaking country with non-indigenous minorities. 2

In this chapter both legislative and non-legislative discriminatory actions against non-Europeans are discussed. First, prohibitive legislation enacted by the Commonwealth and the other States is discussed briefly. Then the discriminatory attitudes and actions of European farmers and unionists are considered. Thirdly, prohibitive legislation placed on the Queensland statute-books is examined. Finally, the Sugar Cultivation Act, the most important piece of discriminatory legislation from the perspective of Pacific Islanders in North Queensland, is looked at more closely, in terms of its conception, administration and critical reception.

1. Kidston to Prime Min., 22 Aug. 1906, Al 15/19391, AA.

UNDER the constitution, the Commonwealth's legislative powers were limited, being confined to such areas as foreign affairs, migration, defence, posts, pensions and the settlement of inter-state industrial disputes by arbitration or conciliation. The new Commonwealth Government was well aware that legislation discriminating overtly against non-Europeans was unpalatable to the British Government: while the rights of nationals of China could be ignored, those of British Indians could not, and neither could the feelings of Britain's important ally in the east, Japan. At the colonial conference in 1897 Chamberlain, secretary of state for the colonies, had objected to nominatom discrimination - legislation which imposed disabilities on groups specified by place of origin, race or colour. A solution he proposed by which the colonies could control immigration, was the 'Natal formula' of an educational test. This subterfuge, adopted in the Commonwealth of Australia's Immigration Restriction Acts 1901 to 1905, effectively served the purpose of preventing non-European immigration: any immigrant could be subjected to a dictation test of writing not less than fifty words in any prescribed language.

In Commonwealth statutes affecting residents in Australia, however, the dictation test was not employed (see Appendix D). Non-Europeans were excluded specifically from such privileges as eligibility for naturalization, voting, invalid and old-age pensions, and the maternity


4. In the original Act this test was to be taken in a European language, but in 1905 this was amended to any prescribed language, thus at one stroke removing any obvious discrimination while making the operation of the Act even more effective. Huttonback, Racism and Empire, pp.308-9; A.H. Charteris, 'Australian Immigration Laws and their Working', in Mackenzie, The Legal Status of Aliens in Pacific Countries, pp.21-24.

5. The numbers and titles of Acts are cited in Appendix D.

6. Unless such persons were entitled to vote under Section 41 of the Australian constitution, by which any person eligible to vote at elections for the more numerous house of parliament of a state could not be prevented from voting at elections for either house of parliament of the Commonwealth.
allowance. Only 'white' labour could be employed on mail boats subsidized by the Commonwealth, and only British subjects could be employed on Australian ships registered in Australia or the United Kingdom. Non-Europeans born in the country were natural-born British subjects and were therefore not subject to most of these restrictions. Together with their parents, however, they were specifically exempted from wartime service and peacetime training in the naval and military forces (see Appendix D).

In such prohibitive legislation, the Commonwealth exercised greater moderation than the State governments, who held the undefined residue of power to make laws. As will be seen later in this chapter and also in Chapter 6, the Commonwealth was concerned with the international ramifications of domestic discriminatory policies. All of the States imposed legal restrictions on non-European residents, but without consistency and in different degrees. The Western Australian parliament was especially vigorous in passing measures such as the Factories and Shops Act of 1920, under which an 'Asiatic' could not be registered as the owner or occupier of a factory or be employed there, and all furniture imported or manufactured in the State was to be stamped 'European labour' or 'Asiatic labour'. But it was Queensland which led the way in such exclusivist measures: according to one observer, Queensland's experience with coloured labour had made her "more fanatically devoted to the White Australia ideal than any other State of the Commonwealth".

BEFORE discussing Queensland's discriminatory legislation, the discriminatory attitudes and actions of North Queensland's farmers and unionists towards non-Europeans need to be considered. In the early twentieth century the region was well advanced towards becoming a community of


farmers, principally cane growers. Two important exceptions were the
Atherton Tableland (maize and dairying) and the Bowen district (fruit
and vegetable growing). \(^9\) Local farmers' associations remained strong, but
a new organization formed in Townsville in 1907, the Australian Sugar
Producers' Association (ASPA), took a prominent role in matters relating
to the sugar industry. \(^10\)

Prominent Chinese farmers, such as See Chin in Cairns and Ching Do
in the Burdekin, were members of the local farmers' associations. In
1927 a Melanesian farmer, Willy Api, was present at a meeting of the
Mossman Cane Suppliers' Association and was nominated (unsuccessfully)
as a delegate to attend a conference in Innisfail. \(^11\) But in other
districts non-Europeans were ineligible for membership of such associations.
In Bowen in 1907 the Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Association decided
that 'coloured aliens' should not be eligible for membership. In February
1914 in Mackay, some non-European farmers applied to join the Pioneer
River Farmers' and Graziers' Association. A motion to allow them to do so
was carried by a large majority, after an amendment to establish a separate
branch for 'coloured' growers, was not seconded. \(^12\) But at the executive's
next monthly meeting, it was reported that this decision had not been
endorsed strongly by the branches, and a resolution to rescind the motion was
strongly supported. \(^13\) The issue was raised again in September 1918, when

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12. PDT 15 Jan., 2 Feb.1907; MM 16 Feb.1914. In 1906 at least three
islander farmers in the district had received printed circulars from the
Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association inviting them to join,
but it would seem that this was an oversight. MM 1 May 1906, Pacific
Islanders Association meeting.
13. I found no evidence of a vote being taken on the motion to rescind
the resolution at this meeting or the next monthly meeting. MM 16 Mar.,
17 Mar., 1 May 1914.
the question of extending membership to Pacific Islanders and Malays was discussed, but apparently no decision was reached before the Association disbanded early in the following year.  

Opposition to Chinese and Islander farmers was particularly vocal in Bowen, probably because this was a district of small farmers who had never relied on non-European labour. Objections were taken to such farmers on two principal grounds. First, it was claimed that they endangered Bowen's reputation, by growing their produce under insanitary conditions, by packing it carelessly, and by sending away inferior quality fruit and vegetables. No convincing evidence was presented to corroborate these charges. Secondly, it was argued that non-Europeans competed unfairly with European farmers, whose standard of living, if they were to rear their families respectably, was much higher: "the white farmer cannot live down to the Chinese or Kanaka farmer's level." Such an argument was by no means confined to Bowen.

In requests to local members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and deputations to visiting Government ministers, Bowen farmers repeatedly called for severe restrictions on non-European farmers, such as legislation to prevent the leasing of land to 'coloured aliens' or to provide that their produce be marked 'alien grown'. In other districts, hostility


15. In contrast, the Chinese in the Cairns district were tolerated by the Europeans, who left the heavy work of clearing the land to them. C. May, 'Chinese-European Relations in Cairns during the Eighteen Nineties', Lectures on North Queensland History, Third series, p.158.


to non-European farmers was similarly evident, if less sustained. For instance, Chinese and Indian leaseholders on the Atherton Tableland were strongly resented, and European cane growers at Hambledon near Cairns were antagonistic to the policy of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR), of increasing the number of Chinese growers for the mill. 19

Attitudes to non-European labour, especially amongst small cane farmers, had begun to change by the second decade of the twentieth century. Many farmers, particularly large growers north of Ingham, had sought to retain the services of Pacific Islanders for as long as possible. Asians often took the Islanders' place: in 1905, according to Dr Walter Maxwell, director of Queensland Sugar Experiment Stations, there were some 5,600 Asians in North Queensland, 4,000 of whom were living north of Townsville. By 1910 92.8 per cent of Queensland sugar cane was grown and harvested by European labour, but in the districts from Ingham to Mossman this was reduced to 82.5 per cent. 20

Several factors assisted the gradual changeover to a European workforce. Misgivings about the quantity and quality of European sugar workers were reduced as the proportion of cane grown and harvested by such labour steadily increased. 22 The slump in the North Queensland mining industry in this period forced many miners to take seasonal work in the coastal sugar districts. Better working conditions were promoted by the Shearers' and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act of 1905, which specified minimum standards of diet and accommodation, and by the fixing of minimum wages for field labourers by the Commonwealth Government in 1907. 23


21. Ibid., pp.86-87, 91.


23. 5 Edw. VII, No.9. The rates were fixed at 22s.6d. per week and found in the slack and 25s. per week and found in the crushing season.
Such improvements lessened the psychological dislike for 'nigger's work', a prejudice deriving more from the presence of a 'coloured' workforce than from the actual work. The incentive to employ European labour was maintained by the extension in 1905, and increase in 1906, of the bounty and excise on sugar: the excise on Australian-produced sugar was raised to £4 per ton and the bounty (or refund) on sugar manufactured from cane grown and harvested solely by Europeans was increased to £4 per ton; the protective duty on sugar imports was maintained.24

The emergence of a satisfactory European labour force was not the only reason behind the willingness of most cane farmers to employ Europeans. They recognized that the Commonwealth had provided fiscal protection for the sugar industry only in order that more highly paid 'white' labour would become its mainstay, and tropical settlement in Australia would be assured. If non-Europeans represented a significant proportion of sugar workers, the southern States might seek the withdrawal of financial protection.25 With such pragmatic reasons for supporting European labour, it is not surprising to find that most small farmers in the 1910s were opposed to the continuation of 'coloured' labour in the sugar industry.26 In 1910 the ASPA at its annual conference unanimously resolved to press for legislation to prohibit non-Europeans from participating in the sugar industry as growers or employees, and petitioned the prime minister accordingly. Again in 1913 the ASPA called for such legislation, and the platform of the Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association contained a similar proposal.27 But the large companies did not support this policy:

24. These increases had been recommended by Maxwell. Hunt, 'Exclusivism and Unionism', p.91.

25. As was recognized. See QPD CXIV. 1913, p.522, Gillies; CNP 4 Dec.1913, letter to Ed. by 'A Sugar Worker'; MM 29 Oct.1913, letter to Ed. by P. Kirwan: QGG CII, 1914, p.1583; Groom to White, 12 Feb.1914, 66G, AGS/N96, QSA.


since 1911, CSR had had a policy of giving preference to Europeans, yet the Company was still a major employer of non-Europeans, especially in its five northern mills and on the construction of tramways. Non-Europeans were hard-working and tractable, performed work Europeans found distasteful and, moreover, could be used as strike-breakers.  

The trade union movement was unequivocally opposed to the employment of non-Europeans. In the sugar industry the growth of unionisation was concomitant with the transition to a European workforce. Sugar workers' unions, formed initially in Mackay and Cairns in 1905, had united in 1907 in a loose confederation, the Australian Sugar Workers' Union. But their influence numerically and otherwise remained weak until they amalgamated in 1910 with the Amalgamated Workers' Association - 'the fighting A.W.A.' of Edward Theodore and William McCormack. The union's successful management of the 1911 sugar workers' strike ensured its growth and inaugurated a new deal for European sugar workers. In 1913 the Amalgamated Workers' Association and the AWU united to form a new and stronger AWU.

To many European sugar workers, it appeared that the farmers were attempting to treat them as they had their 'kanakas'. The fight for better conditions and wages was thus integrally linked with the fight against the employment of non-Europeans; as the Europeans' numerical dominance consolidated, so also did their opposition harden to the residue of 'coloured' labour. The Mackay Sugar Workers' Union had from its


inception demanded the employment of 'white' labour only, and this was also a plank in the Amalgamated Workers' Association's platform. Membership in the Australian Sugar Workers' Union was denied to "Asiatics, South Sea Islanders, Kaffirs, Chinese or other coloured aliens", and all 'coloured aliens', with the exception of Maoris and American Negroes, were debarred from joining the AWU and the Amalgamated Workers' Association.\footnote{31}

Having prevented non-Europeans from joining, the unions then engaged in the circular argument of decrying 'coloured' labourers as potential strike-breakers. The Cairns branch of the Waterside Workers Federation, which banned its members from working with non-unionist Asian seamen, rejected an application for membership from an Indian in 1908. In the 1911 sugar strike, there were both non-European and European strike-breakers; the employment of the former by CSR was an especial source of irritation. Yet in Mossman, a group of Pacific Islanders who had gone out with the Europeans were denied entry to the strike camp.\footnote{32}

Such contradictions mostly went unchallenged. One exception was M.P. Nynes, an AWU organizer for Mackay who in 1919 favoured including 'coloured aliens' in the union in order to protect them against farmers who exploited their ignorance.\footnote{33} The definition of a 'coloured alien' was imprecise: usually Maoris and sometimes Aborigines and American Negroes were not included. At the annual conference of the AWA in 1909, it was


\footnote{32. Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, p.105; OPD CXIV, 1913, p.289; Saunders, 'Masters and Servants', pp.103-4, 105; NQR 22 Sep.1913, p.56.}

\footnote{33. MM 29 May 1919, evidence given to Industrial Court. In Darwin in 1921 the president of the Northern Australian Industrial Union was criticized for issuing a ticket to a Malay laundryman who had given valuable assistance in an earlier strike. NQR 21 Nov.1921, p.53.}
discovered that some branches had rejected Syrians as members: unable to agree on a uniform policy, the conference left the decision to individual branches.  

Outside the sugar industry, agitation against the employment of non-Europeans was also one of the first collective actions taken by unionists. Publicans who employed Asians as cooks or domestics faced hostility and even boycotts by members of local unions. In 1909, for example, the conference of the Australian Sugar Workers' Union resolved that branches should take action against the employment of 'aliens' in hotels and other businesses, while at the AUW conference, members were encouraged to give preference to business places employing Europeans only. 

THE NEAR-CONSENSUS against non-European residents was also reflected in the debates and legislation of the lower house of the Queensland parliament (see Appendix E). Discrimination against non-Europeans was not a departure, and as in the nineteenth century the withholding of royal assent was the only obstacle. Anticipating protests from Asian powers such as Japan, the British Government was reluctant to countenance legislation containing disqualifications based on race, colour or country of origin (nominatim discrimination). Royal assent was not given to the Sugar Works Guarantee Bill of 1900, since clause 5 specifically prohibited the employment in such works of Asians, Africans and Pacific Islanders. The offending clause was withdrawn in the Sugar Works Guarantee Act of 1908, although other overtly discriminatory legislation already on the statute books was not repealed. 

34. Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, p.73. 
36. Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.73, 140. See also Chapter 1. The numbers of Acts cited in the text are given in Appendix E. 
The Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Act of 1904 similarly refused any advance under the Act to an aboriginal of Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands, but on the advice of Alfred Lyttelton, the secretary of state for the colonies, this was amended in 1905 to a general prohibition on advances to any 'aliens'.

In other discriminatory legislation the Queensland Government took the Commonwealth's lead in employing the more acceptable restriction of the educational test. In the Dairy Produce Act of 1904 and the Margarine Act of 1910, employment was refused to any person who was not of European descent nor an Aboriginal of Australia, unless he had first obtained a certificate of being able to read and write from dictation words in the English language. In most subsequent legislation, for example the Land Act of 1910 and the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Act of 1911, this requirement of first passing the dictation test was extended to all 'aliens', and the dictation test could be given in any prescribed language. In an additional refinement adopted in 1912, which had been suggested earlier by the secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Elgin, a provision was inserted empowering the Governor-in-Council to make regulations for the automatic exemption of any persons or classes of persons (that is, Europeans) whom it was not considered necessary to examine. Certain earlier statutes were amended to include this provision and it was incorporated in subsequent legislation. In this way a

38. Morgan to Nelson, 18 May 1905, 161C, AGS/N360, QSA; Nelson to Sec. of State for the Colonies, 22 May 1905, Despatch No.33, Bundle 28 1/969, CP 78/1, AA.

39. The British Government had advised this. Chamberlain to Gov. of Qld, 14 May 1901, quoted in O'Sullivan to Premier 11 Dec.1911, 11129, 161C, AGS/N360, QSA. The necessity for adopting this approach was recognised by many MLAs. Qld CIX, 1911-12, p.2106, CX, 1911-12, p.2527, CXIV, 1913, p.284.

40. Elgin to Gov. of Qld, quoted in O'Sullivan to Premier, 11 Dec.1911, 11129, 161C, AGS/N360, QSA; Bailey, 'The Legal Position of Foreigners in Australia', p.42.

41. Such as the Local Authorities Act Amendment Act of 1910, the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Act of 1911, the Leases to Aliens Restriction Act of 1912, the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 and the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Fishery Acts Amendment Act of 1913. See Appendix E.
standard clause was evolved, which met the requirements of both the British and Queensland Governments.

Between 1900 and 1940 there were at least forty pieces of legislation discriminating against non-Europeans on the Queensland statute-books (see Appendix E). Restrictions on civic rights such as voting and occupational restraints in areas such as mining and railway construction had been carried over from the nineteenth century. The new spheres of discrimination were principally in agricultural pursuits, the manufacture of agricultural products and government assistance to farmers and agricultural workers. By 1914, non-Europeans (usually but not always including the native-born) were excluded totally, or unless they obtained certificates by passing a dictation test, from such activities as owning land or leasing over five acres, fishing for pearl-shell or bêche-de-mer, securing advances from the Agricultural Bank or the Government Savings Bank, or working in any margarine or butter factory, sugar works or tramway or omnibus service of a local authority. Since Queensland was less industrialized than most of the other States, it was the engagement of non-Europeans in agricultural rather than industrial pursuits which attracted most attention.

Pacific Islanders, both migrant and native-born, were also subjected to some of the restrictions imposed on Aborigines. Under Section 71 of the Liquor Act of 1912, it was an offence to supply alcohol to Pacific Islanders (including those born in Queensland) as well as to Aborigines. Under the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897, those with Aboriginal mothers and Pacific Islander fathers could be brought under the repressive controls of this legislation and its later amendments. For instance, under the amending Act in 1901, women required the chief protector of Aboriginals' permission to marry non-Aboriginal men;

42. As recognized in the Legislative Assembly. See QPD CWI, 1910, p.1514, CWII, 1910, p.2315, CX, 1911-12, pp.2773, 2776.

43. s.3. See Appendix E. For a discussion of the harsh discrimination imposed by such legislation, see Rowley, Outcasts in White Australia, pp.13-14, 21-23.
some women of Islander descent were refused such permission. In 1933 Cilento, a leading health expert, submitted a report to the home secretary on Aboriginal health in North Queensland, which recommended that 'coloured' persons such as Pacific Islanders who lived under 'native' conditions or in circumstances detrimental to community health, should be brought under the control of the chief protector of Aboriginals. Accordingly, the Act was amended in 1934 to include under the definition of a 'half-caste' any person of Pacific Islander descent who lived or associated with Aborigines or was in the chief protector's opinion in need of control or the protection of the Act. Those most affected by this legislation would have been Islanders in the far north, who were closely associated with and often married to Aborigines, together with their offspring.

The imposition of restrictions on non-Europeans was not a partisan issue and was rarely opposed. But the Parliamentary Labor Party was instrumental in moving the inclusion of discriminatory clauses in a number of bills before the Assembly, and was always ready to charge its political opponents with insufficient commitment to the 'White Australia' ideal. Only a few non-Labor MLAs protested ineffectually against such discriminatory measures, claiming they were unjust.

There were two principal areas of curtailment of the activities of non-Europeans by the Queensland legislature. The first of these concerned the right to own or to lease land. Under the Aliens Act of 1867, only 'aliens' with certificates of naturalization could hold real property, while under the Commonwealth's Naturalization Act of 1903 no aboriginal of

44. 2 Edw. VII, No.1, s.9; Robert John Sikkema and Millie Mow, MMR, Cairns. 4 Dec.1926; Charles Ah Kee and Elizabeth Mow, ibid., 22 Dec.1927.

45. BC 13 Apr.1933; Q 20 Apr.1933, p.3; Rowley, Outcasts in White Australia, pp.4, 28; s.4 (see Appendix E). Pacific Islanders in the Torres Strait thus were also brought under the Act's control. J.R. Beckett, Politics in the Torres Strait Islands (Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1963), pp.93, 95.


47. See ibid., CX, 1911-12, pp.2527, 2531, 2532, 2538.
Africa, Asia or the Pacific Islands could apply for naturalization (see Appendices D and E). In 1907 additional regulations issued under the Land Act of 1897 stipulated that any 'alien' desiring to select or acquire land must first obtain a certificate of having passed a dictation test. The Land Act of 1910 disqualified any 'alien' without such a certificate, from leasing crown land. 48

Private individuals, however, could lease land to whom they pleased. In the first decade of the new century, there was considerable agitation, principally from farmers, and especially from Bowen farmers, to prevent the leasing of land to 'coloured aliens'. 49 In the Legislative Assembly there were several attempts by private members to have legislation introduced to prohibit the leasing of land by private owners to non-Europeans. 50 Although a draft bill for this purpose was prepared in 1905 51, it was not until 1912 that legislation was enacted: the Leases to Aliens Restriction Act of 1912 prohibited the granting of leases of five or more acres to 'aliens' who had not first passed the dictation test. 52 But this Act was not enforced strictly. 53

The other area in which the presence of non-Europeans was considered most dangerous, was in the sugar industry. As shown, the ASPA, most cane growers' associations and the AVU agreed on the need for their exclusion. In the Legislative Assembly many members, especially Labor men, expressed

48. QCG XXXVIII, 1907, p.465; ss. 59, 62.


51. Blair to Premier, 14 Jun.1905, 03168, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.

52. ss.3(a), (2), (3). Under Section 5, this was not applicable to any lease or agreement made before 1 December 1911. An amendment to reduce the area which might be leased without a certificate from five to three acres, was only narrowly defeated. QPD CX. 1911-12, p.2539.

53. This is made evident in Chapter 7 by the number of Islanders leasing land after 1912, of whom many if not most would not have been farming under leases or agreements made after 1 December 1911.
similar sentiments. In the Local Authorities Act Amendment Act of 1910, a clause prohibited the employment of 'aliens', unless they had first passed a dictation test, in the construction, maintenance or working of any tramway or omnibus service of a local authority. This was designed to prevent CSR from employing 'alien' labour on tramways in the sugar districts. In 1911 a clause added to the Sugar Works Guarantee Act Amendment Act prevented the purchase of cane from 'aliens' who had not first passed the dictation test.

By virtue of the excise and bounty legislation, however, effective control of the sugar industry was vested in the Commonwealth. Certain conditions would have to be met before the excise and bounty were removed and control transferred back to the state. Maxwell in his final report in 1910 had warned that the abolition of the excise and bounty would result in a reversion to 'coloured' labour, and that legislation to prevent the production of sugar by non-Europeans would be necessary to complete the Commonwealth's purpose of placing the industry on a 'white' basis. In 1911 a royal commission was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to inquire into the state of the sugar industry. Its report, finally presented on 2 December 1912, endorsed Maxwell's suggestion by recommending:

that the bounty and excise be abolished provided that the Commonwealth government, by co-operation with the States or otherwise, take whatever steps may be necessary to promote the white labour policy and to ensure the maintenance of a living wage generally.

By then, the Labor Government of Andrew Fisher had already announced its intention to repeal the Sugar Excise and Bounty Acts on the condition


55. s.137; QPD CIX, 1911-12, p.2106; s.9 (4).


that a European labour force was retained in the sugar industry. In Queensland the Liberal Government of Digby Denham was offered the choice of empowering the Commonwealth to legislate to prevent the employment of 'coloured aliens' and to regulate wages and conditions of labour in the sugar industry, or of enacting these measures itself. Denham predictably chose the latter and his decision was warmly received in Queensland. 58

In fulfillment of the first part of Fisher's requirements, the Sugar Cultivation Bill was introduced in the Queensland Legislative Assembly in June 1913. During the recess, the ASPA and local growers' associations such as the Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association had stressed the urgent need for this legislation. 59 The bill passed all stages easily, although the Labor Opposition argued that there were more effective means of securing the abolition of 'coloured' labour in the sugar industry. 60 T.J. Ryan, MLA for Barcoo, successfully moved an amendment to clause 8 to remove the provision that proceedings against the Act could only be instituted at the direction of the attorney-general, solicitor-general or minister for justice, but the original clause was reinstated by the Legislative Council. 61 Some Liberal MLAs, such as Philp, Denham and John White, expressed concern that non-Europeans now employed in the industry should not be unjustly treated, but it is debatable whether their protests were motivated by humanitarian feelings or by more self-interested considerations. 62

60. For example, through the establishment of sugar cane prices boards with the power to fix the price of cane. QPD CXIV, 1913, pp.285, 286.
61. Ibid., pp.296, 519, 539.
After Denham's compact with Fisher, the secretary of state for the colonies, L. Harcourt, had reminded the governor of Queensland, Sir William MacGregor, of British objections to the imposition of discrimination nominatim. The Sugar Cultivation Bill prevented such criticism by making it unlawful for any person who had not first passed a dictation test to engage in or carry on the cultivation or manufacture of sugar cane in Queensland. The Governor-in-Council was empowered to make regulations for the exemption of persons and classes of persons whom it was not deemed necessary to bring under the operation of the Act. Even so, royal assent was delayed slightly, being finally received on 29 July 1913.

In general the Act, particularly in the sugar towns, was received favourably. But the Brisbane Labor newspaper, the Worker, considered that the bill left open a back door through which 'coloured' labourers could be smuggled in. Nor was the Brisbane Courier enthusiastic, arguing that when non-Europeans were pushed out of the sugar industry they would merely enter other industries. Bowen farmers shared these feelings, protesting that those who were driven out of sugar would compete with farmers (such as themselves) in other branches of agriculture.

In contrast, CSR was concerned that the Act would disrupt their operations, since there were sixty-seven non-Europeans working in their five northern mills. The general manager, E.W. Knox, had believed the bill would be blocked by the Legislative Council or else would not receive royal assent. However, he had arranged for CSR's views to be put to Denham through a third party, including his concern that a Labor Government could

64. See Denham to Prime Min., 18 Jul.1913, A2 1916/279, Part 1, AA; Harcourt to Gov. of Qld., 23 Oct.1913, Qld. No.116, CP 78/22, 28/1912, AA.
use such legislation to prevent the employment of non-Britishers (such as Italians). 67

There were immediate but cautious reactions from countries concerned for the welfare of their nationals - India, Japan and China. Pacific Islanders, together with the Malays, Cingalese and Javanese, had no diplomatic protests made on their behalf. The Government of India was satisfied with the absence of overt discrimination and the assurance of tact and consideration in the Act's administration. After protracted correspondence between August and December 1913 with the Queensland Government, the acting Japanese consul-general was confident that Japanese would receive preferential treatment. The acting Chinese consul-general forwarded, with his endorsement, a petition from eleven Chinese cane growers in North Queensland, appealing for a reasonable period of time to realize their holdings. 68

AS DENHAM unambiguously stated, the object of the Sugar Cultivation Act was "to restrict work in the field and in the mill to white labour". 69

But the operation of the Act would depend upon the regulations framed by the Governor-in-Council. The British Government in not exercising its power of disallowance had acted in the belief that the Act would be administered "in a generous spirit"; this advice was heeded by Denham and, more significantly, by White, empowered as minister for agriculture to decide on applications for exemption under the Act. 70


69. QPD CXIV, 1913, p.287.

The regulations were proclaimed on 16 October 1913. Persons of European descent were automatically exempted from the Act's operation. A certificate of exemption could also be granted without examination to any person not otherwise entitled to exemption, on the grounds of treaties between his country and the United Kingdom, long residence within Queensland, the presence of a lawful wife and/or family domiciled in Queensland, or any other circumstances satisfactory to the minister for agriculture. Applications for exemption on these grounds were to be made to a clerk of petty sessions, and were to include a statutory declaration witnessed by a justice of the peace who personally knew the applicant. Certificates of exemption would be fingerprinted by the applicant at the time of issue, and the duplicate copy returned to the Department of Agriculture. Those who had planted cane could apply for certificates of authority to cultivate and harvest the crop for an interval of up to three years. Any other person cultivating sugar cane on his own behalf, or employed in the cultivation or manufacture of sugar, could be exempted only by first successfully passing the dictation test. The clerks of petty sessions would conduct these examinations, consisting of the transcribing from oral dictation of between 50 and 150 words in a language selected by the minister.

The Act was to be rushed into operation at the end of the current harvesting season. A comprehensive picture of the State's non-indigenous, non-European population was required. Accordingly, the police commissioner at Denham's request had already obtained detailed information from police

71. QCC LI, 1913, pp.989-92.

72. Under Section 3, the Act and Regulations did not apply to all native-born residents of Australia who were of European descent, all residents of Australia who were of European parentage or descended from any resident of North America other than American Indians, Negroes or Asians, and subjects of the Kingdom of Italy and Empire of Russia and citizens of the Republic of Colombia.

73. See Denham to White, 30 Jul.1913, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.
officers of 'coloured' residents in their districts. In August the managers of sugar mills were asked by the Department of Agriculture to forward information on the numbers of 'coloured' freeholders, leaseholders, and employees in the mills, fields or tramways.

Such foresight and planning were not characteristic of the Act's subsequent administration, in which ad hoc expediency was the governing principle. Under an additional regulation proclaimed on 29 November, the closing date for applications without examination was 31 December 1913. Advertisements to this effect were inserted in appropriate newspapers and the clerks of petty sessions were instructed to draw the attention of those concerned to the regulations. The burden placed on these men in administering the Act locally was apparently not anticipated: they were charged with registering and forwarding all the applications for exemption, obtaining affidavits as to the nature of the applicants' employment in 1913, fingerprinting and issuing certificates, returning the duplicates, conducting dictation tests and issuing certificates to successful candidates. Occasionally they were not even supplied with such essentials as the different application forms.

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74. This information had been collected between March and July in the twelve police districts. Under Chief Sec. to Police Commissioner, 04/793, 11073, POL/137, QSA; Police Commissioner to Insps. of Police, 3 Mar.1913, Circular No.76, Confidential, ibid.

75. Under Sec. for Agriculture to Managers of Sugar Mills, 8 Aug.1913, Circular letter, 161G, ACS/N359, QSA.


77. Not only the clerks of petty sessions but also White found it a very trying business. NQ 2 Mar.1914, p.15, CMP 4 May 1914: Cooney to Scrivens, 13 Jun.1914, 130C, ACS/N99, QSA.

Such inadequate preparation resulted in late decisions on important questions and inconsistency in judging applications. One example of this tardiness occurred with regard to the claim for exemption without examination on the grounds of long residence. Applicants were left ignorant as to what period of time would constitute 'long residence'. White initially decided on a period of thirteen years but, after protests by the acting Japanese consul-general, cabinet on 9 December reduced this to ten years preceding 25 July 1913. Inconsistency was evident in the treatment of non-Europeans born in Australia. Clearly, under the regulations, such persons, except possibly those with a European parent, were not automatically exempted. Yet contradictory answers were given to native-born Islanders who asked about their position: several were informed that they did not need certificates of exemption; others were told that they did. As late as 1918, legal opinion was sought by Ernest Scrivens, under secretary in the Department of Agriculture, as to whether certificates were necessary for such people. The general community was also confused as to who were required to obtain certificates. Many applications were received from Italians, Russians and even British people, and cane farmers and mills were unsure as to whom they could legally employ.

79. Yatabe to Premier, 11 Aug.1913, 27 Oct.1913, A457 0108/6, AA; Barnes to Shimizu, 23 Dec.1913, ibid.; Scrivens to Clerks of Petty Sessions, 12 Dec.1913, Circular letter, 160C, AGS/N359, QSA; Min. for Agriculture, 27 Feb.1914, memo., 170G, AGS/N361, QSA. This was ridiculed by the ASPA, on the grounds that the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 meant that any non-European must have been over ten years in the country. NM 3 Mar.1914.

80. All native-born residents of Australia of European parentage were exempted from the operation of the Act. Yet two brothers with an Irish mother and a Chinese father were required to obtain certificates. Applic. No.2110E, AGS/N356, QSA. For a similar case, see Clerk of Petty Sessions, Ingham, to Scrivens, 30 Dec.1913, 60G, AGS/N98, QSA.

81. Actg Crown Solicitor to Scrivens, 7 Jan.1919, 0612, 147G, AGS/N358, QSA. For cases where native-born Islanders were told they did or did not require certificates, see Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mackay, to Scrivens, 15 Aug.1914, 144C, AGS/N99, QSA; Under Sec. for Justice to Scrivens, 20 Mar.1916, 147G, AGS/N358, QSA; Scrivens to Ashton, 26 Nov.1915, ibid.; Sub-Insp. of Police, Mackay, to Actg Serg., Sarina, 30 May 1919, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA; Applic. No.2049E, David Toloa. AGS/N356, QSA; Scrivens to P.A. Laurison, 7 Apr.1916, 82G, AGS/N96, QSA.

All of the thirty-two 'A' applications for authority to cultivate and harvest the existing crop were granted. These certificates would expire on 31 December 1915. Six went to Islander farmers in North Queensland, as shown in Table 5.1, which presents the numbers of the different types of applications (and the outcome) from Pacific Islanders in North Queensland in 1913-14. Between 1913 and 1921 there were fifty-three 'D' applications for examination and twenty-eight successfully passed the dictation test. The language used for what one newspaper appropriately described as the 'coloured test' was English; according to Scrivens, it was a simple examination which any candidate with a state school education could pass. In North Queensland seven Pacific Islanders, all native-born, were successful (see Table 5.1).

There were 2,308 'E' applications for exemption without examination. Most claimed exemption on the grounds of long residence, while some also gave a lawful wife and family as a further reason. Applicants were also required to be employed in the sugar industry within the meaning of the Act, that is, in the cultivation or manufacture of sugar. Even though it was the slack season, engagement in such activities as chipping grass on a cane farm or cutting wood for a sugar mill, was not held to be sufficient (see Table 5.1). This was intended to prevent non-Europeans not presently engaged in sugar from entering (or re-entering) the industry.

83. Apps. Nos. 1A-32A, AGS/N97, QSA; List of Aliens to whom Certificates of Exemption have been granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act, 159G, AGS/N359, QSA.

84. Although there are fifty-three numbers, there are only fifty-two applications. Apps. Nos. 1D-53D, AGS/N97, QSA; List of Aliens to whom Certificates of Exemption have been granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act, 159G, AGS/N359, QSA; CMP 24 Feb.1914; Scrivens to Insp. Watt, Innisfail, 24 Apr.1917, 147G, AGS/N358, QSA.

85. These applications are contained in thirteen bundles. See ACS/N100-108, AGS/N354-357, QSA.

86. Min. for Agriculture, 27 Feb.1914, memo., 170G, AGS/N361, QSA.
TABLE 5.1: Applications for exemption under the Sugar Cultivation Act, from Pacific Islanders in North Queensland, in 1913-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total no. applications</th>
<th>*(^2) Certificates 'A' Granted</th>
<th>Certificates 'D' Granted</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Granted farmers open-dated</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Granted farmers to 1915</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Returned</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Refused</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Not in sugar</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Other</th>
<th>Certificates 'E' Cancelled*1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>243 (25)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proserpine</td>
<td>22 (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdekin</td>
<td>18 (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert R.</td>
<td>48 (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnstone R.</td>
<td>31 (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atherton</td>
<td>3 (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>60 (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Douglas</td>
<td>27 (0)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>452 (43)</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>261</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
* Certificates of Authority to cultivate and harvest the existing crop;  
+ Certificates of having passed the dictation test (all native-born);  
\# Certificates of Exemption without examination;  
\*1 Not including those cancelled in the years after 1914 because their holders had died;  
\*2 Includes one also granted an 'E' certificate;  
() Number of total born in Queensland.

Sources: AGS/N97, AGS/N100-108. AGS/N354-357, QSA.
Some early certificates had been issued without inquiry into the applicants' occupations, but by February 1914 certificates were not issued until applicants had signed declarations or affidavits stating that they had been continuously engaged in the sugar industry. A number of certificates, some of which had even been fingerprinted and issued, were cancelled when it was discovered that the recipients were not bona fide sugar workers (see Table 5.1).

Cane growers were amongst those who applied for exemption without examination. Many were given certificates expiring on 31 December 1915, similar to the 'A' certificates of authority to cultivate and harvest the existing crop (see Table 5.1). Yet once again this was a decision only reached when the consideration of applications was well underway. Farmers who had made early application, as in Mackay, were issued with open-dated certificates, while those whose applications were received later, as in Proserpine, received certificates to expire at the end of 1915 (see Table 5.1). There was confusion as to whether certificates so endorsed, and also the certificates of authority, entitled their holders to take off crops in the 1916 season. Finally it was announced that all certificates to farmers covered three seasons including 1913, the object being to provide adequate compensation while ensuring that after 1915 no 'coloured aliens' would be growing cane.

Applications were refused if received after 31 December 1913 or if there were insufficient grounds for exemption - that is, if the period of residence was less than 10 years, or if the applicant had not been

87. See Newspaper cutting, BC 23 Mar.1914, encl. in 37C, AGS/N98, QSA; CMP 24 Feb.1914; MM 7 Feb.1914; Scrivens to Clerk of Petty Sessions, Apr. 13 May 1914, Circular letter, 14C, AGS/N98, QSA; Scrivens to Clerks of Petty Sessions, 2 Feb.1914, Circular No.1591, AGS/N16, QSA; Min. for Agriculture. 27 Feb.1914, memo., 170G, AGS/N361, QSA.

88. See MM 4 Apr.1914; Q 11 Apr.1914, p.38.

89. Barlow to Groom, 16 Apr.1914, telegram, A457 0108/6, AA; BC 2 Mar.1914; MM 28 Feb.1914; NOR 9 Mar.1914, p.41; CMP 4 May 1914; Scrivens to Comptroller General of Customs, Melbourne, 28 Feb.1914, 66G, AGS/N96, QSA.
continuously and directly engaged in the sugar industry. It was failure to meet this second criteria which accounted for most of the refusals of applications received before the closing date (see Table 5.1). Three Melanesians in the Johnstone River district, John Santo, Massya and Charlie Herlap, were not given certificates of exemption due to the fact that in 1913 they had only cut firewood for Goondi Mill. 90 Occasionally the rules were bent. Late applications with good excuses were sometimes accepted: five Islanders living in the Daintree and isolated by flooded rivers were allowed to lodge late applications. 91 In a few exceptional cases certificates were granted to applicants who had not been engaged in the sugar industry in 1913: for instance, in Mossman to Ohmonce, who had cut cane for ten years but had not worked in 1913 as a result of an accident in which he had lost his right hand. 92 Where applicants or their solicitors were persistent, especially in Cairns and Mackay, early refusals were often re-considered and exemptions granted. 93 Applicants supported by sympathetic Europeans, sometimes the clerks of petty sessions, were usually awarded certificates of exemption. Managers in CSR's northern mills were instructed in November 1913 to assist non-European employees to obtain certificates of exemption. 94

90. Applic. Nos. 2019E, 2008E and 2069E, AGS/N356, QSA. According to A.H. Barlow, the acting premier, many non-Europeans working in the mills and on the tramways had been refused exemption. Barlow to Prime Min., 16 Apr. 1914, telegram, AGS/N360, QSA.

91. Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mossman, to Scrivens, 14 Jan. 1914, 99G, AGS/N99, QSA. For cases where late applications were refused, despite qualifying circumstances, see Applic. No. 2060E, Chilar, AGS/N356, QSA; Applic. No. 477E, Body Santo, AGS/N100, QSA.

92. Applic. No. 2045E, AGS/N356, QSA.


A deputation of Mackay residents waited on White in May 1914 to ask that William Seekis be exempted not only from the Sugar Cultivation Act but also from other disabilities incumbent on non-Europeans. On investigation, White found that Seekis had already been granted an exemption certificate, and that no additional privileges could be given to him. 95

The Japanese as a group received preferential treatment. White in February 1914 refused exemption to Japanese in Mackay who had not been working in the sugar industry in 1913, and in April to Japanese working for CSR in the Herbert River district, as part of a policy not to exempt mill workers. The Japanese consul-general, S. Shimizu, sought a reversal of these decisions through several letters to and interviews with W.H. Barnes, the acting premier, and CSR also protested. 96 When Barnes supported White's decision, Shimizu protested strongly to the Commonwealth Government. In May, Joseph Cook, now prime minister, asked Barnes to give special consideration to the Japanese and in consequence the Queensland cabinet capitulated and fresh applications were called for from the Japanese affected. 97 But to avoid public criticism the Queensland Government sought (and received) an assurance from CSR that exempted non-Europeans would be employed as far as possible in work outside the mills. 98

95. Applic. No. 948E, AGS/N103, QSA; MM 8 May 1914. For other examples, see Applic. No. 2248E, Blooranta, AGS/N357, QSA; E. Denman to White, 4 Dec.1913, 13G, AGS/N96, QSA; Applic. No. 1872E, James Motlap, AGS/N107, QSA.

96. Shimizu to Barnes, 30 Apr.1914, telegram, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Notes on interviews between the Japanese Consul-General and the Actg Chief Sec., 7-9 May 1914, ibid.; Barnes to General Manager, CSR, 20 Apr.1915, ibid.; Barnes to Shimizu, 28 Apr.1914, N457 0108/6, AA.


98. Rothe to Manager, 22 May 1914, pp.115-16, 142/1059, RSSS-ANUA; Rothe to Manager, Homebush, 21 May 1914, No.799, p.44, 142/1246, RSSS-ANUA.
For every case given special approval, another with similar grounds was rejected. In Ayr and Ingham applications refused in the early stages were later re-considered and granted. Yet certificates not collected promptly from the clerks of petty sessions were returned to the Department of Agriculture and usually cancelled. Applicants who asked for the return of certificates which had been sent back were not always successful. Inconsistency was the hallmark of the administration of the Act.

An exact total for the number of certificates granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act is not available. By 7 April 1914, 1,331 certificates had been issued. But at least six conflicting figures are provided in official sources for the final total. The most reliable would seem to be a figure of 1,558, which was cited on at least five separate occasions, one of these being a list giving the names of certificate-holders.

99. See Applic. No. 757E, Johnny Lena, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No. 2118E, C.D. Silvenny, AGS/N356, QSA; Applic. No. 2249E, Jimmy Thomas, AGS/N357, QSA.
100. See Scrivens to Clerk of Petty Sessions, Ayr, 23 May 1914, AGS/N98, QSA; Scrivens to Clerk of Petty Sessions, Ingham, 23 May 1914, ibid.
101. See Applic. No. 580E, Mambo Assie, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No. 1854E, Sam Grandoor, AGS/N107, QSA; Applic. No. 2284E, Alex Solomon, AGS/N357, QSA.
102. NGR 19 Dec.1913; Scrivens to Senator Mullan, 7 Apr.1914, 24G, AGS/N96, QSA.
103. These figures were: 1,735, 1,659, 1,640, 1,582, 1,570 and 1,558. The first two were not dated, the third was given in November 1917, the fourth in June 1915, the fifth in May 1929 and the last in September 1927. The sources for these, respectively, are: List showing numbers of different Nationalities, 159G, AGS/N359, QSA; Lists giving particulars of applications approved, List showing length of residence of applicants granted Certificates of Exemption, and List showing ages of applicants granted Certificates of Exemption, ibid.; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Under Sec. for Public Works, 23 Nov.1917, 123G, AGS/N358, QSA; List showing occupations of applicants granted Certificates of Exemption, 159G, and Scrivens to E.J. Barton, 21 Jun.1915, 63G, AGS/N359, QSA; Certification of Aliens engaged and employed in the cultivation of sugar in Queensland, 64G, AGS/N96, QSA; List of Aliens to whom Certificates of Exemption have been granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, and List showing the number of different nationalities to whom Certificates of Exemption have been granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, 159G, AGS/N359, QSA, Minister's Questions, Dept. of Agriculture, 5 Sep.1927, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA, J. Munro to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 27 Jul.1933, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA, and CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.195, F.W. Martyn.
The number of certificates sent out to the clerks of petty sessions was said to have been 1,750, but the number issued was 1,558 since 192 of these were returned as not being claimed. The numbers of different nationalities, broken down only for the figure of 1,750, were: Chinese 506, Pacific Islanders ('Polynesians') 466, Japanese 357, Indians 161, Javanese 107, Malays 71, native-born (sons of Pacific Islanders and Indians) 46, others 36. As shown in Table 5.1, 374 of 452 applications from Pacific Islanders in North Queensland were granted.

If 1,558 certificates were granted and issued, then 67.5 per cent of applicants had been successful. Exemptions were certainly "most generous", although the number of applicants did not necessarily equal the number of non-Europeans engaged in the sugar industry. Amongst the Pacific Islanders, for example, some were not aware of the Act, at least until after 31 December 1913, and did not apply.

The actual number of non-European farmers and workers in the sugar industry in 1913 is not known. In 1910 Maxwell gave approximate figures of 1,305 and 360 for the number of 'coloured' field and mill workers, respectively - a total of 1,665. This can be compared with the number of exemptions granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act. The only occupational breakdown given was for a figure of 1,659 certificates, probably an over-estimation by some 100 of the number actually issued: according to this, 1,429 were field and mill workers. Using these figures, it can be calculated that over eighty per cent of non-European sugar workers had been exempted. Even if the figure for certificates was an over-estimate and Maxwell's figure an under-estimate, it is clear that a very high proportion of non-European sugar workers had been allowed to continue in their current employment.

104. Denham to White, 30 Jul.1913, 161C, ACS/N359, QSA.

105. See Chapter 7, p.283.

106. The Department of Agriculture only calculated percentages of the number of tons of cane grown and harvested by European and non-European labour. See Hunt, 'Exclusivism and Unionism', p.92. Table II.

107. CPP III, 1912, p.1055; List showing occupations of applicants granted Certificates of Exemption. 159G, ACS/N359, QSA.
UNDENIABLY, the Denham Government had not fulfilled its contract with Fisher to remove 'coloured' labour from the sugar industry. The Government's stated policy had been to act humanely, by dealing liberally with those long-term residents whose means of livelihood was threatened. In the sugar districts, interest in the Act was initially restricted to the necessity for such legislation in order that the excise and bounty legislation could be repealed. The plight of non-Europeans in the sugar industry did not attract much concern, although the Daily Mercury applauded the Government's generous attitude, since it would be "barbarous" to throw out those who had been in the industry for many years. But early in 1914, when it became obvious that large numbers of exemptions were being granted, criticism began to be voiced. By mid-1914, small cane farmers, the ASPA, the Labor Party and the AWU were united in condemning the Government's administration of the Act.

The Parliamentary Labor Party had begun its attack even before the regulations under the Act were proclaimed: questions were asked in the Assembly as to the cause of the "excessive" delay in publishing these regulations, and as to whether the Government was aware of the flagrant flouting of the Act in northern districts. But it was the ASPA which took the lead, if only to forestall opposition from the labour movement, in questioning the number of exemptions being granted. Since 1910, ASPA policy had been to demand the complete exclusion of non-Europeans from the sugar industry. After receiving a letter from the Johnstone River branch, the ASPA executive became concerned that exemptions were being granted too liberally. In January 1914 G.H. Pritchard, the secretary, spoke to White. Anticipating protests from the AWU, he advised him to announce that the Government, in consequence of the ASPA's protest, had issued instructions that no certificate was to be issued without an affidavit that the applicant

108. MQ 26 Jul. 1913. For a similar comment, see G. Markwell to Clerk of Petty Sessions, Innisfail, 7 Nov. 1913, 66C, AGS/N99, QSA.

had been engaged in the sugar industry; this advice was taken up.

This late attempt to forestall criticism failed. Late in January at the first annual delegate meeting of the Queensland branch of the AWU, a motion proposed by F.W. Martyn was carried, which strongly protested against the excessive number of exemptions being granted and instructed the executive to consult with both State and Federal Parliamentary Labor Parties regarding appropriate action. At the AWU’s annual convention in Sydney in February, McCormack, now the Labor MLA for Cairns, moved a resolution (which Martyn seconded) to the effect that by indiscriminately granting such certificates the Queensland Government had broken its agreement with Fisher. In the Queensland Legislative Assembly, McCormack and William Lennon, the Labor member for Herbert, continued the attack, questioning White on the numbers of exemptions issued and evasions of the Act. In April, Ryan further publicized the issue through a newspaper interview in which he claimed that there had been no checks on the authenticity of applicants’ grounds for exemption, and that the number of certificates issued endangered the 'White Australia' policy.

Additional criticism came from the ASPA and from local farmers' associations. At the ASPA’s annual conference in late February, a resolution expressing strong disapproval of the large number of certificates granted under the Act was carried unanimously and subsequently presented to Barnes.

110. ASJ V, 8 Jan.1914, pp.20-21, 5 Feb.1914, p.694, 5 Mar.1914, pp.777-79, VI, 9 Apr.1914, p.10; Pritchard to White, 26 Jan.1914, 6C, AGS/N96, QSA. In February the ASPA were provided with confidential information on the number of exemptions granted in each district. Scrivens to Pritchard, 25 Feb.1914, 5C, ibid.


112. QD (CXVII, 1914, p.168, CXVIII, 1914,p.187); Newspaper cutting, Daily Standard 3 Apr.1914, encl. in M5, POL/JI, QSA. See also Finlayson quoted in Truth 9 Apr.1914, ibid.

113. A committee had been appointed specifically to draw up this resolution. MM 28 Feb.1914; ASJ V, 5 Mar.1914, pp.777-79, 781, 787, 803.
Angus Gibson expressed the reason for their concern:

No one sympathised more with colored labour than he (Mr. Gibson) did, but ... if it was retained in this State, the sugar growers would soon be thrown on the scrap heap also. They were dependent entirely on duties granted to the sugar industry by the goodwill of the community in the southern states. 114

The ASPA's attitude was endorsed by the farmers. In Mackay, Proserpine, Inkerman, Cairns, and Port Douglas, cane growers' associations and meetings of cane growers condemned the excessive number of exemptions granted. 115

In Cairns in February the Northern Sugar Field Workers Industrial Board announced its award, which included a provision that all persons holding certificates of exemption under the Sugar Cultivation Act were permitted to be employed only on lands worked by 'coloured' labour before 1 January 1913. Farmers in Cairns were urged to adopt this ruling. In April, however, A.W. MacNaughton, the president of the Industrial Court of Queensland, expressed grave doubts that such matters were within the court's jurisdiction, and the provision was abandoned. 116

In the Commonwealth parliament also, opposition was expressed to the number of exemptions, particularly by the Labor Party. As a result of charges by F.W. Bamford, member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Herbert, L.E. Groom, the minister for trade and customs, advised White in February 1914 that the protection given to the sugar industry could be

114. **MM** 3 Mar.1914. For similar sentiments, see **NQR** 2 Feb.1914, p.77; **CPP** 2 Mar.1914.


challenged if non-Europeans not previously engaged in sugar had been granted certificates of exemption, as the ANU and the ASPA claimed. After protests against the indiscriminate granting of such certificates were made in the House on 16 April by Fisher (and later in the Senate on 8 May by Myles Ferricks and John Mullan, senators for Queensland), Cook urgently requested information from Denham on the number of exemptions granted and the policy in issuing them. But Cook, who led the anti-Labor parties, was less concerned with the number of exemptions granted than with international complications; as already shown, in May he asked the Queensland Government to give special consideration to the Japanese.

In mid-1914 the Denham Government decided that further exemptions would be granted only to those who passed the dictation test. An additional regulation was proclaimed under the Act in April 1915, empowering the minister for agriculture to grant a certificate of exemption for any period of time he considered fit and to cancel any certificate already granted. Such late measures did not placate the Government's critics and in the campaign preceding the Queensland election on 22 May 1915 their opponents made political capital of the Liberals' administration of the Act.

In March 1915, opening the Labor Party's election campaign in a speech at Barcaldine, Ryan charged the Liberals with breaking faith with the Commonwealth Government by indiscriminately issuing exemptions under the Sugar Cultivation Act. Three of the twenty-seven election pamphlets produced by Theodore and J.A. Fihelly also pursued this attack. Other Labor candidates, especially in North Queensland, expressed similar strong

117. Groom to White, 12 Feb.1914, 66G, AGS/N96, QSA.

118. CPD LXXIII, 1914, pp.85, 778, 779; Scrivens to Senator Mullan, 7 Apr.1914, 24G, AGS/N96, QSA; Cook to Denham, 16 Apr.1914, urgent telegram, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.


opposition to the continued presence of non-Europeans in the sugar industry. The AWU also kept the issue alive. In March, in response to a resolution from the far northern district committee of the AWU, the Trades Hall Council in Melbourne protested to the Price of Goods Board against any rise in the price of sugar on the grounds that, amongst other reasons, the industry had abused the protection given it by continuing to employ non-Europeans. W.J. Dunstan, secretary of the AWU, and D. Bowman, Labor MLA for Fortitude Valley, waited on Barnes (still acting premier) in April to complain about the excessive number of exemptions granted and also the employment of non-Europeans in preference to Europeans by Pioneer Sugar Mills in the Burdekin district. In defending the Government against these charges, Barnes and White could only repeat their earlier arguments that a humanitarian application of the Act had necessitated liberal exemptions and that non-European growers would not be allowed to grow cane after 1915.

In the general election on 22 May 1915 the Labor Party won a commanding majority in the new Assembly. No less than six ministers of the Liberal Government, Denham, White and Barnes among them, lost their seats. An important factor in Labor's electoral success was the support secured in previously non-Labor sugar seats. But while many small farmers voted Labor and most endorsed their policy of making the sugar industry completely 'white', larger growers and the private mills such as CSR remained intransigent. As the next chapter will demonstrate, in the following years they continued to employ non-Europeans (if in reduced numbers), despite strong opposition from the AWU and the Labor Government.

121. Innisfail Democrat quoted in ASJ VII, 6 May 1915, p.106-7; W 29 Apr.1915; Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 4 Jun.1915, P No.33, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA. There was some defence of the Denham Government's administration of the Sugar Cultivation Act. See NQR 3 May 1915, p.5; NM quoted in ASJ VII, 6 May 1915, p.106.


123. D.J. Murphy.'Thomas Joseph Ryan: Big and Broadminded', in Murphy and Joyce (eds). Queensland Political Portraits, pp.271-72. Labor won forty-five seats to the Liberals' twenty-one.
If the Denham Government had anticipated the strength of opposition to their liberal administration of the Sugar Cultivation Act, they might have been less generous in granting exemptions. Yet their position was invidious. In addition to their promise to the British Government to administer the Act humanely, pressure from the Japanese consul-general, CSR and the Commonwealth Government forced them to retract earlier, tougher decisions. But their Queensland critics simultaneously forced them to take a harder line. The decisions to obtain affidavits before issuing certificates, to revoke certificates if the holders were not bona fide sugar workers and to cancel all certificates to farmers after 1915, were all provoked by protests from the ASPA and the AUU. Recalling certificates which were not promptly claimed, was another belated attempt to reduce the number of exemptions. The Labor Government, as the next chapter will show, very quickly found itself in the same difficult situation of placating internal critics while yielding to external pressure.

BOTH COMMONWEALTH and State Governments in the first three decades of the twentieth century imposed wide-ranging restrictions on non-European residents. As Cook remarked to Denham in reference to the Sugar Cultivation Act, the object in such legislation was "to conserve as far as possible the advantages of this industry to people of our own race ...". The need to avoid overt discrimination in order to obtain royal assent led to ridiculous situations as in Queensland where a non-European, before engaging in unskilled work in constructing and maintaining railways and tramways, was obliged to demonstrate that he was literate by passing a dictation test and obtaining a certificate. An early historian of the 'White Australia' policy, Myra Willard, claimed that discriminatory legislation was mostly enacted between 1888 and 1908. In common with A.B. Keith and other contemporaries, she believed that racial prejudice was disappearing in the 1920s. In fact, discriminatory legislation continued to be enacted after 1908, as Appendices


D and E highlight. In Queensland, the Sugar Cultivation Act and its onerous administration was a convincing example of this, but it has received little historical attention. In the years after 1914 the campaign to exclude non-Europeans from the sugar industry reached new peaks.

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