

CHAPTER 6

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST NON-EUROPEANS IN QUEENSLAND, 1915-40

THIS CHAPTER is concerned with the discrimination practised against non-Europeans between 1915 and 1940, inspired principally by successive Labor Governments and the AWU in regard to employment in the sugar industry. The extent of this discrimination has not been appreciated: after 1915, the issue of 'coloured' labour in the sugar industry received little press coverage and was not important in subsequent elections. The picture presented here of the vigorous and sustained campaign to remove non-European sugar workers, has been pieced together from many different sources. Together with the preceding chapter, it provides a wider perspective on the experiences of those Pacific Islanders who remained behind in 'White Australia'. In the next chapter, the specific effects on the Islanders' employment will be discussed.

From 1915 to mid-1929, Labor held power in Queensland - first under Ryan (to October 1919), then under Theodore (to February 1925), followed briefly by W.N. Gillies (to October 1925) and finally by McCormack (to May 1929). A brief term of Country National Progressive Government under A.E. Moore ended in June 1932, when the Labor Party led by W. Forgan Smith again took office.

The Labor Party had strongly criticized the Denham Government's administration of the Sugar Cultivation Act. But Labor in power discovered that the 'coloured alien' problem did not lend itself to swift or simple solution. In 1915 the Labor Government failed in its attempt to satisfy AWU demands by legislating to disadvantage those who employed 'coloured' labour. In the following years the Government and the AWU turned to the newly formed Arbitration Court of Queensland to restrain the employment of non-Europeans in the sugar industry. A pattern of events can be discerned: AWU opposition to 'coloured' labour would lead to action by the Arbitration Court or the Government, which in turn would provoke protests from the non-Europeans affected and their representatives, and sometimes result in a modification of the earlier decision.

From the 1920s the AWU's attention was diverted increasingly to a greater evil - 'alien penetration' in the sugar industry. After a brief consideration of this, the discrimination practised against non-Europeans

in other occupations is discussed. Finally, the motivation for this campaign by the AWU against non-European employment in certain occupations, is analysed.

FINDING solutions to the problems of the sugar industry was one of the most difficult tasks confronting the Ryan Government when it took office in 1915. The war years were characterised by low prices for sugar and rising labour costs; the enlistment of men in the sugar districts was amongst the highest in the country.¹ With low prices for sugar and an anticipated labour shortage, non-European sugar workers were an attractive proposition.² But with a Labor Government, the AWU was determined to prevent such employment. On 7 June, J.A. Moir, secretary of the far northern district committee of the AWU, notified cane growers and sugar mills in the Cairns district that members would be requested to refuse to work with 'coloured aliens', except in extenuating circumstances.³ In Innisfail an industrial crisis over the engagement of non-Europeans was also feared.⁴

1. Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, pp.52-53, 142.

2. For justifications on these grounds of the use of 'coloured' labour, see ASJ VII, 12 Aug.1915, p.346; CMP 10 Aug.1915, 21 Jun.1919; Swayne to Lennon, 17 Feb.1916, 90G, AGS/N358, QSA; Laurisen to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 12 Oct.1916, 100G, QSA; Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 21 Jun.1916, P No.56, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA.

3. Sugar workers in Cairns had threatened in late May to strike if non-Europeans cut cane. W 10 Jun.1915; Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 29 May 1915, P No.32, 11 Jun.1915, P No.34, 11 Jun.1915, telegrams exchanged, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA; Moir to Manager, Hambledon, 7 Jun.1915, ibid.; Fisher to Ryan, 14 Jun.1915, 05926, telegram, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA. The managers of Victoria and Macknade also received complaints from the AWU against the employment of non-Europeans. Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 17 Jun.1915, No.962, 142/1499, RSSS-ANUA.

4. Hebbel to Lennon, 7 Jun.1915, 2580, telegram, 62G, AGS/N96, QSA; McKenna to Lennon, 7 Jun.1915, 2580, telegram, ibid. See also NQR 3 May 1915, p.85; W 29 Apr.1915.

Ryan had been considering the issue of the exemptions granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act. A draft regulation had been prepared which would cancel all exemptions (except to farmers) under the Sugar Cultivation Act. On 14 June he telegraphed the prime minister, Fisher, for his reaction to a proposal to revoke all exemptions and allow only those 'coloured aliens' who could pass a dictation test to work in sugar.⁵ On the same day, the anticipated industrial trouble at Innisfail broke out: AWU members decided to strike unless the employment of non-Europeans was discontinued. A meeting of cane suppliers telegraphed Ryan and Lennon, the minister for agriculture, urging them to introduce legislation immediately to remove 'coloured aliens' from the sugar industry. Ryan and Lennon, in reply, assured them that the matter was being carefully considered.⁶ Satisfied by Ryan's reply, cane-cutters agreed to resume harvesting.⁷ But on this same day, Fisher replied to Ryan, recommending that in view of "the international situation" exemptions should not be revoked: the Japanese consul-general had already protested to Fisher concerning the AWU's actions and the British Government was very reluctant to antagonize an important war-time ally.⁸

5. Ryan was waiting on the assistance of the crown solicitor, T. McCawley. BC 12 Jun.1915; W 17 Jun.1915; Dept of Agriculture to McKenna, 10 Jun.1915, 2580, telegram, 62G, AGS/N96, QSA; Ryan to Fisher, 14 Jun.1915, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA, also in CRS A2 1916/279 Pt.1, AA; Draft Regulation, Sub-clause 7, Clause 3, Regulations under the Sugar Cultivation Act 16 October 1913 repealed, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; D.J. Murphy, T.J. Ryan A Political Biography (St Lucia, 1975), p.114.

6. W 17 Jun.1915; ASJ VII, 8 Jul.1915, p.253; Wilcox to Ryan, 15 Jun.1915, 05937, telegram, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Moir to Ryan, 16 Jun.1915, 07475, ibid.; Wilcox to Lennon, 15 Jun.1915, 2580, telegram, 62G, AGS/N96, QSA; Lennon to Wilcox, n.d. [15 or 16 Jun.1915], telegram, ibid. According to the Goondi manager, farmers who dissented from the motion sent a telegram to Pritchard, secretary of the ASPA, asking him to inform Ryan and Lennon that the 'coloured' labour situation had been grossly exaggerated. Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 17 Jun.1915, Private, 142/3087, RSSS-ANUA.

7. W 24 Jun.1915; Moir to Ryan, 16 Jun.1915, 07475, telegram, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Sub Insp., Cairns, to Police Commissioner, 17 Jun.1915, 06075, ibid.; ASJ VII, 8 Jul.1915, p.253; Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 24 Jun.1915, No.45, 142/1449, RSSS-ANUA. In Brisbane on 18 June Ryan promised a deputation of northern sugar workers that the Government would act justly on the 'coloured' labour question. Murphy, T.J. Ryan, p.114.

8. Fisher to Ryan, 17 Jun.1915, 06098, confidential telegram, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Fisher to Ryan, 14 Jun.1915, 05926, telegram, ibid.

Ryan publicized the threatened strike in Innisfail, blaming it on the number of exemptions granted by the Denham Government.⁹ His accusations provoked criticism from conservative quarters. The Cairns Post felt that the strike or even the threat to strike had been unnecessary, in view of the Government's willingness to legislate. The Australian Sugar Journal, mouthpiece of the ASPA, refuted claims that the ASPA was pro-'coloured' labour by carefully detailing its policy and actions. The former Liberal minister, Barnes, also defended the number of exemptions granted and stressed the influence of international considerations - which, he accurately predicted, would soon become apparent to Ryan.¹⁰

Since the Commonwealth was reluctant to antagonize the Japanese, Ryan on 15 July gave Fisher two alternatives: either all certificates could be cancelled, and those to Japanese re-issued, or a lower price for sugar could be paid to employers of 'coloured' labour. When Fisher (not surprisingly) indicated his preference for the latter proposal, Ryan went ahead.¹¹ Under an agreement between Fisher and Ryan signed on 26 June, the Queensland Government would acquire the entire 1915 sugar crop which the Commonwealth would then purchase at cost price and sell to the community. The acquisition of the crop by proclamation was ratified in the Sugar Acquisition Act (see Appendix E).¹² On 19 July Ryan announced that, in taking over the sugar crop, the Government had the power to pay less for sugar grown by non-European labour.¹³ Under clause 6 of the Sugar Acquisition Bill, the price of raw sugar could be determined by the

9. BC 17 Jun.1915; Q 26 Jun.1915, p.39; ASJ VII, 8 Jul.1915, p.238; Newspaper cuttings, Daily Telegraph 14 Jun.1915, p.28, and BC 19 Jun.1915, p.42, 142/3584, RSSS-ANUA.

10. CMP 21 Jun.1915; ASJ VII, 8 Jul.1915, p.238, 12 Aug.1915, p.316; BC 19 Jun.1915; MM 8 Jul.1915. M. Rothe, the general manager of CSR, mistakenly believed that the Government was already aware of the international protests which would be provoked if the Japanese were prevented from working in the sugar industry. Rothe to Manager, Goondi, 24 Jun.1915, P No.56, p.431, 142/1060, RSSS-ANUA; Rothe to Manager, Hambledon, 24 Jun.1915, P No.48, p.430, ibid.

11. Ryan to Fisher, 15 Jul.1915, 3812/43, A457 0108/6, AA; Fisher to Ryan, 16 Jul.1915, 3812/44, ibid.

12. QPP T1, 1915-16, p.853; QGG CIV, 1915, p.1787.

13. BC 20 Jul.1915; Newspaper cutting, Daily Telegraph 20 Jul.1915, p.59, 142/3584, RSSS-ANUA.

circumstances or conditions of production or manufacture. When E.H. Macartney, leader of the Opposition, asked whether there would be different prices for sugar grown by European and non-European labour, Theodore, the treasurer, would say only that the Government's action would not be retrospective.¹⁴ On 5 August a further proclamation was gazetted; the price of raw sugar was to range from £13 to £18 a ton, depending on its production and manufacture by labour and under conditions satisfactory to the treasurer. Certain sugar mills (principally those in North Queensland) were to supply monthly returns showing the names and nationalities of employees, and after a period of grace (to 15 September), those still employing 'coloureds' would receive a reduced price for their sugar. Theodore justified this provision against the employment of 'coloured aliens' on the grounds of industrial trouble at Cairns and Innisfail.¹⁵

The Sugar Acquisition Act generally was received favourably by the press.¹⁶ However, the Brisbane Courier felt that this was a blatant use of legislation for political objectives, and the Cairns Post thought that with the Japanese and Indians fighting on the Allied side, it would have been more tactful to have temporarily sacrificed principle to expediency.¹⁷ But the Post was out of step with the feeling amongst small growers. The ASPA at its annual conference in July reaffirmed its support for the total exclusion of non-Europeans from the industry, and this was acclaimed in the northern sugar districts. In Mackay the Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers'

14. QPD CXX, 1915-16, pp.241, 242. See also ibid., pp.414, 436-37, 462-63.

15. QCG CV, 1915, p.451; BC 6 Aug.1915; W 12 Aug.1915. There were rumours in Cairns in late July that there would be a strike against the employment of non-Europeans. Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 24 Jul.1915, P No.37, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA; QPD CXX, 1915-16, p.367.

16. See MM 20 Jul.1915; BC 29 Jul.1915; ASJ VII, 12 Aug.1915, pp.319-21; W 12 Aug.1915; Newspaper cuttings, Daily Standard 19 Jul.1915, p.60, and Daily Telegraph 20 Jul.1915, p.61, 142/3584, RSSS-ANUA.

17. BC 27 Jul.1915; CNP 10 Aug.1915. For another critical reaction, see letter by 'Sugar' to Age (Melbourne), quoted in BC 19 Aug.1915.

Association reassured an AWU deputation that they were opposed to the employment of non-Europeans.¹⁸

While farmers were prepared not to employ non-Europeans, the mills were more reluctant. Following Ryan's announcement that mills employing 'coloured' labour might receive a lower price for their sugar, Knox protested to W.M. Hughes (then attorney-general) that this would contravene the terms of the agreement between the Commonwealth Government and CSR. Hughes, while pointing out that the Commonwealth could not control the actions of the Queensland Government, made representations to Ryan.¹⁹

'Coloured' mill employees had been dealt with in the Sugar Acquisition Act, but there were still the field workers. On 14 August, Lennon announced that the proposed Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Bill would likewise provide for discrimination in prices for sugar paid to growers (see Appendix E).²⁰ Under clause 12, subclause 2, different prices for raw sugar could be fixed by award, taking into consideration different labour conditions under which the cane was grown, harvested and delivered to the mill; and under subclause 6 regulations could be issued so that a lower price than that specified in the award could be paid to growers in cases where such labour conditions were in any respect unsatisfactory to the minister.²¹

18. ASJ VII, 12 Aug.1915, pp.316, 339, 345, 346; CMP 22 Jul., 26 Jul.1915; NQR 23 Aug.1915, p.58; W 8 Apr., 22 Apr.1915; Newspaper cutting, BC 16 Aug. 1915, p.73, 142/3584, RSSS-ANUA.

19. Knox to Hughes, 20 Jul.1915, urgent telegram, p.487, 21 Jul.1915, pp.492-93, 142/1060, RSSS-ANUA; CPP V, 1914-17, p.1068. Mulgrave Mill sent a telegram to the Japanese consul-general in September, encouraging him to protest against the refusal by AWU members to work with Japanese cane-cutters. Copy of telegram, Mulgrave Mill to Japanese Consul-General, n.d. [Sep.1915], 142/3446, RSSS-ANUA.

20. BC 16 Aug.1915; MM 16 Aug.1915. See also Under Sec. for Treasury to Neilson, 16 Aug.1915, telegram, 67G, AGS/N96, QSA. Such a means of preventing the employment of 'coloured' labour had been suggested by Ryan in 1913 during debate on the Sugar Cultivation Bill. QPD CXIV, 1913, pp.285, 286.

21. Murphy mistakenly concluded that there was no indication that this clause had been included to differentiate unfavourably against 'coloured' workers. Murphy, T.J. Ryan, p.120.

During the bill's second reading, Macartney asked for clarification of the object of clause 12, but Ryan and Lennon would not confirm that it would be used against employers of non-European labour. The Government had already been embarrassed by the accusations of C.D.W. Rankin (member for Burrum and leader of the Queensland Farmers' Union), that the Sugar Acquisition Act would be used to penalise the Empire's ally, the Japanese.²² In fact, to placate the Commonwealth and British Governments, the Government had already decided that the Sugar Acquisition Act would not be applied to Japanese presently employed in Queensland sugar mills.²³ To the Government's further embarrassment, this agreement became public knowledge when the Japanese Society in Mackay made an announcement to this effect.²⁴ Following these disclosures, Theodore explained that the Government had relaxed conditions for this season in deference to the Commonwealth Government's belief that it was a matter of international policy.²⁵

In the reception of this legislation, there was little criticism of Section 12. The Cairns Post was angry that such special treatment had been given to Japanese but not to Indians; it concluded that the Government had "under pressure from a small section of their followers, made a hasty proclamation in the belief that by threatening to pay less for sugar manufactured other than by white labour, they would force the farmer to take the step which they were afraid to publicly take themselves."²⁶ But

22. QPD CXX, 1915-16, pp.436-37, 462-63; BC 26 Aug.1915.

23. This decision had been communicated to the Japanese consul-general. Under Sec. for Treasury to Neilson, 16 Aug.1915, telegram, 67G, AGS/N96, QSA; Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, 16 Feb.1924, memo., 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Fowles to Managers, Australian Sugar Co., Australian Estates, Drysdale Bros, Broom and Co. and Waterloo Ltd., 23 Sep.1915, TRE/A315, QSA.

24. QPD CXX, 1915-16, p.597. This arrangement was given considerable publicity and was criticized by the Opposition. See *ibid.*, pp.592-97; MM 2 Sep.1915; BC 3 Sep, 8 Sep.1915; NQR 13 Sep.1915, p.64; CNP 9 Sep.1915; W 9 Sep.1915; ASJ VII, 9 Sep.1915, p.453.

25. BC 4 Sep.1915; W 9 Sep.1915. Yet Theodore in 1913 had described a suggestion to exempt Japanese mill workers from the Sugar Cultivation Act as "manifestly unfair ...". QPD CXIV, 1913, p.294.

26. CNP 9 Sep.1915. For favourable reactions, see W 9 Sep.1915; MM 9 Sep.1915; ASJ VII, 7 Oct.1915, pp.481-82.

Hambledon growers were not loath to take this step: the Cairns Canegrowers Association urged CSR not to employ labour other than that approved by the Government or to act in any way which might jeopardise growers' prospects of receiving the full price for raw sugar.²⁷

CSR in fact was preparing to dismiss all non-Europeans except Japanese and replace them with Europeans. Since November 1911, the number of non-European employees in their North Queensland mills had been progressively reduced from 321 in 1912 to 227 in mid-1915, and by August 1915 this number had been further reduced to 188.²⁸ Mill managers were instructed in July that only non-Europeans who were 'old hands' were to be retained, since their employment could be justified if necessary. In August they were told that Japanese could work in the mills this season but that all other 'coloured aliens' would have to be replaced. While they were not to be dismissed as yet, Japanese were to be placed in the jobs of other non-Europeans outside the mills and mill work was to be reserved as far as possible for Europeans.²⁹

The Japanese, through their consul-general, had already objected to the proposed discrimination under this sugar legislation. The Indians were also active. Pooran Dabee Singh, a very articulate Indian resident, expressed his resentment, both face-to-face with Ryan and in several letters, that Indians, who were fighting with the Allies, were to be excluded from

27. MM 6 Sep.1915; BC 6 Sep.1915.

28. Aliens. Points. Exemption Acts, and Aliens. Telegraphed Figures from Mills. handwritten notes, 142/3479, RSSS-ANUA. In June 1915 the Macknade manager was reprovved for employing too many non-Europeans in positions which were filled by Europeans at other mills. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 24 Jun.1915, No.984, pp.396-98, and 8 Jul.1915, No.994, p.415, 142/1522, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 1 Jul.1915, No.967, 142/1499, RSSS-ANUA. See also Chapter 5, p.204.

29. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 22 Jul.1915, No.2, p.433, 142/1522, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Homebush, 22 Jul.1915, No.3 142/1246, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 19 Aug.1915, P No.36, and also sent to Homebush, Victoria, Goondi and Hambledon, 142/1061, RSSS-ANUA.

the canefields while such enemy subjects as Germans were not.³⁰ The governor of Queensland, Sir Hamilton John Goold-Adams, received a petition from eighty-three Indian residents of Cairns, and Fisher received a protest from sixty Indian residents of North Queensland. Ryan remained adamant that the Government intended to prohibit the employment of all 'coloured' labour in the sugar industry, with the exception, for this season, of the Japanese.³¹

In these twin pieces of legislation, the Labor Government had apparently secured an ingenious and flexible method of preventing the employment of non-Europeans in the canefields and mills. Nor would it have been as administratively burdensome as the Sugar Cultivation Act had proved to be. This intention might have been realized but for the strong opposition from non-European groups and CSR, and consequent pressure from the Commonwealth and British Governments to stop the implementation of such discriminatory powers.

Between September 1915 and January 1916 further petitions against these two measures were received from a number of different 'races' - Malays in Cairns, Chinese in Cairns, Innisfail and Ingham, Pacific Islanders in Cairns and Mackay, and Indians (including Dabee Singh) in Cairns and southern Queensland.³² The Malays and Pacific Islanders had no consul-general to press their claims, and protests by the Chinese and their consul-general were not regarded as important. However, the British

30. Singh to Ryan, 21 Jul.1915, 08046, 31 Jul.1915, 08340, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, 16 Feb.1924, memo., *ibid.*; BC 30 Aug., 4 Sep.1915. His protests were reported widely, and generally sympathetically, by the press. See MM 4 Sep.1915; W 9 Sep.1915, CMP 9 Sep.1915; BC 30 Aug. 1915; NQR 13 Sep.1915, p.64.

31. MacDonnell and Hannam to Under Chief Sec., 1 Sep.1915, 10203, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Under Sec. for Treasury to Under Chief Sec., 2 Sep.1915, 10072, *ibid.*; Ryan to Fisher, 7 Sep.1915, 100737, *ibid.*; Atlee Hunt to Sec. for Prime Min., 8 Nov.1915, 15836, and Handwritten Note, 5 Nov.1915, A1 20/5592, AA; Fisher to Ryan, 27 Aug.1915, 3812/52, A457 0108/6, AA.

32. See, for example, Scrivens to Min. for Agriculture, Sugar Cultivation Act, 5 Jan.1916, memo., 147G, AGS/N358, QSA; Dept of Agriculture, Sugar Cultivation Act, 27 Mar.1918, memo., *ibid.*; Chinese Consul-General to Ryan, 24 Sep.1915, 11175, 28 Sep.1915, 02226, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Chinese Consul-General to Ryan, 8 Oct.1915, 92G, *ibid.*; MacDonnell and Hannam to Ryan, 11 Oct.1915, 67G, AGS/N96, QSA; Petition from Polynesians in the Mackay districts, forw. by Luke Logmier to Premier, n.d. [Dec.1915], *ibid.*; Bella Singh and Kharum Chan to Prime Min., 23 Aug.1915, 3812/51, A457 0108/6, AA.

Government was very sensitive to the question of the Indians. According to Ryan's biographer, D.J. Murphy, Goold-Adams was requested to reserve assent to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Bill because it discriminated against Indians, and assent was only given (on 6 October) on the understanding that it would not be used against Indians. In February 1916 Goold-Adams was able to reassure A. Bonar Law, secretary of state for the colonies, that Japanese and Indians would be treated similarly in regard to employment in the sugar mills.³³

The Government's intentions were not clear to those connected with the sugar industry. In August 1915, CSR telegraphed the Government for details of its policy and advised mill managers in the meantime not to make advances to non-European growers.³⁴ The United Cane Growers' Association (UCCA) was attempting to discover what the actual penalty for employing non-Europeans in the field or mill would be, and other farmers' associations and individual growers asked for similar information.³⁵

CSR were acting on the assumption that the Queensland Government would inform them, on receipt of the returns under the Sugar Acquisition Act, of that labour to which objection would be taken. When sending in these returns, mill managers were instructed to show all non-European

33. The under secretary of state for India was concerned that the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act would be used against Indian farmers. Ryan assured Goold-Adams that there was no such intention, but this meant nothing since the Act was aimed at employees rather than farmers. Murphy, T.J. Ryan, p.121; Goold-Adams to Sec. of State for Colonies, 3 Feb.1916, Qld.No.4, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Under Sec. of State for India to Under Sec. of State, 9 Nov.1915, forw. by Bonar Law to Goold-Adams, 00062, ibid.; Ryan to Goold-Adams, 7 Jan.1916, ibid.; Bonar Law to Goold-Adams, 7 Jun.1916, Qld.No.36, forw. by Actg Under Chief Sec. to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 26 July 1916, ibid.

34. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 19 Aug.1915, No.17, p.468, 142/1522, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Homebush, 19 Aug.1915, No.22, p.473, 142/1246, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Homebush, 30 Sep.1915, No.51, 142/1247, RSSS-ANUA. The Pleystowe Central Mill was also anxious to discover the Government's intentions, because of the question of advances to 'coloured' growers. Smith to Under Sec. for Treasury, 9 Dec.1915, 12336, 10 Jan.1916, 15 Feb.1916, 67G, AGS/N96, QSA.

35. See CMP 9 Sep.1915; Mrs Burke to Lennon, 20 Apr.1916, 6 May 1916, 88G, AGS/N358, QSA; P.D. Dunworth to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 24 Jun.1916, 91G, ibid.; Swayne to Lennon, 17 Feb.1916, 90G, ibid.; Under Sec. for Treasury to Manager Pioneer, 16 Sep.1915, 142/3446, RSSS-ANUA; Under Sec. for Treasury to Manager Kalamia Estate, 16 Sep.1915, ibid.

employees connected with the factory but not those engaged in domestic work or in the cutting or transport of firewood to the mill.³⁶ In September 1915, CSR's mill managers were directed to suspend all non-Europeans except Japanese until the Company concluded its negotiations with the Commonwealth Government on the issue. These negotiations were still in progress in October, when the suspended labour was transferred to outside work not connected with sugar manufacture, such as firewood cutting, in order that they would not be included in the returns under the Sugar Acquisition Act.³⁷

By September, the Japanese Government had also made strong representations to the British and Commonwealth Governments on this subject.³⁸ In February 1916, after consulting with the Commonwealth, the Ryan Government decided not to impose penalties on cane grown with 'coloured' labour.³⁹ This policy was not announced but an answer to a Mackay cane farmer's query was given publicity in the press. Other requests concerning the operation of the Act received the same information.⁴⁰ Neither the Ryan Government nor future Labor administrations made any further attempt to use the Sugar Acquisition Act or the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices

36. This was the Company's interpretation of paragraph 3 of the proclamation. Managers were to advise head office of the numbers of non-Europeans on the lists, and the number of additional Europeans who could be accommodated in existing buildings. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 12 Aug. 1915, No. 13, pp. 459-60, 142/1522, RSSS-ANUA.

37. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, telegram, 27 Sep. 1915, p. 17, and also sent to Homebush, Victoria, Goondi and Hambledon, 142/1523, RSSS-ANUA. For a sample of the managers' replies, see Manager, Homebush, to General Manager, 4 Oct. 1915, No. 137, 142/3479, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 7 Oct. 1915, No. 994, *ibid.*; List of Suspended Alien Labour (Hambledon No. 68), *ibid.*; Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 7 Oct. 1915 No. 73, *ibid.*

38. Caucus Minutes, State Parliamentary Labor Party, 9 Sep. 1915, p. 242.

39. On 5 February cabinet held over the decision on whether or not to penalise those whose cane was grown with 'coloured' labour until the Commonwealth Government had been consulted; the pressure which the latter applied to prevent discrimination under the legislation was deeply resented. Sugar Cultivation Act, 27 Mar. 1918, memo., 147G, AGS/N358, QSA; Newspaper cutting, Daily Mail 19 Nov. 1919, A457 0108/6, AA.

40. Under Sec. for Agriculture to Swayne, 23 Feb. 1916, 90G, AGS/N358, QSA; Ryan to Chinese Consul-General, 14 Feb. 1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; MM 4 Mar. 1916; ASJ VII, 9 Mar. 1916, p. 907.

Act in a discriminatory manner. In April the requirement that the mills forward monthly returns of labour was dropped.⁴¹

Another issue requiring decision concerned the certificates issued to non-European cane farmers under the Sugar Cultivation Act, due to expire on 31 December 1915.⁴² Early in 1915 there was considerable anxiety amongst non-European farmers (including Pacific Islanders) in Mackay regarding their position, and the local clerk of petty sessions, W.G. Ashton, was informed in April that they were not entitled to plant or cultivate cane after the end of 1915.⁴³ But once again sensitivity concerning the Japanese prevented this policy being implemented by the Labor Government. Lennon sought legal opinion and was advised that the cancellation of certificates held by Japanese farmers might contravene the understanding arrived at with the Japanese consul-general, and that the regulation issued on 9 April 1915, empowering the minister for agriculture to cancel any certificate granted under the Sugar Cultivation Act, had doubtful legal validity.⁴⁴ Scrivens, the under secretary for agriculture, suggested that the extension of such certificates could be limited to the Japanese and to British subjects such as Indians, Cinghalese and Pacific Islanders. But in February 1916 Lennon ruled that all growers with certificates could continue to cultivate leasehold or freehold, provided it was the same land on which they had been working at the time they obtained exemption. Once again, this policy was not publicly announced, but those who asked for information were advised of the decision.⁴⁵

41. The Treasurer could still direct millowners to furnish such returns, if dissatisfied with the labour or conditions under which the sugar was manufactured. QGG CVI, 1916, p.1479; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 15 Jun.1916, No.173, p.325, 142/1523, RSSS-ANUA.

42. See Chapter 5, p.220.

43. Dept of Agriculture, Sugar Cultivation Act, 19 Dec.1924, memo., 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.

44. Ashton to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 16 Feb.1915, 02580, 8 Mar., 19 Aug., 4 Sep.1915, *ibid.*; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Ashton, 5 Mar., 21 Apr.1915, 02580, *ibid.*; Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, 14 Sep.1915, memo., 147G, AGS/N358, QSA.

45. Dept of Agriculture, Sugar Cultivation Act, 27 Mar.1918, memo., *ibid.*; Scrivens to Min. for Agriculture, 4 Jan., 5 Jan.1916, memo., *ibid.*; Pearce to Forgan Smith, 15 Jan.1916, 66G, AGS/N96, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Forgan Smith, 10 Feb.1916, *ibid.*

Lennon also ruled that no further certificates of exemption under the Sugar Cultivation Act would be issued unless applicants were prepared to pass a dictation test in the English language. This only reaffirmed the policy of the Denham Government.⁴⁶ Protests from Indians who did not hold certificates of exemption, in August and September 1916, were ignored.⁴⁷

IN THESE first months of office the Labor Party had been thwarted in their efforts to solve the 'coloured' labour problem.⁴⁸ In future years Labor governments did not attempt to legislate directly on the matter.

Keeping the labour movement on side and under control on the issue of 'coloured' labour was a difficult task. As Goold-Adams commented, the cabinet "would rather allow their supporters to remain in blissful ignorance of what they are doing".⁴⁹ The AWU raised the question of non-European sugar workers on more than one occasion in 1915.⁵⁰ In caucus too, the Government had to defend its policy. First, on 9 September, H.C. McMinn (Labor member for Bulimba) had criticized the decision to allow Japanese to work in the sugar mills. Theodore had explained the reasons which had compelled the Government to make this exception. Secondly, in caucus on 24 February 1916, Theodore himself raised the issue of Japanese and Indian sugar workers: he stressed the need for State and Federal Labor politicians

46. See Chapter 5, p.228. For examples of the application of this ruling, see Applic.No.2284E, Alex Solomon, AGS/N357, QSA; Applic.No.2300E, Stephen Malayta, *ibid.*; Applic.No.2308E, Aleck Gomerin, *ibid.*; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Dunstan, 29 May 1916, 92G, AGS/N358, QSA; Scrivens to Manager, Pioneer, 30 Jul.1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.

47. Lieutenant-Colonel G. McColl to Chief of General Staff, 15 Aug.1916, O.A.10137, memo., forw. by Sec. for External Affairs to Sec. for Prime Min., 21 Aug.1916, 21543, A1 20/5592, AA; P.D. Singh to Goold-Adams, 8 Sep.1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Theodore to Goold-Adams, 18 Sep.1916, *ibid.*

48. As at least one member of the Opposition, E.B. Swayne, recognized. QPD CXX, 1915-16, p.593.

49. Murphy, T.J. Ryan, p.121.

50. See W 5 Aug.1915; Mortison to Collins, 19 Dec.1915, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA; Scrivens to Collins, 22 Feb.1916, *ibid.*

to visit the sugar centres and impress on AWU members the importance of acting cautiously and diplomatically in this matter, because of the pressure being exerted on the British and Commonwealth Governments by Japan. J.H. Coyne (Labor member for Warrego) suggested calling a conference of AWU members to solicit their assistance, but it was resolved to leave the matter with cabinet.⁵¹

That the AWU would heed such urgings seemed doubtful; even if AWU officials gave their support, sugar workers frequently took direct action against official directions. At the annual delegate meeting of the Queensland branch in January 1916, it was stated in the far northern district report that the 'coloured' labour question in the sugar industry would have to be settled. In March Dunstan protested to Lennon that there were rumours in Cairns that the Government intended to grant further exemptions to Indians; Lennon denied this.⁵² In Cairns in June, the Labor Senator, T. Givens, addressed a meeting of growers and millers from Mossman, Cairns, Mourilyan and Innisfail. He said he had impressed upon the AWU the need to avoid actions against 'coloured' labour which would embarrass the British or Commonwealth Governments and he advised employers that trouble would be avoided if they employed only those 'coloured aliens' with certificates of exemption and only in positions in which they had previously been employed.⁵³

51. Caucus Minutes, State Parliamentary Labor Party, 9 Sep.1915, p.242, 24 Feb.1916, pp.344-45.

52. Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, p.417; Australian Workers' Union, Official Report of Third Annual Delegate Meeting, Brisbane, January 1916 (Brisbane, 1916), p.22; Dunstan to Lennon, 15 Mar.1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Lennon to Dunstan, 16 Mar.1916, ibid.; Scrivens to Steele, telegram, 94G, AGS/N358, QSA; Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 23 Mar.1916, No.114, 142/1449, RSSS-ANUA.

53. Rothe, the general manager of CSR, informed the mill managers that Senators Givens and Mullan would be visiting Queensland to address meetings on the need to avoid industrial disputes over 'coloured' labour; the newspapers had been instructed by the censor not to publish anything on the issue. BC 22 Jun.1916: General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 15 Jun.1916, No.174, p.326, 142/1523, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 21 Jun.1916, P No.56, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 29 Jun.1916, No.135, 142/1449, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 1 Jul.1916, No.182, 142/963, RSSS-ANUA; Givens to Prime Min., 20 Jun.1915, telegram, A2 16/3673, AA; Givens to Actg Prime Min., 19 Jun.1916, ibid.; Actg Premier to Prime Min., 20 Jun.1916, de-code of telegram, ibid.

Between June and July, confidential negotiations took place between Dunstan, the AWU secretary, and G.F. Pearce, the acting prime minister, during which Pearce disclosed information "of such a nature that we [the AWU] decided to hold our hands".⁵⁴

The Ryan Government could not legislate to remove 'coloured' labour from the sugar industry, but a more indirect method which would not antagonize the Indian or Japanese Governments might be successful. The preference for non-European labour, it was reasoned, was based on a desire for cheap labour: if all sugar workers received the same wages and worked the same hours, then this preference would disappear. The schedule published under the Sugar Growers' Employees Act of 1913 had stipulated a minimum wage and scale of rations for sugar workers. Therefore it could be, and was, argued that non-Europeans received the same wages as Europeans.⁵⁵ The AWU, however, believed that this requirement was generally evaded, through secret agreements between employers and employees whereby the latter accepted less than award wages.⁵⁶ No machinery had been provided to superintend the provisions of the Sugar Growers' Employees and Sugar Cultivation Acts. The duty devolved upon the police, who were already over-worked. From May 1916, the inspectors of factories and shops in the sugar districts were

54. Martyn told the royal commission in 1920 that this meeting had taken place in 1915, but clearly it was in 1916: he told the AWU conference in Sydney in March 1916 that with Senator Givens he had recently waited on Pearce and learnt of the present complications surrounding the 'coloured' labour question; Pearce was acting prime minister only between January and July 1916, during Hughes' absence in London. CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.183; W 23 Mar.1916; P. Heydon, Quiet Decision. A Study of G. Foster Pearce (Melbourne, 1965), p.73.

55. 4 Geo.V, No.13; QGC CI, 1913, pp.289-90; Newspaper cutting, not identified, n.d. [1915?], IG, AGS/N96, QSA; QPD CXX, 1915-16, pp.462, 596; ASJ VI, 4 Jun.1914, p.171, VII, 8 Jul.1915, p.238; CPP IV, 1913, p.1272, B.R. Riley, Misc.Vol., 1920-21, p.311, A.J. West.

56. Newspaper cutting, not identified, n.d. [1915?], IG, AGS/N96, QSA; W 15 Apr.1915; Actg Under Chief Sec. to Under Sec. for Public Works, 06663, T8 May 1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Actg Under Chief Sec. to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 18 May 1916, 80G, AGS/N96, QSA; CPP Misc.Vol., 1920-21, p.293, T. Quilty; ASJ XI, 12 Jun.1919, pp.137, 139.

instructed when on patrol to check that 'coloured' workers held certificates of exemption and to report if they did not.⁵⁷

To secure closer supervision of non-European sugar workers, it was decided to intervene in the case then being heard in the Arbitration Court by acting judge F.W. Dickson. The Government requested that the following be included in the award: first, that all aboriginal natives of Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands and persons substantially of such origin employed as sugar field workers, should be paid their wages in the presence of a government officer; and secondly, that a special scale of rations should be prescribed applicable to all cases where such field and mill workers were supplied with food as part of their remuneration. The justification for these requests recalled those given for the Pacific Island Labourers Acts of the previous century: "... where persons are and can be thought by the Legislature of a State to be foreign or unacquainted with our language, they should be protected in their dealings with persons requiring their services, ...".⁵⁸ This was hardly applicable to non-Europeans born in Australia, to whom these special provisions would also apply. Both suggestions, however, were incorporated in the Dickson award, handed down on 15 September 1916 - an award which aroused great controversy and bitter industrial disputes due to the substantial wage increases granted to sugar workers.⁵⁹

57. Under Sec. for Agriculture to Insps. under Workers Accommodation Act, 20 May 1916, memo., 07869, 123G, AGS/N358, QSA; Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops to Insps., 25 May 1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Scrivens to Under Chief Sec., 23 May 1916, *ibid.*; Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops to Scrivens, 6 Feb. 1918, 123G, AGS/N358, QSA.

58. QGG CVII, 1916, p.810. It was already stipulated under regulations proclaimed under the Sugar Acquisition Act in April 1916, that the treasurer could order that mill employees be paid their wages by a government officer or in his presence. Actg Under Chief Sec. to Under Sec. for Public Works, 06663, 18 May 1916, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; QGG CVII, 1916, p.794; QGG CVI, 1916, p.1479. See also Theodore's justification of the crown's intervention. QPD CXXIII, 1916-17, p.129.

59. QGG CVII, 1916, pp.615-16, 619-20; QPD CXXIII, 1916-17, pp.125-48; Murphy, T.J. Ryan, pp.178-81; Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, pp.273-83.

In mid-1916 also, a state board of inquiry into the sugar industry was collecting evidence. Martyn, representing the AWU, claimed that 'coloured' labour was increasing, and that there were nearly 2,000 such workers in northern canefields and sugar mills, chiefly in the Babinda, Johnstone, Herbert River and Burdekin districts: "...British labour is being largely shoved out of the industry by coloured people in the first instance, and secondly, by Southern Europeans...". In the Herbert River and Johnstone River districts, at least, it was in fact the second rather than the first category who were supplanting British sugar workers: 621 out of 790 cane cutters were non-British but three-quarters and more of these were southern Europeans.⁶⁰ In the 1920s, as will be seen, the presence of large numbers of southern Europeans became a source of intense industrial conflict.

OVER THE next decade there was a discernible pattern in regard to actions against the employment of non-Europeans in the sugar industry. The Labor Government could not legislate to satisfy AWU demands for the total exclusion of such labour. But the AWU continued its campaign against non-European sugar workers, with local organizers protesting that 'coloured aliens' were employed without certificates of exemption or in contravention of the award. The police and inspectors of factories and shops investigated such complaints and also collected information on the employment of 'coloured aliens'. Such information was often used in the hearing of the sugar awards in the Arbitration Court, where the AWU repeatedly pressed for the granting of preference in employment to its members principally on the grounds that this would effectively preclude the employment of non-Europeans (who were ineligible for union membership).

In May 1916, at the request of the acting premier, Theodore, police inspectors were instructed to keep a watch on the number of non-Europeans employed and to make periodic inspections for breaches of the Sugar

60. QPP II, 1916-17, pp.837, 838, 907, 908.

Cultivation Act.⁶¹ There were, however, complaints from the AWU in 1917 that the police would not act to stop 'coloured aliens' without certificates working in the sugar industry.⁶² In the Johnstone River district, the inspector of factories and shops, W. Watt, consistently checked on 'coloured' sugar workers and likewise felt that the police could do more to stop illegal employment.⁶³

Watt had suggested that the police could do more if authorised to demand certificates of exemption for inspection. This was taken up in a further regulation under the Sugar Cultivation Act issued on 22 September 1917: every holder of a certificate under the Act was to produce it for inspection, on demand, to members of the police force, police magistrates, clerks of petty sessions, or any persons authorized by the Department of Agriculture.⁶⁴

61. In this month they were also requested to report on the number of 'coloured' aliens employed, and these reports were sent in by August. Police Commissioner to Under Chief Sec., 24 May 1916, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Police Commission to Insp., 22 Aug. 1916, *ibid.*; Police Commissioner to Under Chief Sec., 11 Aug. 1916, *ibid.*; Police Commissioner to Under Chief Sec., 21 Aug. 1916, 1116, 161G, ACS/N360, QSA.

62. See Dunstan to Lennon, 3 Aug. 1917, forw. by Under Sec. for Agriculture to Police Commissioner, 21 Jul. 1917, 118G, ACS/N358, QSA; Smith to Police Insp., Townsville, 8 Aug. 1917, forw. to Police Commissioner, 23 Aug. 1917, *ibid.*; Quilty to Dunstan, 31 Oct. 1917, forw. by Dunstan to Theodore, 8 Nov. 1917, 123G, *ibid.*; Under Sec. for Public Works to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 12 Jul. 1917, 80G, ACS/N96, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Police Commissioner, 16 Jul. 1917, *ibid.*

63. Watt prosecuted for several breaches of the Sugar Cultivation Act; he believed that the employers, who pleaded ignorance, were well aware of the illegality of their actions. Watt to Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops, 26 Jul. 1917, *ibid.*; Watt, Report to Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops, 2 Aug., 16 Aug. 1917, 123G, ACS/N358, QSA; Watt to Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops, 2 Aug., 10 Nov. 1917, *ibid.*; Breaches under the Sugar Cultivation Act, CSR/378(a), QSA.

64. Watt to Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops, 26 Jul. 1917, 80G, ACS/N96, QSA; Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 16 Aug. 1917, *ibid.*; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Under Sec. for Public Works, 29 Aug. 1917, *ibid.*; QCG CIX, 1917, p.958. In 1918 Watt suggested that the inspectors of factories and shops should have the power to engage lawyers and prosecute cases as soon as possible, but this suggestion was rejected by the minister for agriculture on the grounds that the power to prosecute must remain with his department. Watt to Chief Insp. of Factories and Shops, 9 Jan. 1918, forw. by Chief Insp. to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 6 Feb. 1918, 123G, ACS/N358, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Under Sec. for Public Works, 9 Feb. 1918, *ibid.*

Although in July the Government had reputedly been considering acting against growers who employed non-Europeans to harvest their cane⁶⁵, this was, in fact, the last Government-initiated action on the matter until 1924.

. In May 1918, at a compulsory conference heard in Cairns by Mr Justice Thomas McCawley of the Industrial Court, complaints of victimisation against European workers and preference to Indian cane-cutters by the suppliers to the Mulgrave Mill, were settled by an agreement under which the mill would urge its suppliers to dismiss Indian cane-cutters and give preference to AWU members who had been refused work.⁶⁶ Indignant at this treatment, the Indians protested to the Commonwealth Government. The matter was discussed in the Queensland cabinet on 2 July but no action was taken. Yet Ryan later instructed that no notice was to be taken of unexempted Japanese working in the sugar industry.⁶⁷ McCawley also presided over a conference held in Innisfail in September, between cane-cutters and representatives of the Goondi, South Johnstone and Mourilyan Mills. Dunstan, for the AWU, requested that growers should employ only those 'coloured aliens' already engaged for harvesting. The manager at Goondi, F. Gillan, agreed to do so provided satisfactory other labour was available, and the other representatives promised to recommend this to their growers.⁶⁸

65. See Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 27 Jul.1917, P No.95, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA. The large growers such as G.R. Mayers, S.H. Warner and Dr Reed, were expecting to be served with writs, and intended to fight the Government through the courts.

66. W 27 Jun.1918. The Babinda and Mulgrave AWU local centres criticized the far northern district committee on the grounds that this agreement was not firm enough. Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, p.341.

67. Dept of Agriculture, Scrivens for Cabinet, 28 Jun.1918, memo., 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Dept of Agriculture, Scrivens for Cabinet, 4 Oct.1918, memo., ibid.

68. Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 12 Sep.1918, P No.85, 142/3086, RSSS-ANUA; CMP 5 May 1919. A meeting of unionists voted not to accept McCawley's recommendations (and end the strike) but a week later they resumed work.

In this same year appeals were launched against the legality of the Sugar Cultivation Act. In the Cairns police court on 16 August, a prosecution under the Sugar Cultivation Act became a test case when an Edmonton farmer, C. Butler, was fined £3 for employing three Indians without certificates; the Indians, Addar Khan, Nebbe Bucleish and Kar Deen, were each fined £1. Other such cases were adjourned when appeals were lodged against these convictions. Growers and Indian harvesters were preparing, if the appeals were dismissed, to collect separate funds for further legal action.⁶⁹ Their applications for quashing orders against the convictions were refused by the High Court of Queensland on 8 October but on 5 December they were granted the right to appeal to the Privy Council. CSR subscribed £100 to support Butler's appeal, on the grounds that the issue was not merely the employment of non-Europeans but that of the right to work of a British subject. The Company refused to be associated directly with the campaign. Chinese and Japanese residents in Cairns also donated generously to the appeal and in Mackay the Japanese sought the best legal advice on the constitutionality of the Sugar Cultivation Act. However, on 2 December 1919, Addar Khan's appeal was dismissed with costs by the Privy Council, and the validity of prosecutions under the Sugar Cultivation Act thereby confirmed.⁷⁰

69. NQR 26 Aug. 1915, pp. 3, 17; CMP 17 Aug. 1918. At Atlee Hunt's direction, an investigation was carried out into the length of residence in Australia of Butler's Indian employees, but all were found to be long-term residents. Hunt to Collector of Customs, 25 Sep. 1918, 11871, A1 18/14556, AA; Const. to Police Insp., Cairns, 16 Oct. 1918, ibid.

70. NQR 9 Dec. 1918, p. 13; BC 9 Oct., 5 Dec., 6 Dec. 1918; CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p. 195, F.W. Martyn; General Manager to Manager, Hambledon, 31 Oct. 1918, P No. 24, p. 487, 142/1065, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Hambledon, 29 Nov. 1918, P No. 260, p. 113, 142/1066, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 14 Dec. 1918, P No. 64, 22 Mar. 1919, P No. 178, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Homebush, to General Manager, 27 Oct. 1919, P No. 18, 142/3101, RSSS-ANUA; Privy Council Appeal No. 78 of 1919, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA. According to Scrivens, the appeal was dismissed principally because the appellants did not support their case with evidence. Scrivens to Under Chief Sec., 23 Nov. 1920, ibid.

According to H.K.N. Macdonnell, a Cairns lawyer, Cairns farmers deliberately inaugurated these appeals as a means of delaying the general application of the legislation and of providing them with a period of grace in which to recruit suitable 'white' labour. Such labour had been procured by the time the Privy Council made their decision.⁷¹ Presumably the Indians, Chinese and Japanese who helped to fund the appeal were unaware of this opportunistic motivation.

During this period, Pooran Dabee Singh again protested against the discriminatory treatment afforded to the Indians. He wrote to Ryan and met with Ryan and also Lennon. Lennon again refused to issue additional certificates of exemption and cabinet on 23 September 1919 reaffirmed this policy, despite further protests from the Indians and Japanese.⁷²

Not only would no more exemptions be granted. In this same year, the Arbitration Court imposed close restrictions on the employment of 'coloured aliens' who held certificates. In late 1918 and 1919 unemployment was high in Queensland and very high in North Queensland; the post-war period was marked by great social upheaval and tense industrial relations.⁷³ In this climate, the AWU believed that urgent steps were necessary to remove 'coloured' labour; T. Quilty, on behalf of the far northern district committee, complained to Lennon in February 1919 that

71. H.K.N. MacDonnell, 'Early Days In and Around Cairns - Sugar Industry', Historical Society Cairns, North Queensland Bulletin No.196, Mar.1976.

72. MM 29 Jan.1919; BC 24 Jan., 25 Jan.1919; Notes in connection with a deputation of Indians to the Minister for Agriculture, 22 Jan.1919, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Under Chief Sec. 29 Mar.1921, 161G, ibid. In February CSR were assisting Singh, but not directly, to obtain information on the number of Indians without exemption who had been refused work, and also the number of Germans employed in the sugar industry. Manager, Brisbane, to General Manager, 7 Feb.1919, 142/3049, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Brisbane, 13 Feb.1919, 142/1066, RSSS-ANUA.

73. Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, pp.411, 413-14.

...the menace seems to be becoming greater each year, and areas that were practically all white previously, are employing a number of coloured aliens...The situation is a very serious one for us, and unless something can be done it will only be a matter of time till the sugar industry is a coloured one again.⁷⁴

Lennon, in reply, pointed out that the Government could not legislate to solve the problem since an agreement with the Commonwealth Government in 1917 prevented any alteration in sugar legislation until the end of 1920.⁷⁵

But the Arbitration Court was not so bound.⁷⁶ During May and June ^{Mr Justice} McCawley heard evidence in the sugar award, first at Cairns, and then at the other sugar centres and in Brisbane. Information on the number of 'coloured aliens' employed in the sugar districts, the number with exemption certificates and the circumstances of the payment of wages to them, was collected by the police in early May, as the result of an urgent request by Martyn (appearing for the AWU).⁷⁷ Part of this information is presented in Appendix F. The AWU argued strongly for preference to AWU members as a solution to the 'coloured' labour question. Martyn contended

74. Quilty to Lennon, 19 Feb. 1919, 3483, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA. The number of disputes caused by 'coloured' labour had also been mentioned at the annual delegate meeting of the AWU in January, and in May the northern district secretary complained about the employment of non-Europeans to the manager of the Macknade Mill. W 16 Jan. 1919; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 22 May 1919, No. 365, 142/1502, RSSS-ANUA.

75. Scrivens to Quilty, 27 Feb. 1919, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA. For the terms of the agreement see QPP 1, 1918, pp. 1160-63; Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, p. 282.

76. The Government may have had some influence on the Arbitration Court's decision to restrict 'coloured' labour. See Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 31 May 1919, P No. 134a, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA.

77. Dunstan to Huxham, 2 May 1919, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Police Commissioner to Insp., Cairns, Townsville and Maryborough, 3 May 1919, telegram, *ibid.*; Insp., Cairns, to Police Commissioner, 6 May 1919, telegram, 6 May 1919, urgent telegram, 7 May 1919, telegrams, *ibid.*; Insp., Townsville, to Police Commissioner, 12 May 1919, telegram, *ibid.*

that "the coloured aliens are working utterly in disregard of the award, and against the whole spirit of the legislation on the matter", and much of the evidence collected was in the same vein: non-Europeans were increasing in number, working longer hours and for lower wages, and being employed during the slack season in preference to Europeans. The situation was exacerbated by the presence of many unemployed returned soldiers.⁷⁸

The new sugar award was handed down on 27 June 1919. In his judgment McCawley concluded that many larger employers did indeed give preference to 'coloured aliens', especially in the Cairns district; while it had not been proven that these men worked longer hours for less remuneration, it was clear that they were not paid their wages in the presence of a government officer. This trend, "unless altered, is bound sooner or later to lead to a serious industrial upheaval focussing the attention of Australia on the extent to which coloured labour is still employed in the industry". Preference to the AWU was not granted, but a new provision stipulated that no 'coloured' labour was to be employed in cane-cutting or, from 1 January 1920, in connection with sugar cultivation on any farm planted with more than seventy-five acres of cane. The owner of a cane farm, however, could employ his own countrymen.⁷⁹

Before leaving Cairns, McCawley urged farmers and the CSR manager not to take on 'coloured' gangs during the crushing season, and his advice

78. CMP 2 May, 3 May 1919; ASJ XI, 12 Jun. 1919, pp.132, 134, 135, 137, 139, 141; Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 5 May 1919, P No.181, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Victoria, to General Manager, 15 May 1919, P No.121, 142/3151, RSSS-ANUA; QCG CXIII, 1919, p.31. The ASPA and the UCGA declared themselves against the employment of non-Europeans but were not in favour of preference.

79. The provisions stipulating that non-Europeans must receive special rations and be paid their wages in the presence of a government officer, were maintained. QIG IV, 1919, pp.518, 519, 521; NQR 12 May 1919, p.81. This award is referred to briefly in Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, p.309; Bailey, 'The Legal Position of Foreigners in Australia', p.42.

was largely heeded.⁸⁰ CSR directed that no new 'coloured aliens' should be taken on but continued to employ old hands.⁸¹ While disappointed by the refusal to grant preference, the AWU welcomed the prohibition on 'coloured' labour, which was described at the annual delegate meeting in January 1920 as "the only bright spot" in the award.⁸²

In May and June 1919, a royal commission on the sugar industry appointed by the Commonwealth Government was also collecting evidence in Queensland. The AWU vigorously protested against the growing menace of non-European labour. In Cairns the Japanese society tendered evidence, claiming that all the Japanese in the district were long-standing, legal residents, and their arguments were supported by Shimizu, the consul-general. He wrote not only to the commission but also to the Commonwealth Government. His letter was forwarded to Ryan, and the Commonwealth briefly considered legislation to nullify the new award.⁸³ While evidence on the 'coloured alien' question was taken, the issue was not considered

80. See Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 5 May 1919, P No.181, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA; Actg Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 14 May 1919, No.577, 142/965, RSSS-ANUA; CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, pp.183, F.W. Martyn, p. 277, F.C.P. Curlewis; NQR 12 May 1919, p.81; CMP 21 Jun.1919. Some of the large growers had argued that 'coloured' labour was more dependable and necessary in the newer sugar districts such as Babinda. ASJ XI, 12 Jun.1919, p.144, 8 Aug.1919, pp.305-6; CMP 5 May, 20 Jun.1919.

81. Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 3 Jul.1919, P No.120, 142/3086, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Hambleton, 5 Jun.1919, P No.295, p.149, 142/1067, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 5 Jun.1919, P No.197, p.150, ibid.; General Manager to Manager, Victoria, 5 Jun.1919, P No.238, and also sent to Manager, Goondi, P No.266, p.151, ibid.; General Manager to Actg Manager, Homebush, 9 Jul.1919, P No.243, p.197, ibid. The Hambleton suppliers committee were pressuring growers to harvest with 'white' labour. Manager, Hambleton, to General Manager, 10 Jun.1919, P No.184, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA.

82. A motion was carried that AWU organizers should be given the power to demand information from responsible officials (such as police officers) on the employment of 'coloured aliens' in sugar districts, so that the AWU could assist in ensuring that the award was observed. NQR 28 Jul. 1919, p.55; Australian Workers' Union, Official Report of the Seventh Annual Delegate Meeting, Brisbane, January 1920 (Brisbane 1920), pp.10, 13, 42.

83. Shimizu to Sec. for Home and Territories, 6 Jun.1919, telegram, A457 0108/6, AA; Actg Prime Min. to Actg Premier of Qld., 10 Jun.1919, ibid.; Hunt to Shepherd, 29 Jul.1919, ibid.; Piesse to Sec. for Prime Min., 14 Aug.1919, ibid.; Commonwealth Government Gazette II, 1919, pp.497-98.

to be within the scope of the commission's enquiry, and the McCawley award was gazetted before the commission had finished taking evidence.⁸⁴

The restrictions on cane-cutting and cultivation in the McCawley award elicited protests not only from the Japanese. In March 1920, a petition from sixty-two Pacific Islanders in the Mackay district was sent to E.B. Swayne, member for Mirani, to be presented to the Queensland Parliament. The Government was asked

to reparate [sic] us to our homes or Find some
place and Establish us so as we can live and Give
us a genuine Market for our Goods as we are
debarred [sic] by act from working in sugar Farms
Grown by white labor or white Farmers...

James Pearce, a local farmer, who forwarded this petition to Swayne, also raised the matter at a meeting of the Mackay branch of the UCGA but was given no support.⁸⁵ The Indians also protested. In 1920 a petition from Indian residents was sent to the governor of Queensland. Theodore met delegations of Indians in March and December and memorandums on the subject were drawn up.⁸⁶ Later in the year, a protest concerning the disabilities suffered by Indian residents in Queensland was received from the Indians

84. CPP IV, 1920-21, p.916, Misc.Vol., 1920-21, pp.183, 184, 195, F.W. Martyn, pp.297-98, A. Murray; A1 19/13433, passim, AA.

85. Petition from Polynesians in the Mackay district, 3 Mar.1920, Mackay, 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA; J. Pearce to Swayne, 8 Feb.1920, *ibid.*; Newspaper cutting, *MM* 18 Apr.1920, *ibid.*; *MM* 20 Apr.1920. For the response to this appeal, see Chapter 7, p.286-87.

86. The secretary of state for India was concerned that no more exemptions would be issued under the Sugar Cultivation Act, and that the Act was not being administered in a generous spirit. Dept of Agriculture, Employment of Indians and Japanese in Sugar cane fields, 13 Feb.1920[?], memo., 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Scrivens for Cabinet. Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, 2 Mar. 1920, memo., *ibid.*; Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, 16 Feb.1924, memo., *ibid.*; Dept of Agriculture, Sugar Cultivation Act, 19 Dec.1924, memo., *ibid.*; Milner to Goold-Adams. Qld.No.51, 22 Oct.1919, forw. by Goold-Adams to Theodore, 19 Dec.1919, 13436, *ibid.*

Overseas Association.⁸⁷

Such protests had no effect. Over the next few years the impact of the McCawley award was to reduce substantially the employment of non-Europeans in the sugar industry. But it did not supply a final solution to the problem, since 'coloured aliens' could still be employed in the cultivation of sugar cane on farms owned by their countrymen or on small farms. Only total prohibition would satisfy the AWU and its members, and in future sugar award hearings, the AWU continued to argue for preference to unionists as the most effective method of removing 'coloured' labour from the industry.

IN MAY 1920 police inspectors in Townsville, Cairns and Maryborough again collected information on the number of 'coloured aliens' working in sugar, the number with certificates of exemption and the names of the principal employers (see Appendix F).⁸⁸ These returns were intended for the use of Judge MacNaughton, who was hearing the current Sugar Field and Mill Workers Award, but were not received till after his judgment was delivered on 3 June. MacNaughton commented that the question of 'coloured' labour was important only in the far north, where large growers continued to prefer such labour. Although the AWU claim for preference was again rejected, MacNaughton sought to tighten further the restrictions on 'coloured' labour by amending two provisions of the 1919 award. The maximum acreage of cane planted on farms employing 'coloured' labour for cultivation was reduced from seventy-five to forty acres. Since the clause requiring their wages to be paid in the presence of a government officer was a dead letter, it was stipulated that

87. Since this was a matter with possible international consequences, Hughes requested a copy of Theodore's reply. H.S.L. Polak to Under Sec. for State, 9 Jan.1920, forw. by Sec. of State to Prime Min., No.7, 26 Jan.1920, forw. by Prime Min. to Premier, 30 Aug.1920, ibid., also in A1 20/5592, AA; Dept of Agriculture, Employment of Indians and Japanese in Sugar cane fields, 13 Feb.1920, [?], memo., 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Under Chief Sec., 23 Nov.1920, ibid.

88. Police Commissioner to Insp., Townsville, Cairns and Maryborough, 24 May 1920, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Insp., Cairns, to Police Commissioner, 27 May, 28 May, 29 May 1920, telegrams, ibid.; Insp., Townsville, to Police Commissioner, 27 May 1920, ibid. This information was forwarded to the home secretary, who had requested the information.

non-observation of this provision would constitute a breach of the award - thus placing the onus on the employer to comply with this requirement.⁸⁹

MacNaughton repeated a warning given by McCawley in 1919, that legislation might be necessary to preserve the industry for 'white' labour. The Government, however, was again bound - perhaps conveniently - by the new sugar agreement with the Commonwealth Government concluded on 18 March 1920, against any legislative or administrative act inconsistent with the agreement.⁹⁰

In 1921 the AWU continued its efforts to remove 'coloured' labour from the sugar industry. In Cairns in February about 200 Japanese were evicted from their regular work in Babinda and other sugar areas. It was rumoured that they would protest strongly to their consul-general, but there is no evidence that they did so. Later in the same month the local AWU branch warned the Babinda Farmers' Association that there would be severe industrial trouble if the sugar award's provisions concerning the employment of 'coloured aliens' continued to be breached. The Association expressed its opposition to such employment and asked to be informed of any such contravention of the award.⁹¹

A new sugar award was handed down by Judge MacNaughton on 4 July 1921. Pritchard, for the ASPA, had argued that the award already met every reasonable demand against the employment of 'coloured' labour and that these men were chiefly employed by their own countrymen. Nevertheless, preference was granted to AWU members on farms with over forty acres of sugar cane, though this still allowed small farmers to employ non-union labour. In the case of mill workers, the preference clause did not apply to those persons employed at the mills last season who were unable to join the AWU, and

89. The special dietary requirements for non-Europeans were maintained. QIG V, 1920, pp.579, 580, 582, 586, 588.

90. QIG IV, 1919, p.518, V, 1920, p.579; CPP IV, 1920-21, p.903.

91. NOR 21 Feb.1921, p.17; CMF 22 Feb.1921. In January AWU members were requested to report any breaches of the prohibition of the employment of non-Europeans on farms with over forty acres of cane. W 20 Jan.1921.

therefore non-Europeans could be kept on in such employment. MacNaughton granted preference largely to prevent the employment of 'coloured' labour, which, he considered, some employers still used to an undesirable extent.⁹²

The combination of the Sugar Cultivation Act and the sugar awards handed down in 1919, 1920 and 1921 had a marked impact on the employment of non-Europeans. The very significant reduction between May 1919 and May 1920 in the number of non-Europeans employed, particularly in the far north, is highlighted in Appendix F. Since 1915, CSR's policy had been to retain the services of long-term non-European employees but not to engage any others.⁹³ In October 1919 in Mackay Pacific Islanders were put off by farmers on the advice of the local constable; one Islander, Jimmy Tanna, told the police magistrate that he was unemployed because he was debarred from cane-cutting by the award. The petition from Pacific Islanders in Mackay in 1920, which has been quoted, is further evidence of the award's effect.⁹⁴ Other groups were similarly affected. In January 1921, for instance, three Indians put off by an Innisfail farmer after he had been warned that he was contravening the award, applied to the Government for relief rations.⁹⁵

92. In March, police inspectors once again were instructed to forward urgently returns on 'coloured aliens' in the sugar industry, but this information (which had been requested by the ASPA) was not used during the hearings for the award. ASJ XIII, 10 Jun.1921, p.187; QIC VI, 1921, pp.531, 532, 536, 537, 538; General Manager to Manager, Victoria, 14 Jun., telegram, 16 Jun.1921, No.869, pp.329, 333, 142/1572, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 15 Jun., telegram, 16 Jun.1921, No.924, pp.17, 19, 142/1527, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 24 Jun.1921, No.772, 142/966, RSSS-ANUA.

93. General Manager to Manager, Homebush, 18 May 1916, No.161, 142/1247, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Hambledon, 20 Jul.1916, P No.66, p.466, 142/1061, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 5 Jun.1919, P No.197, p.150, 142/1067, RSSS-ANUA. Even Martyn admitted that CSR did not employ 'coloured' labour to any great extent. CPP Misc.Vol., 1920-21, p.199.

94. Manager, Homebush, to General Manager, 6 Oct.1919, P No.114, 142/3101, RSSS-ANUA; MM 14 Oct.1919. As a result of this petition, a suggestion to establish a reserve for Pacific Islanders was investigated in 1921. See Chapter 7.

95. NQR 31 Jan.1921, p.27. For other examples, see NQR 14 Nov.1921, p.49, 26 May 1924, p.31; Manager, Goondi, to General Manager, 3 Jul.1919, P No.120, 142/3086, RSSS-ANUA.

The Sugar Cultivation Act and the sugar award were being applied stringently. In the last quarter of 1921, in Cairns, Ayr, Ingham and Mackay, there were numerous prosecutions for such breaches of the award as employing 'coloured aliens' on farms with over forty acres of cane, or failing to pay wages in the presence of a government officer. In October, for example, an Ayr farmer was fined for employing two Islanders on a farm planted with more than forty acres of cane. In this same month, clerks of petty sessions were advised that no dictation tests were to be given to any 'coloured aliens' until their applications had first been considered by the Department of Agriculture.⁹⁶

There was also considerable agitation, in these post-war years, to ensure that preference was given to returned soldiers in employment in the sugar industry, especially over non-Europeans and especially in the mills. In May 1919, the Ryan Government asked local authorities to give preference to returned soldiers over unnaturalised aliens.⁹⁷ The Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia was rapidly becoming a powerful pressure group, to which mill owners and growers were eager to demonstrate their patriotism. Both CSR and Pioneer Sugar Mills had policies of employing returned soldiers wherever possible.⁹⁸ In 1921 at the annual conference of the Townsville district branch of the League, opposition was expressed to the employment of Japanese at the Pioneer and Inkerman Mills, but the

96. NQR 31 Oct., p.17, 14 Nov., p.49, 21 Nov., p.10, 5 Dec., p.36, 12 Dec.1921, p.5; MM 17 Nov.1921; CMP 5 Nov.1921; W 2 Feb.1922; W. Watt vs. G. Rubagotti, 21 Oct.1921, CPS 12H/S4, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Clerks of Petty Sessions, 20 Oct.1921, Circular No.799, 164G, AGS/N361, QSA.

97. NQR 19 May 1919, p.9. See also BC 15 Mar.1920; QPD CXXXIV, 1919-20, pp.2703, 2970; Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, pp.335-36.

98. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 5 Jun.1919, P No.197, p.150, 142/1067, RSSS-ANUA; Smith to Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia, Charters Towers, 18 Sep.1919, p.91, and Smith to J. Leahy, Ayr, 28 May 1920, p.463, Pioneer Mill Letter Book, 1919-20.

meeting was assured that when their contracts expired they would be replaced by returned soldiers. The League's attitude to all unnaturalized aliens (including Europeans) was revealed at the state annual conferences in 1920 and 1921: on both occasions motions were carried to deport all such people.⁹⁹

The preference granted to AWU members by Judge MacNaughton did not remove all 'coloured' sugar workers, who could still cultivate cane for small farmers. In Cairns in December 1921, James Larcombe, the minister for railways, was asked by an AWU deputation to request the Government to legislate to exclude all 'coloured' labour from the industry; as promised, he referred the matter to Gillies, the minister for agriculture.¹⁰⁰

Further protests were made at the annual delegate meeting of the Queensland branch of the AWU in January 1922, and two resolutions received from the Cairns branch were carried, and passed on to the executive for immediate action. These urged the Government to amend the Sugar Cultivation Act so that all 'coloured aliens' were entirely eliminated from the sugar industry and also, as an immediate precaution against illegal employment, to call in all certificates of exemption and cancel those not received by a certain date.¹⁰¹ The Theodore Government was not prepared to legislate, but in later years an examination of certificates of exemption was undertaken.

99. NQR 31 Jan.1921, p.33, 15 Mar.1920, p.73, 8 Aug.1921, p.82. For other instances of the League's opposition to 'coloured aliens', see QIG IV, 1919, p.518; NQR 31 Jan.1921, p.33, 26 Jun.1922, p.20; Sec. of ASPA to Prime Min., 1 Aug.1922, A457 0108/6, AA.

100. NQR 19 Dec.1921, p.37. On 9 September 1919, Lennon was appointed speaker of the House and Gillies became minister for agriculture.

101. It was claimed that many farmers had subdivided their farms amongst family members in order to meet the forty acre restriction on the employment of 'coloured' labour, and that many non-European farmers employed countrymen who were not exempted. W 2 Feb.1922.

The Government did advise local authorities to be vigilant in detecting evasions of the Sugar Cultivation Act and sugar award, and to press for heavy penalties in prosecuting such breaches. The AWU had complained that there had been no prosecution of See Chin, a wealthy Chinese farmer in the Cairns district, although police were aware that most of his thirty employees did not hold certificates of exemption. In May 1922 See Chin was finally fined for employing an unexempted 'coloured alien'. Further charges were adjourned when his solicitor appealed against the conviction, on the grounds that Section 4 of the Sugar Cultivation Act was inconsistent with and replaced by Clause 4 of the present Sugar Field and Mill Workers Award. The Crown gave in and filed a consent.¹⁰² When the other cases against See Chin were heard in December, only a nominal fine was imposed.¹⁰³

Strict enforcement of the Sugar Cultivation Act and the sugar award was continued in 1923 and 1924. In Babinda, farmers put off 'coloured' employees when AWU members threatened to place an embargo on their cane. But by early 1924 farmers were again employing non-Europeans, and further embargoes by AWU members were expected. In February 1924 the far northern district committee again called on the Government to legislate to prevent the employment of 'coloured aliens'.¹⁰⁴ The matter was raised in caucus on

102. Section 4 of the Sugar Cultivation Act prohibited the employment of any person not exempted from the Act's operation; Clause 4 of the sugar award prohibited the employment of 'coloured' labour in cane-cutting, or in the cultivation of cane on farms with over forty acres. Ibid.; CMP 5 May 1922; NQR 15 May 1922, p.10. In the previous year an Innisfail farmer had sought legal advice on whether he could fight against the prohibition on 'coloured' labour, but apparently decided against it. NQR 31 Jan.1921, p.27.

103. Cairns Times cited in NQR 1 Jan.1923, p.29; Insp., Cairns, to Police Commissioner, 13 Mar.1923, 08183, 1336M, POL/J40, QSA. For other prosecutions under the Sugar Cultivation Act and sugar award, see W 27 Apr.1922; NQR 15 May 1922, p.10; QPP II, 1922, pp.455, 457.

104. See Chief Insp. to Police Commissioner, 5 Dec.1923, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Campbell to Dunstan, 7 Feb.1924, forw. by Dunstan to Gillies, 14 Feb.1924, 05577, ibid.; Under Chief Sec. to Dunstan, 20 Feb.1924, 1306, ibid.; Under Home Sec. to Police Commissioner, 20 Feb.1924, 05692, ibid.; Police Commissioner to Insp., 29 Feb.1924, Circular No.1250, ibid.; D. Brophy to Insp., Cairns, 2 Jan.1924, 170G, AGS/N361, QSA; Const. to Actg Serg., Gordonvale, 1 Feb.1924, ibid.

4 March and 30 April, and a resolution was submitted to cabinet that immediate action should be taken to examine all certificates issued under the Sugar Cultivation Act and to prosecute, and cancel the certificates of, all those who presented certificates which had not been issued to them originally.¹⁰⁵ Such action (and even then without prosecutions or cancellations) was not carried out effectively until 1933.

In May 1924 in Townsville, Judge J. Douglas began taking evidence for the new sugar award. AWU members continued to complain of the competition from non-European sugar workers, claiming that their numbers were not decreasing and the provisions in the award were disregarded. A return given in of 'coloured' mill employees in Queensland, however, revealed that there were only 129 thus employed. In handing down the award on 4 July, Douglas stated that such evasions of the award could not be prevented unless some sort of registration was made of every 'coloured' sugar worker. As long as the Government permitted the employment of such people, it was not within the province of the Arbitration Court to prohibit it absolutely.¹⁰⁶

The Government was not prepared to enact such legislation, and similarly chose to ignore protests in December 1924 against the (legitimate) employment of exempted Japanese by Pioneer Sugar Mills.¹⁰⁷ However, Gillies attempted to deal with one of the AWU's complaints. On 24 May 1924, a further regulation was gazetted under the Sugar Cultivation Act, requiring all those with certificates to submit them, between 1 January and 31 March in each year, to the nearest clerk of petty sessions for comparison of the fingerprints on the certificate with those of the holder; any unsatisfactory certificates would be impounded. This regulation was designed to

105. Scrivens prepared a memorandum for Gillies on the subject of exemptions under and prosecutions for breaches of the Sugar Cultivation Act, advising him that the alternatives were to continue with the present policy of not granting any further exemptions and prosecuting all offenders, or to rescind the earlier decision and issue more certificates of exemption. Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, Scrivens to Gillies, 16 Feb. 1924, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA; Caucus Minutes, Parliamentary Labor Party, 4 Mar. 1924, p.164, 30 Apr. 1924, p.169.

106. W 29 May, 5 Jun., 12 Jun., 19 Jun. 1924; BC 13 Jun. 1924; QIG IX, 1924, pp.610, 619. See also ASJ XVI, 8 Aug. 1924, p.296; W 10 Jul. 1924.

107. Dept of Agriculture, Sugar Cultivation Act, 19 Dec. 1924, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.

prevent trafficking in certificates.¹⁰⁸

It was claimed that the certificates of dead 'coloured aliens' were taken and used by countrymen; in order to prevent this, the police and clerks of petty sessions often reclaimed the certificates when their holders died, and returned them to the Department of Agriculture. In cases where certificates were lost, rigorous checks were made before duplicates were issued.¹⁰⁹ The new regulation would mean more stringent checks. In July 1924, for example, the certificate produced by George Anafun, a Malaitan in Mackay, was impounded when it was discovered that his fingerprints did not match those on the certificate. An extensive investigation was finally closed when Anafun produced his own certificate which he had confused with that of Taromai's, a deceased Solomon Islander.¹¹⁰

Throughout North Queensland in 1924 and 1925, there were many prosecutions for breaches of the Sugar Cultivation Act and sugar award, with police magistrates threatening to impose the maximum penalty on future offenders.¹¹¹ Such prosecutions continued throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s but in gradually decreasing numbers. The Arbitration Court's

108. QPP II, 1924, p.347; ASJ XVI, 6 Jun.1924, p.189; BI 3 Jun.1924. Since 1913 there had been intermittent complaints that certificates were being used by persons other than their original holders. See Applic. No. 325E, Charley Aban, AGS/N100, QSA; Extract from A.E. Carling to Dunstan, forw. by Dunstan to Lennon, 3 Aug.1917, 118G, AGS/N358, QSA; W 9 Feb.1922, 29 May 1924.

109. For some examples, see Applic. No.899E, Alec Ondoo, 861E, Walter Mylung, 827E, Mathew Malachi, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.980E, Taromai, 994E, Harry Tarryango, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No.390E, Luke Logomier, AGS/N100, QSA.

110. The certificate had been issued under the name of Hanfin, which added to the confusion. Applic. No.360E, Hanfin, *ibid.* For other such examples, see Applic.No.813E, Charley Maui, AGS/N102, QSA; NQR 2 Feb.1925, p.63; CMP 26 Jan.1925.

111. See NQR 26 May, p.88, 4 Aug., p.98, 15 Dec.1924, p.103, 9 Feb., p.33, 20 Jul., p.97, 23 Nov.1925, p.40; W 29 May 1924, 29 Jan.1925; CMP 11 Mar.1925; MM 26 Feb.1925; Senior Serg. to Insp., Cairns, 26 May 1925, M1336, POL/J40, QSA.

restrictions had effectively reduced if not eliminated the employment of non-Europeans. By 1929 W.H. Doherty, secretary of the Queensland Cane Growers' Council, could claim that to all intents and purposes there was no 'coloured' labour in the sugar industry.¹¹² In future sugar awards there were no further provisions aimed specifically at limiting the employment of non-Europeans.

Protests against the employment of non-Europeans continued intermittently, as also did attempts by the Government to tighten up the operation of the Sugar Cultivation Act. In 1927 the issue of the Japanese working for Pioneer Sugar Mills was again raised, when the Ayr branch of the Labor Party protested that unexempted Japanese were using the certificates of countrymen who had died or left Australia. The under secretary for agriculture, J. Munro, pointed out that this was not possible under the regulation gazetted in 1924, which required certificates to be presented annually to the nearest clerk of petty sessions for inspection and comparison of the fingerprints of the holder with those on the certificate.¹¹³ In fact, as Munro later admitted, this regulation had been a dead letter. Under a new regulation gazetted on 27 July 1929, employers of 'coloured aliens' were required to furnish yearly returns concerning such employees.¹¹⁴

112. Doherty to G.F. Hudson, 7 Aug.1929, 8955, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA. See, for examples of prosecutions, NQR 17 Jan., p.38, 7 Feb.1927, p.8, 29 Oct.1928, p.31; MM 5 Nov.1932; QPP I, 1927, pp.1105-7. By the late 1930s, breaches of the Sugar Cultivation Act and sugar award by non-Europeans do not seem to have been prosecuted, as two examples of Pacific Islanders in cane-cutting gangs illustrate. Compulsory Conference, Industrial Magistrate's Court, 7 Sep.1937, A/20620, QSA; Industrial Inspector vs Edward Tass, 16 Oct.1940, CPS 10B/S27, QSA.

113. NQR 21 Mar.1927, p.87; Minister's Questions, Dept of Agriculture, 6 Sep.1927, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA. In 1928 this ALP branch was again concerned at the employment of non-Europeans. See NQR 19 Mar.1928, p.11.

114. Apart from the Japanese in Ayr, very few non-Europeans had presented their certificates for inspection. Under Sec. for Agriculture to Doherty, 28 Nov.1929, 8955, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA; Munro to Sec. for Agriculture, 30 Apr.1929, ibid.; QGG CXXXIII, 1929, p.223; Dept of Agriculture, The Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, 24 May 1929, 8955, memo., 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA. For the response of CSR, see General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 31 Jul.1929, No.45, p.139, 142/1532, RSSS-ANUA.

While the mills forwarded such returns, these were not forthcoming from the farmers. In 1931 in an attempt to enforce compliance with the regulations, clerks of petty sessions were asked to supply the names of those who had produced their certificates for inspection, and also the names and addresses of growers who had employed non-Europeans in 1930.¹¹⁵

This latest regulation had failed to provide the Department of Agriculture with a complete record of these 'coloured aliens' still employed in the sugar industry. In 1929 Munro had suggested that an officer of the Department should be sent to the largest centres to check on certificates of exemption, so that those who did not produce them for annual inspection could be prosecuted. This proposal was finally taken up in 1933. In March 1933, F.W. Bulcock, the minister for agriculture, received a deputation from the Cairns AWU branch, protesting against the employment contrary to the award of Indian cane-cutters by Indian farmers. When cabinet discussed the matter in early April, it was decided to hold a 'muster' of all non-Europeans who came under the operation of the Sugar Cultivation Act, in order to ascertain their total number and the proportion who were illegally employed in the industry.¹¹⁶

Police inspectors were advised that Munro would be conducting this 'census' in sugar centres from Bundaberg north, and that they were to ensure that those persons involved presented themselves. Just before the 'census' began, the threatened industrial dispute broke out in Cairns over the Indian cane-cutters. It was finally resolved when the Indian farmers agreed to replace their countrymen with European gangs.¹¹⁷

115. Under Sec. for Agriculture to Clerks of Petty Sessions, 1 Apr. 1931, Circular, 1019, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA. The Department then asked the growers to explain why they had failed to comply with the regulation. See Under Sec. for Agriculture to Y. Endo, Homebush, 23 Apr. 1931, *ibid.*; Under Sec. for Agriculture to G. Okada, 23 Apr. 1931, *ibid.*

116. A recent meeting of cane-cutters at Freshwater had resolved that these Indians should not be employed in the present season if they themselves were unemployed. Notes of a Deputation from J. Campbell, District Sec., AWU, Cairns, to Min. for Agriculture, 20 Mar. 1933, *ibid.*; Newspaper cutting, *Daily Mail* 13 Mar. 1933, *ibid.*

117. Under Sec. for Agriculture to Police Commissioner, 6 Apr. 1933, 09970, M1336, POL/J40, also in 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872. OSA: Police Commissioner to Insp., Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Maryborough, 24 Apr. 1933, memo., M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Advertisement for Census, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA; Sec. of Freshwater ALP to Min. for Agriculture, 12 May 1933, *ibid.*; CMP 29 May, 30 May, 31 May, 1 Jun. 1933.

The 'census' was held in late May and early June. In late July Munro reported that only 208 (including 74 Pacific Islanders) of the original 1,558 non-Europeans issued with certificates, had presented themselves, either with their certificates or to say that they had lost these in cyclones or floods. An additional twelve (including three Islanders) claimed to have been issued with certificates which could not be found under those names. A 'large number' without certificates had also attended to ascertain their position in regard to future employment in the sugar industry. Many were born in Australia and had believed themselves to be exempt from the Sugar Cultivation Act's operation; others claimed that through ignorance they had failed to apply for certificates, although eligible as long-standing residents. There were also some cane growers who had only recently discovered that they were contravening the Act.¹¹⁸ No action was taken against these people in the following years. As Bulcock commented in forwarding the 'census' results to the AWU secretary, C. Fallon, large numbers of those originally issued with certificates had died, left the industry or the State, and most of the remainder would soon be too old to work.¹¹⁹

CLEARLY the declining numbers of non-European sugar workers, due both to the effect of the restrictions imposed on their employment and the loss of many through death, departure or retirement, contributed to the lessening of agitation against them by the labour movement. An equally significant factor was that from the mid-1920s the AWU turned its attention to what was perceived as a greater threat to its achievements in the sugar

118. There were twenty-six Pacific Islanders amongst thirty-six 'Uncertificated Persons Born in Australia' and four Islanders amongst twenty-three 'Uncertificated Growers'. Munro to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 27 Jul.1933, and encl. lists, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA; Dept of Agriculture, 14 Sep.1933, memo., ibid.

119. Sec. for Agriculture to Fallon, 24 Jul.1933, ibid. Since only five non-Europeans had been examined and had passed the dictation test between 1928 and 1933, it was very unlikely that large numbers without certificates would have been able to gain exemption. Dept of Agriculture, 14 Sep.1933, ibid.

industry - the increasingly high proportions of southern Europeans, principally Italians, in the sugar districts of North Queensland. While there was antagonism to their purchase of cane farms, it was their engagement as sugar workers which most concerned the union. Although the reaction to Italian migrants can only be briefly described, it is integral to an understanding of the labour movement's campaign against non-Europeans.

Italian immigration to North Queensland had begun in 1891, and even then the small number of indentured labourers had drawn opposition from British workers.¹²⁰ Large-scale Italian immigration to Queensland only began in 1922, but quickly drew opposition from not only the AWU but also the cane growers' associations and patriotic groups such as the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia. The League and the Australian Natives Association were opposed to aliens acquiring land, and concerned that the British element in the sugar industry would be swamped.¹²¹ However, the canegrowers' associations took a more conciliatory line, emphasizing that those of British descent remained the majority of farmers, cane-cutters and mill workers except in certain centres, such as Babinda, Goondi, Mourilyan and the Herbert River.¹²²

Some unionists had displayed hostility to southern Europeans before the 'invasion'.¹²³ As with reactions to non-Europeans, the hostility to

120. See Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, pp.202-3; Mercer, Racial Attitudes towards Melanesians in Queensland, pp.193-94.

121. See NQR 27 Jul.1925, p.59; ASJ XIV, 4 Aug.1922, p.241; M.A. Curdon, Australian Attitudes to Italy and Italians, 1922-36 With special reference to Queensland (B.A. Hons, University of Queensland, 1970), pp.93-94; Henderson, Italians in the Hinchinbrook Shire, p.271.

122. ASJ XV, 6 Apr.1923, p.71, 8 Feb.1924, p.637, XXI, 4 Apr.1929, pp.7-8, XXII, 5 Jun., pp.131-33, 3 Jul.1930, p.251; Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, pp.168-70; L.D. Henderson, 'Economic or Racist - Australia's Reactions to Italians in North Queensland, 1921-1939', in Reynolds (ed.), Race Relations in North Queensland, p.346.

123. See OPP 11, 1916-17, pp.837, 908-9; ASJ VIII, 8 Feb.1917, p.778; NQR 12 May 1919, p.29.

southern Europeans in the 1920s and 1930s was more marked in the Innisfail, Cairns and Burdekin districts than in the long-established areas of the Herbert River and Mackay.¹²⁴ The southern European 'problem' became a recurring feature in the far northern district reports presented to the AWU's annual delegate meetings, and several strikes occurred over the proportion of southern Europeans in cane-cutting gangs. In 1925, for example, Babinda, South Johnstone and El Arish AWU members demanded that seventy-five per cent British cane-cutters be employed during the crushing, and southern Europeans were refused union tickets.¹²⁵ At the annual delegate meeting in 1926, a motion was passed to instruct the executive to lift this embargo on the issuing of tickets to southern Europeans. Yet later in the year the AWU branch at Mossman was still refusing to issue tickets to Italians.¹²⁶

In 1925 the Arbitration Court had included in the sugar award, at the AWU's request, a clause giving first preference during the crushing season to cane-cutters, irrespective of nationality, who had cut cane in the area and held AWU tickets during the last season, and second preference to those who had held AWU tickets in the last season. This provision, maintained in subsequent awards, applied to the Johnstone River district only and was intended to cut out recently arrived migrants. It was also

124. See Henderson, *Italians in the Hinchinbrook Shire*, pp.265, 267, 270; Jones, *Hurricane Lamps*, pp.353-55; Jones, *Trinity Phoenix*, p.463.

125. W 29 Jan.1925, 21 Jan., 28 Jan.1926, 18 Jan.1928, 18 Jan.1933; QIG X, 1925, p.579; ASJ XVII, 9 Apr.1925, p.58; Gurdon, *Australian Attitudes to Italians*, p.72; Henderson, *Italians in the Hinchinbrook Shire*, p.265. There was also trouble in Mackay in 1925. See ASJ XVII, 10 Sep.1925, p.382; QIG X, 1925, p.578.

126. The representatives of the far northern district supported the motion on the grounds that non-unionised southern Europeans were a threat to class solidarity. W 28 Jan.1926; NQR 4 Oct.1926, p.104.

stipulated in the 1926 award that employers could be required to pay wages fortnightly to employees in the presence of a government officer: the AWU wanted this to ensure that southern Europeans unable to read the award would be paid award wages.¹²⁷

The Queensland Government was not prepared to legislate to reduce the number of southern European sugar workers, since such legislation would contravene the treaty existing between the British and Italian Governments. In 1925, to appease the AWU, a royal commission was appointed to investigate the social and economic effects of southern European immigration to the State. Known as the Ferry Commission, after its commissioner, T.A. Ferry, it was a superficial and prejudiced investigation but it served the purpose of deflecting criticism of the Government's inaction.¹²⁸ Senator Crawford, former President of the ASPA, suggested that the Queensland Government could use the Sugar Cultivation Act to stop 'foreigners' growing cane, but in fact Europeans were exempted from the Act's operation.¹²⁹ However, the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act was amended in 1933 so that the Central Board's permission was required before the sale or lease of any assigned land; this was seen by some as an attempt to prevent Italians from buying or leasing cane farms.¹³⁰

The Commonwealth Government in 1925 had acted to limit the flow of southern European immigration¹³¹, but was not ready to interfere with their

127. ASJ XVII, 5 Jun.1925, p.125; QIG X, 1925, p.446, XI, 1926, p.485; BC 24 Aug.1926; NQR 30 Aug.1926, p.89. Gurdon, Australian Attitudes to Italians, pp.72-73; Henderson, Italians in the Hinchinbrook Shire, p.265 n17.

128. See ASJ XXII, 3 Jul.1930, p.252; QIG X, 1925, p.578; QPP III, 1925, pp.25-52; Henderson, 'Economic or Racist', pp.345, 357 n10. For different views of the Ferry Commission, see ibid., pp.335-37; Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, p.333.

129. The minister for agriculture, Forgan Smith, pointed out that an alien wishing to purchase a farm, could be subjected to the dictation test under the Land Act of 1910. BC 22 Oct.1925; NQR 26 Oct.1925, p.3; Henderson, 'Economic or Racist'. pp.328, 350 n9.

130. 24 Geo. V, No.27, s.3; Henderson, 'Economic or Racist', pp.328, 350 n8. This Act was passed in 1933, and not 1934 as Henderson states.

131. The Immigration Act Amendment Act of 1925 empowered the governor-general by proclamation to prohibit or limit the entry of aliens of any race or nationality, but it was seldom used after the excitement over Italian immigration died down. No.7 of 1925, s7; C.A. Price, Southern Europeans in Australia (Melbourne, 1963), pp.86-92.

employment within Australia. The 1930 Commonwealth sugar inquiry, set up to investigate the necessity or otherwise of the embargo on imported sugar, took evidence on the question of the 'alien penetration' of the industry. But its report only gave statistics for 'alien' sugar workers in each of the three sugar districts and not for each mill area, thus successfully disguising their preponderance in the Herbert River and Innisfail districts.¹³²

Neither the Commonwealth nor the Queensland Government was prepared to establish a British quota for sugar workers, and the Arbitration Court was similarly reluctant. In February 1930 in Ayr the British Preference League was formed and within a year there were ten branches in centres from Proserpine to Cairns. The League, which demanded that all labouring and skilled work in the sugar industry should be restricted immediately to ninety per cent British and increased to one hundred per cent within three years, was at least partly responsible for the 'Gentlemen's Agreement'. Signed on 24 June 1930 by representatives of the ASPA, the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the AWU, this agreement provided that seventy-five per cent of cane-cutters would be British with the exception of the Victoria, Macknade and Mourilyan mill areas where there was already a high proportion of Italians.¹³³ Europeans who were naturalized British subjects were not included in the British quota, and the AWU resisted attempts by the ASPA to include them; but in the local operation of the 'Gentlemen's Agreement', northern Europeans (of whom there were not large numbers) were often classed as British cutters. Thus Germans, against whom public opinion had been so bitter during the war, received preference over Italians and other southern Europeans. In the years after 1930, notwithstanding some disputes

132. By this total, only twenty per cent of sugar workers were 'foreigners', and ten per cent of these were naturalized. Henderson, 'Economic or Racist', p.346.

133. QIG XV, 1930, p.406; ASJ XXII, 3 Jul.1930, pp.251-52; W 25 Jun.1930; Henderson, 'Economic or Racist', pp.330-31, 342, 347. Hambledon had till 1932 and Goondi till 1933 to achieve the seventy-five per cent British quota; the exempted areas were required to employ as many British as possible. For examples of the agitation early in 1930, see NQR 5 Mar., p.44. 29 Mar., p.22, 3 May, p.16, 17 May 1930, pp.62, 72-73.

over contraventions, this agreement helped to keep industrial peace. While not a party to the 'Gentlemen's Agreement', CSR accepted the quotas, presumably to avoid confrontation with the AWU and also to deflect southern criticism of the presence of non-Britishers (meaning for all practical purposes southern Europeans) in a protected industry.¹³⁴

Like 'coloured aliens', southern Europeans were accused of breaking the award by working for longer hours, lower wages and under poor conditions.¹³⁵ But there were some important differences in their treatment. The refusal to issue union tickets to southern Europeans was a response to a crisis situation, and not a long-term policy. While southern Europeans may have been regarded as second-class unionists, they were, after all, 'whites'. Union officials stressed that their opposition to southern Europeans was economically motivated, and not a racist response. They were prepared to admit that southern Europeans, once educated in union matters, made very reliable unionists and the AWU made some attempts, such as printing the sugar award in Italian, to provide this education. Whereas the union objected to the employment of non-Europeans in any capacity, they were prepared to allow southern Europeans to undertake the less lucrative and unskilled farm labouring work.¹³⁶

THE FOREGOING discussion has detailed the campaign mounted by the AWU with the support of the Labor Party against non-European labour. This issue assumed less importance from the mid-1920s, when attention switched to the question of 'alien penetration'. There were also attempts to discriminate against

134. Newspaper cutting, Daily Mail 20 Apr.1933, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA; Serg. to Insp., Cairns, 12 Aug.1941, 567, POL/J40, QSA; W 18 Jan.1933; Henderson, *Italians in the Hinchinbrook Shire*, p.131.

135. Ibid., pp.181-85, 189-91; Hunt, 'Exclusivism and Unionism', p.94.

136. Ibid.: CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, pp.291, 292; Henderson, 'Economic or Racist', p.332, 343, 344, 346; W 19 Mar.1925, 25 Jun.1930; ASJ VIII, 8 Feb. 1917, p.778; Curdon, *Australian Attitudes to Italians*, pp.74-75; Henderson, *Italians in the Hinchinbrook Shire*, pp.185, 191.

non-Europeans in other occupations. Two main targets for the AWU were pastoral work and hotel employment. In 1915 AWU members in Charleville refused to shear for any pastoralist who employed Chinese at scrub-cutting. Finally, in the 1921 award for station hands, the employment of 'coloured aliens' was prohibited except in cooking, gardening or prickly-pear cutting; even in these jobs preference was to be given to European workers.¹³⁷

Employment of non-Europeans in hotels also drew strong opposition from the AWU. At the annual delegate meeting in 1915 (and also in later years), a resolution was carried recommending that the Licensing Act be amended to prohibit the employment of 'coloured aliens' on licensed premises. The Government did not take up the recommendation. Nor would the Arbitration Court: in 1923 Judge McCawley rejected an application by the AWU to prohibit the employment of non-Europeans under the hotel, cafe and restaurant employees award, on the grounds that it would be unjust to debar such people from this livelihood.¹³⁸

The Labor Government did not amend the Licensing Act but it did enact other discriminatory measures (see Appendix E). The Elections Act of 1915, since hailed as an important reform measure, disqualified all aboriginals of Australia, Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands from voting, and the Jury Act of 1929, disqualified those who were not naturalized and those who could not read or write English from jury service. Under the Factories and Shops Act Amendment Act of 1916 all furniture manufactured in factories was to be stamped according to the labour used - 'European labour only', 'Chinese labour', or 'European and other labour'.¹³⁹ In this same year, the State Advances

137. BC 10 Sep.1915; W 9 Sep.1915, 27 Jan.1921; QIG VI, 1921, p.527.

138. W 4 Feb.1915, 23 Mar.1916, 10 Feb.1921; Australian Workers Union, Official Report of the Fourth Annual Delegate Meeting, Brisbane, January 1917 (Brisbane, 1917), p.26; CMP 5 Nov., 10 Nov.1923.

139. In the Factories and Shops Bill Theodore rejected an amendment to substitute 'Asiatic' for 'Chinese', on the grounds that this might endanger assent. QPD CXXIV, 1916-17, pp.1438, 1483-84.

Act disqualified all 'aliens' who had not first passed the dictation test from obtaining advances. Further measures such as the Government Savings Bank Act of 1916, the Dairy Produce Act of 1920, the Agricultural Bank Act of 1923, the Sugar Workers' Selection Act of 1923 and the Petroleum Act of 1923, similarly required that specified 'aliens' first pass the dictation test.

The Banana Industry Preservation Act of 1921 was modelled on the Sugar Cultivation Act. To protect local growers against imported bananas, the House of Representatives in May 1921 increased the duty on these, but there was resistance to this increase in the Senate, principally on the grounds that increased protection could not be justified while there were non-Europeans growing bananas in Australia.¹⁴⁰ The Banana Industry Preservation Bill was introduced in the Queensland parliament in September to counter such accusations, but it was a piece of political window-dressing rather than a serious attempt to remove the few non-Europeans in the industry. As Gillies stated, and as the large number of exemptions demonstrated, the intention was to prevent non-Europeans from entering the industry but not to force out those already so engaged.¹⁴¹

The Commonwealth Government, concerned at international repercussions, paid close attention to disabilities imposed by State governments on 'aliens'.¹⁴² During these years, some important concessions were made in

140. CPD XCV, 1921, pp.8512-28, XCVII, 1921, pp.10682-711, 11951-67, CXVIII, 1921, pp.13711, 13911.

141. As with the Sugar Cultivation Act, regulations were issued exempting Europeans from the Act's operation and empowering the minister for agriculture to grant exemptions. QPP I, 1922, pp.1107-9; CPD XCVII, 1921, p.11955; QPD CXXXVII, 1921, pp.472, 644; The Banana Industry Preservation Act of 1921, 64G, AGS/N96, QSA. There were 329 certificates of exemption granted, mostly to Chinese; all the Chinese already engaged in the banana industry in the Cairns district were exempted. See AGS/N87-88, QSA; May, The Chinese in Cairns and District, pp.57, 468.

142. Disabilities of Aliens and Coloured Persons within the Commonwealth and its Territories, 1920-21, A1 21/13034, AA; Aliens. Possession of Freehold Property. 11 Nov.1917. A2 17/4122, also in A2 17/13223, AA; Bailey, 'The Legal Position of Foreigners in Australia', p.46.

regard to discrimination against the nationals of India and Japan. The Nationality Act of 1920 did not specifically exclude non-Europeans from acquiring naturalization, providing instead that the governor-general could grant certificates of naturalization to aliens at his discretion. At the imperial conferences in 1921 and 1923, Australia accepted the need to remove legal disabilities on Indian residents. In fulfilment of this promise, the Electoral Act Amendment Act of 1925 enfranchised natives of British India who had been resident in Australia for at least six months. The Invalid and Old-Age Pensions Act Amendment Act of 1926 extended eligibility for pension benefits to British Indians, and the Maternity Allowance Act Amendment Act of 1926 made naturalized women eligible for the maternity allowance.¹⁴³ In 1930 Queensland belatedly followed the Commonwealth's lead and enfranchised natives of British India.¹⁴⁴

BOTH THE Commonwealth and the Queensland Governments actively discriminated against non-European residents in the years up to 1940. Yet neither government took an uncompromising stance: under pressure, they yielded and gave special treatment to groups such as the Japanese and Indians. Moreover, most of the legislative restrictions imposed applied only to non-Europeans migrants, and not to the native-born - the latter were regarded, if reluctantly, as Australians and accorded most of the rights and privileges of citizens.

The AWU, which spearheaded the campaign against the employment of non-Europeans in certain occupations, was also prepared (very grudgingly) to compromise. In 1916 AWU members were persuaded to modify their opposition to 'coloured' labour, on the grounds of international policy. In subsequent years the AWU renewed its attack and through the Arbitration Court secured close restrictions on the employment of 'coloured' labour. At the same

143. There was some Commonwealth legislation such as the Apple Bounty Act of 1918 and the Navigation Act of 1921, which discriminated against non-Europeans. See Appendix D.

144. Keith, Responsible Government, Vol.II, pp.815, 819 n2, 1203-4, 1208-9; Appendix E. See also QPD CXXXIX, 1922, p.889, CXLVII, 1925, pp.306, 946.

time, they accepted, if reluctantly, the inability of the Queensland Government to legislate on the issue and the need to give special consideration to the Japanese.

As well as being prepared under pressure to compromise, the AWU were inconsistent in their attitudes to 'coloured' labour. Under rule 6 of the AWU constitution, most but not all non-Europeans were disqualified from membership - the exceptions were Australian Aborigines, Maoris, American Negroes, and those native-born with a European parent. The special treatment for American Negroes and Maoris was justified (presumably because of their small numbers) on the grounds that they were not a 'menace'.¹⁴⁵ Attitudes to Aborigines were more equivocal. While Aborigines could join the AWU, union members resented their employment in the pastoral industry. In Queensland from 1919, after an agreement between the AWU, pastoralists and the chief protector of Aborigines, the minimum wage for Aboriginal workers was fixed at about two-thirds of the wage specified in the award.¹⁴⁶ Outside the pastoral industry, however, Aborigines were not the focus of discrimination by the AWU and most of the legislative restrictions were imposed on 'aliens' (and therefore did not apply to Aborigines).

Under rule 6 of the AWU constitution, native-born non-Europeans were ineligible for membership. In 1927 this rule was amended to the extent that any person could be admitted to membership by resolution of the union's executive council. Two years later, four native-born Pacific Islanders in Mackay were allowed to join under this provision. The AWU (and the general community) regarded such native-born people as in a different category to the migrants.¹⁴⁷

145. See ASJ XI, 12 Jun.1919, p.134.

146. Markus, 'Aborigines and the Labour Movement', p.143. For examples of the opposition to Aboriginal pastoral workers, see Caucus Minutes, State Parliamentary Labor Party, 18 Sep.1918, pp.217-18, 13 Aug.1919, pp.273-74; W 11 Jul.1918, 30 Jan.1919; NQR 14 Jan.1918, p.14.

147. Otherwise rule 6 remained unaltered until the mid-1970s. Markus, 'Aborigines and the Labour Movement', p.141; W 6 Feb.1929; MM 26 Jan.1929. See Chapter 7, pp.289-90.

While the AWU's attitudes were inconsistent, the focus of its campaign was clearly against 'coloured aliens' (and therefore not the native-born or Aborigines). That its stance was racist is demonstrated by comparing attitudes to and treatment of 'coloured aliens' and southern Europeans, but first the AWU's own rationalization of its opposition to 'coloured' labour needs to be considered.

Compared with the number of southern Europeans in North Queensland in the mid- and late 1920s, non-Europeans were not a numerical threat. But since non-Europeans were permanently disqualified from membership of the union, their small numbers assumed a greater significance. Also the proportion of non-Europeans in the far north was much higher: in 1921 non-European men constituted 11.84 per cent of the male population in coastal North Queensland but 20.75 per cent in the coastal districts of the far north.¹⁴⁸ In the far north especially, AWU members regarded 'coloured aliens' as an important obstacle in the struggle to improve conditions for sugar workers. In the union's view, employers were still seeking to reintroduce cheap indentured labour, and to subvert the union's efforts to establish decent wages and conditions for sugar workers: "the coloured alien ... is more or less a submissive slave who can be used to stay the progress of unionism in the sugar industry."¹⁴⁹

The attitudes of employers in the sugar industry lent credence to this belief. Certainly the farmers' associations opposed the employment of non-Europeans, but only the UCGA instructed its members not to employ them. The AWU believed that the ASPA only gave verbal support to a 'white' labour policy. In the far north particularly, many farmers continued to employ 'coloured aliens', even including some who had publicly spoken against such employment, and the large growers continued to argue that 'coloured' labour

148. Calculated from census. Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, 1921, pp.858-63.

149. W 15 Apr.1915, Con Ryan. See W 2 Mar.1922, 1 May 1924, 19 Mar.1925, 28 Jan.1926; CPD XCI, 1920, pp.567, 580; Mackay Sentinel 23 Feb.1930 (reference supplied by D. Hunt).

was necessary in the newer sugar areas.¹⁵⁰ The privately owned mills were also eager to maintain a proportion of non-Europeans on the grounds that they were reliable and could be used in jobs for which Europeans were unsatisfactory or hard to obtain. Japanese were retained in mill work by Pioneer Sugar Mills and CSR, and CSR kept on other non-Europeans in outside work.¹⁵¹ The Company would not relinquish non-Europeans altogether unless forced to do so.

Non-Europeans were thus associated not only with the past but also the present struggle to improve the conditions of European sugar workers. The labour movement's reaction was to press for the complete removal of 'coloured' labour from the sugar industry. The union movement seldom contemplated incorporating non-Europeans and thereby strengthening class solidarity.¹⁵² Attempts by non-Europeans to increase their wages or improve their conditions, or to join with their European co-workers in strikes¹⁵³, were ignored or derided. Yet by denying 'coloured aliens' the protection of the union, the AWU made them easy targets for exploitation by employers. When they then resorted to such 'horrible' practices as putting up deposits with growers to secure cane-cutting contracts, the AWU roundly condemned them.

150. CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.189; W 29 May 1924: Campbell to Dunstan, 7 Feb.1924, forw. by Dunstan to Gillies, 14 Feb.1924, 05577, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; QIG IV, 1919, p.518. Curlewis, Draper, Mayer and Wilcox had for example spoken against the employment of 'coloured' labour but were themselves employing such labour in 1919. CMP 19 Mar.1914, 21 Jun.1919; NQR 16 Feb.1914, p.29; ASJ VII, 8 Jul., p.253, 12 Aug.1915, p.346; Appendix F.

151. See Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 21 Jun.1916, P No.56, 27 Jul.1917, P No.95, 142/3088, RSSS-ANUA; Manager, Victoria, to General Manager, 15 May 1919, P No.121, 142/3151, RSSS-ANUA; CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.284, B.R. Riley, p.299, W.J. Henry.

152. The Communist Party was an exception, but it lost support in North Queensland over its opposition to the British Preference League and the 'Gentlemen's Agreement'. A.E. Jones, Electoral Support for the Communist Party in North Queensland: A Study of F.W. Paterson's Victory in Bowen, 1944 (B.A. Hons, University of Queensland, 1972), p.97.

153. See CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, pp.260, 311, 325; Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 31 Aug.1918, P No.146, 26 Jul.1918, P No.141, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA. See also Chapter 1, p.31; Chapter 5, p.205.

The importance attached by the AWU to the 'coloured' labour question was demonstrated in 1920 and 1922 during interstate negotiations on the One Big Union scheme. Some of the other unions objected to rule 6 of the AWU constitution, disqualifying from membership all non-Europeans (with the exceptions previously noted). At the AWU's annual convention in 1920 the Queensland representatives strongly defended this ban. According to Dunstan, "there was not one white man working in the cane-cutting districts who would vote for the elimination of that rule, which would allow kanakas and all kinds of Asiatics to come into the sugar industry".¹⁵⁴ At the inaugural convention on the One Big Union scheme in 1922, this issue was again raised, but the AWU's Queensland delegates were adamant that the scheme would never be endorsed by their members if there was any clause admitting 'coloured aliens' to membership.¹⁵⁵ The scheme floundered despite the fact that this controversial subject was not raised again.

The campaign against the employment of non-Europeans in the sugar industry was most fierce from the mid-1910s to the mid-1920s. Not coincidentally, this was a decade of great social turbulence and industrial friction in North Queensland. Wage levels were low and unemployment was high. Industrial relations in the sugar industry were especially bitter and discordant. The use of 'coloured' labour took on major proportions under this atmosphere. Rank and file militants were ready to take direct action on this issue, with or without the backing of AWU officials.¹⁵⁶ From the mid-1920s, a new scapegoat had been found in the southern European.

154. Australian Workers' Union, Official Report of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention, Sydney, 1920 (Sydney, 1920), pp.106-16. An amendment to delete this sub-clause of rule 6 was soundly defeated.

155. The motion was withdrawn on condition that it would be brought before the next convention but it was not re-introduced. Australian Workers Union, Report of Inaugural Convention, Sydney, 1922 (Sydney, 1922) pp.10-13; Australian Workers' Union, Report of Second Annual Convention, Sydney, 1923 (Sydney, 1923). See also the constitution of the One Big Union, printed in W 16 Mar.1922. In 1922 also at the AWU annual convention, a motion to link up with the red international was overwhelmingly defeated, with speakers concentrating on the fact that the international included 'coloured' workers. W 6 Apr.1922.

156. See Hunt, A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland, pp.341, 411, 413-14; P.G. Macarthy, 'Wages in Australia, 1891 to 1914', Australian Economic History Review Vol.X, Mar.1970, p.76.

Yet the AWU's attitudes to southern Europeans never assumed the same intensity as those towards non-Europeans. Like non-Europeans, southern Europeans were viewed as tools used by the employers against the union. But southern Europeans were always eligible for AWU membership, even if local branches at times refused to issue them tickets. Unlike non-Europeans, the employment of southern Europeans in any capacity was not opposed - their employment as poorly paid farm labourers, for example, drew no criticism. Clearly there was a fundamental difference in the treatment of southern Europeans and 'coloured aliens'; treatment of the latter was based on their perceived racial differences.

Labour historians have paid little or no attention to the energetic campaign which the AWU, with the Labor Party's support, directed against the employment of non-Europeans in the first four decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵⁷ Yet AWU members portrayed it as an integral part of their efforts to improve working conditions. Economic motives were important but there was an underlying element of racism. As Martyn commented, the presence of non-European sugar workers was "the greatest curse with which the Labor Movement could be afflicted".¹⁵⁸ The next chapter details the impact of this campaign on the economic activities of Pacific Islanders.

157. For example, Kennedy only makes a passing reference to the Sugar Cultivation Act and Birrell does the same with the Sugar Acquisition Act, while Murphy briefly discusses the Indian protests against these Acts and the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. Only Hunt recognizes that the 'coloured' labour question was a vexed one for industrial relations in the sugar industry. Kennedy, *the Public Life of William McCormack*, p.88; M. Birrell, *T.J. Ryan and the Queensland Labour Party* (B.A., University of Queensland, 1951), p.49; Murphy, *T.J. Ryan*, pp.114, 120-21; Hunt, *A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland*, pp.43, 341.

158. Australian Workers' Union, Official Report of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention, p.110.

CHAPTER 7
LIVELIHOODS 1908-40

THE EXTENT to which Europeans, and particularly the labour movement, sought to exclude non-Europeans from all favoured occupations and civic privileges has been discussed in the two preceding chapters. This campaign's impact on the means of livelihood of those affected is taken up in this chapter, which examines the economic condition of Islanders in North Queensland from 1908 to 1940. As will be seen, the majority earned their livelihood through the sugar industry - as labourers, cane-cutters or farmers. The remainder were chiefly employed in other agricultural pursuits or in the pastoral industry, while some eked out a bare subsistence living, growing fruit and vegetables on a few acres of land. Most Islander women were not employed outside their own homes. The Islanders' economic condition varied to a certain extent, but the trend throughout these years was for the more comfortable to be reduced to the ranks of the relatively impoverished. By the early 1930s, many of the migrants were living out their old age in penury, with a small government allowance their only source of income. Yet the depression of the 1930s did not cause special hardship for the Islander community overall, accustomed as it was to supplying many of its own physical wants.

THE COMMONWEALTH censuses have limited value for studying the occupational range amongst Pacific Islanders. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, they significantly underenumerated the number of Islanders, at least in North Queensland. The first census in 1911 tabulated occupation by order and sub-order of industry for Islander men and women resident in Queensland, but did not distinguish between the self-employed and wage earners, nor between the sugar industry and other agricultural industries. The only conclusions which can be drawn therefore are that over seventy-five per cent of the breadwinners were engaged in primary industries, and nearly nine per cent of these were engaged in pastoral pursuits. Small numbers

were to be found in other occupations such as domestic and industrial work. By comparison, Europeans and the two other main non-European groups, the Chinese and the Japanese, had significant numbers in commercial and industrial pursuits, as well as in primary production.¹ Aborigines were not counted in the censuses until 1947.

An assessment of any occupational changes over the period is prevented by the absence of detailed information in subsequent censuses. In 1921 the only occupational breakdown given for Pacific Islanders in Queensland was that of grade of occupation (such as employer or wage earner), and this breakdown was given in 1933 only for Islanders in the country. In 1921 sixty-eight per cent, and in 1933 fifty-eight per cent, of the male Islander breadwinners in Australia were wage or salary earners; these are only slightly higher than the proportions amongst European males.²

The majority of those engaged in agricultural pursuits were involved in the sugar industry. Before considering other occupations, this majority will be discussed, considering first, those who were engaged as sugar workers, and then those who were farming on their own account. In both cases the impact of the campaign to exclude non-Europeans from the sugar industry must be assessed.

Farm labouring, cane-cutting and outside work for the mills represented the employment offering in the sugar industry for those Islanders who were not farming. This presumes an open market, in which the Islanders could compete equally with other sugar workers for employment. In fact, as the previous two chapters have shown, non-

1. Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, 1911, p.351, Vol.II, 1911, pp.1050-53. Those engaged in fisheries were obviously in the Torres Strait, and are not included in my calculations. The statistician noted that most of the Pacific Islanders in the country were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Ibid., Vol.I, 1911, p.325.

2. Amongst Europeans the proportions were 66 per cent in 1921 and 55 per cent in 1933. Ibid., Vol.II, 1921, p.200, Vol.I, 1933, Statistician's Report, p.275. There was a significant decrease in the number of Islander breadwinners (calculated by subtracting from the total those stated as 'not applicable', which included pensioners, students and dependants) between 1921 and 1933, according to the censuses. Ibid., Vol.I, 1921, pp.330-33, Vol.I, 1933, pp.948-49. There was no correlation between occupations and race in the next census, held in 1947.

European sugar workers bore the brunt of the campaign to preserve all occupations for Europeans, and it is important to consider its impact on the Islanders' occupational opportunities and their reactions to these restrictions.

From 1903 to 1913, the bounty on sugar grown by 'white' labour served to discourage European farmers from employing non-Europeans. The effect of the rebate was to increase greatly the employment of Islanders by Islander and other non-European farmers³, as the later discussion of the employers of those Islanders who applied for exemption from the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 (the year in which the bounty was abolished) will highlight.

The majority of those who applied for exemption from the Sugar Cultivation Act were sugar workers. There were 452 applications (including 2 from women) received from Pacific Islanders resident in North Queensland in 1913-14, 54 per cent of these being from Islanders in Mackay. Certificates were granted to 374 or 83 per cent of these applicants, and 92 per cent of the Islanders in Mackay were successful (see Table 5.1). Most of those who did not obtain certificates were refused because of late applications, or had their certificates returned to the Department of Agriculture before they could collect them. Only in Innisfail was there a significant number rejected on the grounds that they were employed outside the sugar industry. Overall these applicants constituted the majority who were farming or working in the sugar industry, although over the years some only belatedly became aware of the need for certificates of exemption or were discovered working in the industry without such certificates.⁴ Those with certificates, however, were well aware of the need to put them away safely and to apply for duplicates if the originals

3. For the impact of the rebate on the Islanders' employment, see CPP IV, 1913, p.1557, T.J. Whitcomb; Norman, Life's Varied Scenes, p.75; Saunders, Uncertain Bondage, p.459.

4. For examples, see Applic. No.477E, Body Santo, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No.2060E, Chilar, AGS/N356, QSA; Applic. No.2300E, Stephen Malayta, AGS/N357, QSA; J. Munro to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 27 Jul. 1933, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA; QPP II, 1917, p.481; Insp., Sugar Workers Accomodation Act, Cairns, to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 5 Aug. 1916, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA; Insp. of Factories and Shops, Innisfail, to Chief Insp., Report, 2 Aug. 1917, 123G, AGS/N358, QSA.

were lost or destroyed.⁵ Native-born Islanders were included in the Act's operation and theoretically those reaching working age after 1913 could obtain certificates of exemption by passing a dictation test in English. After 1921, however, such applications were sent on to the Department of Agriculture, and very few certificates were issued.⁶ In 1913 and 1914 individual Islanders protested against the refusal to grant them certificates.⁷ A request for repatriation (apparently unsuccessful) was made in December 1913 by about twenty Islanders in Mackay, who may have been concerned that the Sugar Cultivation Act would remove their means of livelihood.⁸

The Sugar Cultivation Act was intended to remove the remnant of 'coloured' labour from the industry, but the liberality in exemptions ensured that few were pushed out, while the removal of the bounty (and therefore any financial incentive to employ Europeans) in fact attracted non-Europeans back into the industry. The growers' associations opposed the liberal issue of exemptions and some farmers refused to employ non-Europeans, but others did, especially as the labour shortage created by the war increased. After the Labor Government's unsuccessful attempts in 1915-16 to force employers to give up non-European employees, the Arbitration Court took up the issue in 1919, prohibiting 'coloured' labourers from cutting cane and restricting them to cultivation on small farms and the farms of their countrymen. Preference

5. See Applic. No. 390E, Luke Logomier, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No. 822E, Matthew Malachi, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No. 11D, Dickson Manaway, AGS/N97, QSA; Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mackay, to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 13 Jun. 1914, 130C, AGS/N99, QSA.

6. See Clerk of Petty Sessions, Proserpine, to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 6 Mar. 1916, 147G, AGS/N358, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to Clerks of Petty Sessions, Circular No. 799, 20 Oct. 1921, 164G, AGS/N361, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture, 14 Sep. 1933, memo., 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA.

7. See Applic. No. 757E, Johnny Lena, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No. 948E, William Seekis, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No. 2118E, C.D. Silvenny, AGS/N356, QSA. See also Chapter 5, pp. 221-23.

8. HN 12, 17 Dec. 1913. The clerk of petty sessions passed on their request to the immigration agent but presumably it was unsuccessful, since other such requests were refused. See below, p. 287.

in employment in the sugar industry to members of the AWU, granted by the Arbitration Court in 1921, was a further obstacle to the employment of non-Europeans.

Present day Islanders do not know of the Sugar Cultivation Act and none of the certificates of exemption held by their fathers or grandfathers appear to have survived. Their memories of harassment and discrimination refer to the vigilance of the AWU in the years before World War II and the operation of the sugar awards, since these had the most impact on the Islanders' employment. The first petitions from Pacific Islanders were received in 1915 - one from 50 Cairns residents and the other from 111 Mackay residents.⁹ These petitions were protests, not against the Sugar Cultivation Act, but rather against the Labor Government's attempt to use the Sugar Acquisition and Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Acts of 1915 to penalise employers of non-European labour and mills receiving cane grown or harvested by non-Europeans. Due to outside pressure, the discriminatory powers under these Acts were never implemented.

In the 1910s and 1920s, the private mills, particularly CSR, reluctantly acceded to pressure from the Government and the AWU, and progressively reduced the number of non-European employees. CSR engaged only Japanese in the actual mill work, and Pioneer Sugar Mills in the Burdekin apparently had a similar policy.¹⁰ Other non-European employees were deployed in outside work such as tramway maintenance, cane loading, wood-cutting, sanitary work and gardening. In 1913, sixteen Islanders were employed by CSR's Homebush Mill at firewood-cutting, tramway line maintenance, yard work, sanitary work, in the crushing mill, and in one case as a fireman; by August 1915, only one Islander, employed as a sanitary worker since 1911, was still engaged by the mill.¹¹ In October 1915, CSR

9. Petition from residents of the Cairns district, forw. by MacDonnell and Hannam to Premier, 11 Oct.1915, 67G, AGS/N96, QSA; Petition from Polynesians in the Mackay district, forw. by Luke Logomier to Premier, n.d. [Dec.1915], *ibid*.

10. See Chapter 5, p.204; Pioneer Mill, Cash Book, 1916-22; Sec., Pioneer Sugar Mills to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 29 Mar.1932, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA.

11. The number employed in 1913 was calculated from applications under the Sugar Cultivation Act. Particulars of Aliens Employed at Homebush Mill, 14 Aug.1915, 142/3446, RSSS-ANUA. See also Saunders, 'Masters and Servants', p.103, table.

suspended all 'coloured' mill employees, except Japanese, and only employed them subsequently in work classed as outside the sugar industry, such as firewood-cutting. In the Herbert River, Peter Backo was amongst those suspended from the Macknade Mill, and his children remember how he and fellow Islanders were put off, while the Japanese were kept on.¹² By the following year, only four Islanders (out of a total of eighty-six non-Europeans) were employed in CSR mills in North Queensland; this did not include those cutting firewood. In 1915, the Australian Sugar Company at Mourilyan Mill dismissed all their non-European employees, except for two elderly Islanders who performed tasks (the sanitary work and bread delivery) which no one else would undertake.¹³

The Sugar Cultivation Act was largely superseded by the prohibitions on 'coloured' labour contained in the sugar awards of 1919 and 1920. The Islanders together with other non-Europeans, found it much more difficult to obtain employment in the sugar industry as a result of these awards. In October 1919, for example, Islanders employed by farmers in Mackay were put off on the advice of the local constable. This direct threat to their employment provoked a petition from sixty-two Islanders in Mackay early in 1920. Pearce, the Mackay farmer, had inquired on behalf of Islander farmers in 1916 to ascertain if they would be permitted to continue to cultivate their land, and also raised the question of their employment at the annual meeting of the Mackay UCGA in April 1920, but little interest was shown.¹⁴

12. T45Bsa:2; T57Bsa:1; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 7 Oct.1915, No.994, 142/3479, RSSS-ANUA.

13. Aliens at Queensland Mills 1916, *ibid.*; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 22 May 1919, No.365, 142/1499, *ibid.*; Secretary, Australian Sugar Co., to Under Sec. for Treasury, 19 Aug.1915, 7716 of 1915, TRE/A315, QSA; Insp., Workers' Accommodation Act, to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 29 Jun.1916, 123G, ACS/N358, QSA.

14. Pearce to Forgan Smith, 15 Jan.1916, 66G, ACS/N96, QSA; Manager, Homebush, to General Manager, 6 Oct.1919, P No.114, 142/3101, RSSS-ANUA; *MM* 14 Oct.1919, 20 Apr.1920; Petition from Polynesians in the Mackay district, 3 Mar.1920, 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA; Pearce to Swayne, 8 Feb.1920, *ibid.*; Newspaper cutting, *MM* 15 Apr.1920, encl. in *ibid.* See also Chapter 6.

The petitioners asked for repatriation or resettlement in a place where they could work and farm freely. Their request was forwarded to the prime minister, who replied that the offer of repatriation was no longer open and that employment was a state matter.¹⁵

Undaunted, Pearce wrote to Forgan Smith, his local member, in 1921, suggesting that certain Islanders in the district should be granted land at the foot of Bull Mountain near Netherdale. The crown lands ranger, W.H. Gatfield, inspected the area and interviewed Pearce and some of the Islanders. He reported that the area was dense scrub land, with good quality soil suitable for gardening and banana growing, but that the Islanders, who were in poor circumstances, would expect the Government to provide them with houses and equipment and to place them on equal terms with Europeans in disposing of their produce.¹⁶ Gatfield also pointed out that Pearce was not a disinterested advocate: the proposed land adjoined his selection at Okuloo, and as a Seventh-day Adventist he was hoping to convert the Islanders to his faith. His opinion was that a settlement at this site would be contentious and unsuccessful, whereas an area of land along the coast or a small island would be much more suitable. It was decided, not surprisingly, to take no further action in the matter.¹⁷ When the idea of a

15. Actg Premier to Prime Min., 8 May 1920, 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA; Under Sec. for Prime Min. to Premier of Queensland, 2 Jun.1920, *ibid.*; Under Chief Sec. to Swayne, 2 Jul.1920, *ibid.* This correspondence is also in the Australian Archives. See A1 20/8193, AA.

16. Pearce's letter was forwarded to Coyne, the minister for lands, who directed the land commissioner to report on the matter. Forgan Smith to Min. for Lands, 10 May 1921, 14945, RES 01/198, Lands Dept ; Min. for Lands to Forgan Smith, 19 May 1921, *ibid.*; Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun.1921, 20131, *ibid.* Gatfield's enquiries gained some publicity. See *NOR* 27 Jun.1921, p.26; *ASJ* XIII, 8 Jul.1921, p.236.

17. Pearce told Gatfield that the Islanders would be happy for him to superintend them. Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun.1921, 20131, RES 01/198, Lands Dept ; Pearce to Gatfield, 19 Jun.1921, forw. by Deputy Land Commissioner to Under Sec. for Lands, 7 Jul.1921, 22318, *ibid.*; Under Sec. for Land to Forgan Smith, 8 Jul.1921, *ibid.*

separate settlement for Islanders in the Mackay district was raised again, in 1932, the area investigated, significantly, was nearer the coast at Bloomsbury, to the north of Mackay.¹⁸

That the Sugar Cultivation Act and more particularly the sugar awards had forced many Islanders out of the sugar industry became apparent at the 1933 'census' of non-Europeans conducted by the Department of Agriculture, when many who had not been employed in the industry for years asked if they could take up sugar work again.¹⁹ Other Islanders, either in ignorance or deliberate contravention, of the law, continued to work in the sugar industry illegally. In their evasion of the Act and awards, they were aided and abetted by their employers, the farmers. AWU organizers and local government officials complained that 'coloured aliens' were warned to drop their tools if union organisers or the police appeared, and deny they had been working; others hid in the cane or temporarily disappeared from the area. In the Herbert River, Burdekin and Mackay districts, the Islanders today recall how their parents, relatives or friends cut cane at night to avoid detection, and hid from AWU organisers in the canefields during the day.²⁰

18. See Chapter 8.

19. J. Munro to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 27 Jul.1933, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA; MM 7 Sep.1932. They were informed that this would be illegal.

20. Insp. of Factories and Shops to Chief Insp., 2 Aug.1917, 123G, AGS/N358, QSA; AWU Organizer, Cairns, to Branch Secretary, 7 Feb.1924, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Ty4Bp.2; T27Bsa:1+3; T29Bsb:2; T32Bsa:2; T57Bsa:1; T58Bsb:2; T64Bsa:2; T72Bsa:1; T73Bsb:1; Moore, The Forgotten People, pp.66-67. The only interviewee who had lived in the Cairns district had done so as a child, and she did not recall any trouble. Islanders in the Bowen district where there was very little cane farming had heard of harassment in other districts but did not themselves experience it. T58Bsb:2; T61Bsa:2; T62Bsb:3.

In employing the Islanders illegally, the farmers were not necessarily motivated by sympathy for their plight. Without the protection of union membership, and working illegally, the Islanders were doubly vulnerable to exploitation in regard to contracts, remuneration, and conditions of labour.²¹ As the Islanders themselves were aware, the farmers could pay them wages below those stipulated in the award, and use the labour of those living on their farms at any time: as one Islander born and bred in the Herbert River district remarked, "the farmer put it all over them coloured boy".²²

It was the AWU, rather than the Government's legislation and the Arbitration Court's awards, which was responsible in the view of present day Islanders for the harassment of those working in the sugar industry.²³ Since the AWU refused membership to the migrants and since it was the union's organizers who paid such attention to detecting evasions of the Sugar Cultivation Act and sugar awards, this belief was not unfounded. Yet few of the native-born Islanders appear to have experienced any real difficulty in obtaining work in the sugar industry, even in cane-cutting, despite the fact that the Act and awards applied equally to them. In the mid-1920s, when significant numbers of the native-born reached employment age (fourteen years or older), the AWU's attention was shifting to the greater threat of southern Europeans entering the sugar industry. Islanders born in Queensland, moreover, were obviously regarded by both the AWU and the farmers

21. As some AWU officials and farmers were aware. See MM 29 May 1919; NOR 13 Dec.1920, p.15, 12 Jan.1925, p.18; CMP 21 Jun.1919. In the Burdekin, Alf Henaway put deposits down in order to secure cane cutting contracts, but sometimes still lost them. T19Bsb:3; T64Bsa:2.

22. T73Bsb:1. See also T27Bsa:3; T43Bsb:1; T66Bsb:1.

23. See T27Bsa:1, 3; T57Bsa:1; T64Bsa:2; T72Bsa:1; Moore, The Forgotten People, pp.66-67.

as Australians, and therefore in a different category to the migrants.²⁴ They were able to obtain union tickets, and therefore to work in the industry despite the prohibition on 'coloured' labour which was retained in the sugar awards as late as the 1950s.²⁵

Bearing in mind the effects of this campaign against non-Europeans, the work obtained by Islanders in the sugar industry can be examined. As many applicants under the Sugar Cultivation Act pointed out, this was the only occupation for which they had been trained. Some of the young native-born men had also not worked outside the sugar industry.²⁶

The lowest paid and most menial work in the sugar industry was farm labouring. Sometimes this involved clearing the ground²⁷, but more generally it meant preparing the ground for planting, planting by hand, watering, and chipping the weeds from the young plants. Young Islanders were engaged as 'top boys', to cut the tops off the cane and do general work such as feeding and tending the horses.²⁸ Some of the applicants

24. For example, in 1929 four Pacific Islanders born in Queensland and resident in Mackay (Leslie Kia, Daniel Quakawoot, Frank Boa and Moses Kissier) were admitted to membership of the AWU; the argument used in support of this resolution at the AWU convention was that every person born in the country should be eligible for membership. W 6 Feb.1929, p.10. For similar distinctions between the Queensland-born and the migrants, see Newspaper cutting, MM 15 Apr.1920, encl. in 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 30 Sep.1915, No.992, 142/1499, RSSS-ANUA; MM 17 Sep.1932, letter to Ed. by M.A. McColl.

25. For examples of Islanders born in Queensland who claim to have obtained AWU tickets to work in the sugar industry in the 1930s and 1940s, see T15Bsa:1; T29Bsb:3; T51Bsa:2; T57Bsa:1, 2; T61Bsa:2; T72Bsa:1; T73Bsb:1; Moore, The Forgotten People, p.66. Seventh-day Adventists are not supposed to join unions, and it would appear that some of the Islanders of this faith did not join the AWU. T18Bsa:1; T21Bsb:2.

26. See Applic. No.430E, Jimmy Sippie, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No.1454E, Sandy Tanna, AGS/N105, QSA; Applic. No.2128E, Fullaloo, AGS/N356, QSA; Applic. No.2248E, Blooranta, AGS/N357, QSA; Applic. No.512E, Louis Lammon, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.611E, Sandy Buka Buka, ibid.

27. See Applic. No.240E, Simon, AGS/N355, QSA; Applic. No.595E, Tom Barmenas, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.1936E, Johnny Lok Lok San, AGS/N108, QSA; F. Guyah, Wages Book, Farleigh Mill, pp.16, 22, 29, 35.

28. See T29Bsb:3; T32Bsa:2; T68Bsa:1; Clerk of Petty Sessions, Proserpine, to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 6 Mar.1916, 147G, AGS/N358, QSA.

in 1913-14 were engaged solely in farm work.²⁹ Undoubtedly the proportion of Islanders in farm work increased after 1913, as the campaign against non-Europeans in the sugar industry gathered momentum. As one Islander commented, farm labouring "was all there was to do in those days around the Herbert River".³⁰ The hours were relatively long, the work monotonous, the wages low in comparison with cane-cutting: the adult award wage (for a 48 hour week) for 'fieldwork' in the sugar industry rose from £2.8s. in 1913 to £5.6s. in 1920, without keep.³¹ The Islanders probably received considerably less than this and worked longer hours. Most lived on the properties of their employers.³²

By 1920, cane-cutters were earning £9 per week.³³ Cane-cutting was thus much more lucrative, and many Pacific Islanders in North Queensland in 1913 had cut cane during the crushing season (usually June-July to November-December) and were working as farm labourers during the slack.³⁴ In the late 1920s and 1930s, as a result of the increasing age of the migrants and their harassment by union and government officials, the native-born began to predominate amongst the Islander cane-cutters. In the Burdekin, for

29. See Applic. No.132E, Bob Roberts, AGS/N355, QSA; Applic. No.419E, Tom Pentecost, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No.603E, James Bongmeal, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.1501E, Charlie Atwee, AGS/N106, QSA; Applic. No.2013E, Jimmy Penticost, AGS/N356, QSA.

30. T52Bsa:1. See also T57Bsa:1; T70Bsa:1; Statement of Johanna McEvoy, Inquest No.224 of 1920, Harry Maratta, JUS/N705, QSA; Norman John Fatnowna, AMR, Mackay, 6 Dec.1918; Jack Swaney, *ibid.*, 10 Aug.1927.

31. QGC CI, 1913, p.290, CVII, 1916, p.790; Australian Sugar Producers' Association, White Australia's Great Sugar Industry Only Can Keep Tropical Australia White (Brisbane, 1921), p.23.

32. For examples of this, see Statement of Tommy Wattoom, Inquest No.138 of 1914, Jack Tully, JUS/N548, QSA; Evidence of Louie Buka Buka, Rex vs Angelo Costa, Francisco Pelleri and Michael John O'Sullivan, No.24 of 1921, A/18407, QSA; Norman Henaway, Rita Island SSAR, 31 Aug.1926; T45Bsa:2; T68Bsa:1.

33. Australian Sugar Producers' Association, White Australia's Great Sugar Industry, p.23.

34. See Applic. No.219E, Harry Maratta, AGS/N355, QSA; Applic. No.1169E, William Cawoot, AGS/N104, QSA; Applic. No.1956E, Jack Modlab, AGS/N108, QSA; Applic. No.2253E, Bret, AGS/N357, QSA; Applic. No.2045E, Tom Robbins, AGS/N356, QSA.

example, Alf Henaway worked on cane farms in the slack and went cane-cutting for the 'big money' during the crushing season. Islander cane-cutters usually worked in mixed gangs, often with other non-Europeans (see Plates 7.1 and 7.2).³⁵ The rations provided for non-Europeans were prescribed by award, as was accommodation separate from European sugar workers.³⁶

In the Cairns, Johnstone River, Herbert River and Mackay districts, many of the applicants under the Sugar Cultivation Act named their employers.³⁷ In Cairns most of these were employed by Chinese farmers, notably See Chin at Green Hills, and by individual European farmers, including G.R. Mayers at Moolooba, W. Cannon at White Rock and C. Morton at Deeral. A small number were working for CSR at Hambledon. In the Johnstone River district, several were working at CSR's Goondi Mill, and others were engaged by European farmers, including J.B. Perrier at Mourilyan, E.C. Eden at Liverpool Creek and W. McEvoy at Daradgee. CSR's Macknade Mill, in contrast, employed most of the Islanders in the Herbert River district while European farmers such as Lynn at Farnham and F. Fraser at Gedge's Crossing employed a few. In the Mackay district, many had been engaged by different employers in the crushing and the slack. The greatest number had been employed by fellow Islanders with farms, and the remainder by Japanese, Indian and other non-European farmers and by European farmers such as Tidemann at Pleystowe, A.E. Innes at Alligator Creek and A.E. Atherton at Plane Creek. The mills at Homebush, Palms, Farleigh, Racecourse and Cattle Creek, employed a considerable number. In lists of the principal employers of non-European sugar workers collected by local police in 1919 and 1920, many of the same employers are to be found, particularly the mills (see Appendix F).³⁸ However, the number of

35. T68Bsa:2; T57Bsa:2; T61Bsa:2; T73Bsb:1; Raymond Cassidy, Ingham DHAR, 8 Dec.1933; Industrial Magistrate's Court, 7 Sep.1937, Ayr, A/20620, QSA; CIP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.183, F.W. Martyn.

36. QIG I, 1916, pp.619, 620; Appendix E.

37. There were 209 applicants throughout these districts who named their employers.

38. The number of Islanders included in the totals was not given for any of the districts in 1919 and only for Cairns and Innisfail in 1920. For the background to these lists, see Chapter 6, pp.253, 257.



PLATE 7.1: Cane-cutters outside their lunch tent at Tweed Heads in northern New South Wales, 1920s or 1930s; conditions would have been similar in North Queensland. The two men sitting on the left and the man above them are migrants; the men sitting in the centre and lying on the ground are Europeans; the others are native-born Islanders.



PLATE 7.2: Cane-cutters at Tweed Heads at a later date, 1930s or 1940s. The man (seated) second from the left and the two men above him are Europeans; the rest are native-born Islanders.

non-European employers was considerably less than in 1913, and there is no indication of how many Islanders were employed by their countrymen.

Firewood-cutting was the major occupation for Pacific Islanders in the sugar mills. Of the mills in the Mackay district, Homebush, Farleigh, Palms, Racecourse and Cattle Creek, as noted, all employed Islanders as wood-cutters. In the Herbert River and Johnstone River districts, wood-cutting for the CSR mills continued in the years after 1913 to be a major source of employment for Pacific Islanders.³⁹ Wood-cutting was important in that it offered work in the slack season. Unemployment during this off season (about December to June) was a major problem amongst sugar workers, and there were continual complaints by the AWU and its members that non-Europeans were employed during the slack in preference to Europeans.⁴⁰ Apart from wood-cutting, some Islanders obtained general work around the mills. Most, as shown, took up farm work such as clearing, fencing, chipping and watering. Others went outside the sugar industry to obtain work: for example three Islanders in Mackay in 1913 were picking coffee.⁴¹ Catching cane beetles for the farmers was one way to earn small amounts of money.⁴²

39. See Evidence of George Romelo, Rex vs Alick Jones, No.32 of 1922, A/18409, QSA; T52Bsb:2; T69Bsb:1; NOR 20 Jun.1927, p.40; Daniel Blooranta, PBR, Innisfail, 11 Mar.1928.

40. See CPP IV, 1913, p.1492, W.E. Black, p.1493, J.T. Ferguson, Misc. Vol., 1920-21, pp.292, 293, T. Quilty, p.400, P. Kirwan, p.457, M.P. Hynes; ASJ XVI, 8 Aug.1924, p.295.

41. See Applic. No.666E, John Estelle, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.881E, Nompua, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.1085E, John Wadin, AGS/N103, QSA. Seeking work outside the sugar industry was common during the slack. CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.298, A. Murray.

42. This was usually done by shaking the trees to make the beetles fall. From 1923 Cane Pests Boards were established in all districts except Ingham and Cairns and a levy was imposed on growers and millers for a fund to pay for the suppression of such pests as cane beetles. See 'Tramp', 'Sugar Land Reminiscences. Early Day Episodes', Feb.1936, p.27: NOR 15 Mar.1920, p.55; T40Bsa:3; Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, p.223.

THE ALTERNATIVE to working for wages was to grow cane for oneself. As in the years before 1908, many Islanders in Mackay and Proserpine and smaller numbers in the other sugar districts took up this option. Yet today cane farmers of Islander descent are virtually unknown in North Queensland.⁴³ This disappearance will be discussed in the context of the legal disabilities imposed on the Islanders, the effect of the Sugar Cultivation Act and sugar awards and the problems suffered generally by small cane growers.

The presence of Islander cane growers in this period was known to some government officials and local residents.⁴⁴ Yet they receive no mention in local histories. In assessing the number of Islanders engaged in cane growing, the censuses provide no help.⁴⁵ The only figures at any one time for Islander cane farmers throughout North Queensland are those derived from the applications for exemption from the Sugar Cultivation Act in 1913-14. There were 105 Pacific Islander farmers in North Queensland who applied for exemption: 83 in Mackay, 18 in Proserpine, 1 in the Herbert River and 3 in Port Douglas (see Table 5.1). These Islanders constituted well over half of the total number of non-European farmers who applied for exemption in North Queensland; both in Mackay and Proserpine they represented three-quarters of the farmers who had applied.

From this and other nominal evidence, a (minimum) number of Islander cane farmers in each of the sugar districts between 1908 and 1940 can also be calculated.⁴⁶ In the Port Douglas district, there appear to have been

43. Moore, The Forgotten People, p.70. By contrast, Indians are still prominent in the Queensland sugar industry. R.T. Watters, 'Sugar Production and Culture Change in Fiji. A Comparison Between Peasant and Plantation Agriculture', Pacific Viewpoint Vol.4, No.1, Mar.1963, pp.28, 30.

44. QPP 11, 1909, p.989; Scrivens to Min. for Agriculture, 4 Jan., 5 Jan.1916, memo., 147G, AGS/N358, QSA; NC 1 Dec.1911, p.2; Newspaper cutting, MM 15 Apr.1920, encl. in 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA; Molesworth, Kanaka Labour in Queensland, p.97.

45. Only the 1911 census gave a detailed occupational breakdown for Pacific Islanders in Queensland and even this did not distinguish between farmers and workers. Throughout Australia, there were said to be 410 Islanders engaged as farmers and farm hands, and 244 engaged in sugar planting. Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, 1911, p.235, Vol.II, pp.1050-53.

46. The sources for the following calculations include the applications under the Sugar Cultivation Act, other archival sources such as petitions, inquests, trials and intestacies, the evidence collected by royal commissions and other inquiries, CSR records, other mill records, district hospital records, newspapers and oral evidence. Some specific references are given where individuals are named.

only the three farmers listed in 1913 - Tabby at Mossman, Harry Tanna at the Daintree River and Willy Api at Saltwater Creek (who was still farming there in 1927). Ohnonee, a Malaitan working for Robbins of Mowbray, had two acres planted with cane in 1913, and there were others with selections who may have grown small amounts of cane.⁴⁷ In the Cairns district, there were no Islander farmers who applied for exemption in 1913, but there were six farmers who signed the 1915 petition and a few grew small amounts of cane on their employers' farms. The only farmer of any note was Tom Dennis, a Solomon Islander who farmed at Mackey's Creek and sent his cane to Hambledon Mill from 1918 or earlier until his death in 1934.⁴⁸ There is no evidence in the Johnstone River district of any Islander farmers, or even of Islanders growing cane on their employers' properties.⁴⁹

In the Herbert River district, there were several farmers. Tom Lammon was the only farmer who applied for exemption in 1913; he and later his son Harry leased land from Lynn from about 1909 until 1931 or later.⁵⁰ Peter Backo, together with Jacob Erromango, took up a small leasehold at Cordelia when the Islanders were suspended from the Macknade Mill in 1915. Backo's son Ishmael farmed with him in later years, and in

47. NQR 17 Jan.1927, p.72; PDMR 10 Sep.1908; Applic. No.1222E, Harry Tanna, AGS/N104, QSA; Applic. No.5A, Willy Api, AGS/N97, QSA; Applic. No. 18A, Tabby, ibid.

48. Petition from residents of the Cairns district, forw. by MacDonnell and Harnam to Premier, 11 Oct.1915, 67C, AGS/N96, QSA; Letters to Intermediary, Hambledon Mill, p.4, encl. with Manager, Hambledon, to General Manager, 16 Mar.1918, P No.124, 142/3089, RSSS-ANUA; Intestacy No.6 of 1935, Tom Dennis, A/17945, QSA; T58Bsa:2; T66Bsa:3.

49. For instance, there were no Islanders included in lists of cane suppliers to Goondi between 1914 and 1916. QPP II, 1916-17, p.1019; Cane Contracts Record, pp.107-14, 121-26, 142/2932, RSSS-ANUA.

50. Applic. No.756E, AGS/N102, QSA; T25Bsa:1; T74Bsa:1, 2; Norah Lammon, Ingham SSAR, 19 Jan.1909; Manager, Victoria, to General Manager, 27 Feb. 1919, P No.104, 142/3151, RSSS-ANUA; Advocate (Ayr), 1 Apr.1966, p.15.

the early 1930s bought the farm.⁵¹ The third farming family was the Goslings. Annie Barslo was married to George Gosling, an Englishman with a farm at Halifax who died in 1905. Two of their sons, George Henry and Frank William, later farmed for some years at Halifax.⁵² Apart from these farmers, there were a few migrants who grew very small amounts of cane.⁵³

In the Burdekin, there is no evidence of Islanders growing tiny plots of cane. Only one farmer has been discovered, and this was Andrew Poollar, who had moved up from Bowen by 1927 and leased a farm at Seaforth from the Connolly Brothers until he died in 1936.⁵⁴

In Proserpine and Mackay there were large numbers of Islander cane farmers. In Proserpine, the applications in 1913 combined with other sources demonstrate that between 1908 and 1940 there were at least forty Islanders farming in the area. These included one woman and four native-born. In Mackay between 1908 and 1940 there were at least 151 Islander farmers, including 3 women and 19 native-born, in the district. Of the eighty-three who applied in 1913, nearly one-half were in the Farleigh district, just over one-sixth were at or near Homebush Mill and slightly less than this were at Palms, while the remaining one-sixth was divided between the Eungella and Plane Creek areas. The majority of farmers was thus clustered along the Pioneer River or to the north of the town, a distribution which had been evident since the early 1900s.⁵⁵

51. T19Bsa:2-3; T25Bsa:1; T57Bsa:1; Number of Farmers Supplying Cane to Macknade Mill No.1, 1920-23, Report of Evidence taken by Royal Commission re Alien Immigration to North Queensland, PRE/A849, QSA; Manager, Macknade, to General Manager, 25 Jan.1923, No.775, 142/3377, RSSS-ANUA; Recognizance for the Appearance of Defendant, Rex vs Samson Backo, No.33 of 1940, A/18433, QSA.

52. George Gosling, Hinchinbrook CR, 18 Jan.1905; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 16 Jul.1924, No.360, p.435, 142/1528, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 11 Aug.1926, No.663, p.189, 142/1530, RSSS-ANUA; Frank William Gosling, Ingham DHAR, 2 Feb. 1933.

53. T69Bsa:1; Actg Clerk of Petty Sessions to Deputy Public Curator, Townsville, 25 Jan.1919, p.234, CPS 12H/G1, QSA; Intestacy No.7 of 1925, Tommy Booka Booka, A/17930, QSA.

54. T68Bsa:1; T80Bsa:1; Intestacy No.185 of 1936, Andrew Poollar, A/17947, QSA. There do not appear to have been any Islanders supplying cane to Pioneer Sugar Mills. Drysdale Bros to Sec., Lower Burdekin Farmers Association, 26 Aug.1910, Pioneer Mill Letter Book, 1909-10, pp.461-62; Drysdale to Sec., ASPA, Brisbane, 18 May 1915, *ibid.*, 1915-16, p.45.

55. See Chapter 2, p.69.

The pattern of farming did not alter in the years after 1907, in that there continued to be few Islander farmers outside Mackay and Proserpine. In the far north, the Chinese were still predominant, although now there were only a few large growers.⁵⁶ In the Burdekin, Herbert River and Johnstone River districts, the Italians entered the industry as small farmers in the 1920s. In Mackay and Proserpine, it will be seen, the geographical terrain was an important reason for the large numbers of Islander farmers. The following discussion of the characteristics of cane growing by Islanders will concentrate on the Mackay and Proserpine districts, but many of these features were also true of the farmers elsewhere.

Outside Mackay and Proserpine, farmers had taken up cane growing since 1907. The one exception to this was Willy Api in the Port Douglas district. In contrast, there were a solid core of farmers in Mackay and Proserpine who had been growing cane by 1907 or earlier: 62 of the 151 farmers in Mackay and 17 of the 38 in Proserpine were in this category.⁵⁷ Farming here represented an extension of an existing pattern rather than a new development.

Partnerships amongst Islander farmers were numerous, as in the years before 1908. The partnership of Backo and Erromango in the Herbert River district has been mentioned. In the applications under the Sugar Cultivation Act from farmers in Mackay, there were eleven partnerships involving twenty-seven Islanders. In three cases these partnerships were more formally organized as companies.⁵⁸ From other sources, chiefly mill records, it is apparent that apart from those identified in these applications there were at least a further fifteen partnerships, involving

56. May, *The Chinese in Cairns and District*, pp.88-91. See also Chapter 2.

57. This is calculated by comparing Islanders farming up to 1907 with those known to have been farming after this date. The number of Islanders farming up to 1907 who stayed on after this date (that is, were not repatriated) was 79 (of 129) in Mackay and 17 (of 34) in Proserpine. Thus it can be seen that most of these people continued to grow cane. See also Chapter 2.

58. These were Santo and Co., Jack Marrau and Co. and Billy Tonga and Co. See *Applic. No.929E*, Charlie Santo, AGS/N103, QSA; *Applic. No.980E*, Taromai, *ibid.*: *Applic. No.846E*, Bert Medlap, AGS/N102, QSA.

thirty-two people.⁵⁹ In only two cases were there partnerships between an Islander and a non-Islander.⁶⁰

In at least ten of these twenty-six partnerships, the partners were related by blood or marriage.⁶¹ Predictably, these partnerships were mostly between fathers and their children, usually their sons. In one case, that of Luke Logomier and Harry Fatnowna at Farleigh, a stepfather was farming with his stepson.⁶² There was also a strong connection by island of origin. More than half of all partnerships were formed between men or women from the same island, as for example the partnership between two Malaitans at Farleigh, Johnny Mangway and Dick Sotavi. In view of the importance attached to island group as well as island of origin, it is noteworthy that there were only three cases in which partners were drawn from different island groups, that is, Solomon Islanders farming with New Hebrideans.⁶³

Like most small cane farmers, the Islanders required outside labour - that is, labour other than that supplied by immediate relatives - only at the busiest times of the year, the planting and harvesting

59. The sources for this figure were Individual Ledger of Farmers 1912-16, Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill; Farm Records 1925-49, Pleystowe Mill; Cane Contracts Record, 142/2932, RSSS-ANUA; QPP 11, 1915-16, pp.1081-82; Evidence of Willie, Rex vs Maneboro, No.44 of 1913, A/18381, QSA; QGG CXVIII, 1922, p.1242.

60. T. Marlee, Farm Records 1925-34, pp.95, 96, 105, Farm Records 1925-49, p.196, Pleystowe Mill; P.E. Mezzzen, Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill.

61. Connections by blood or marriage and also by island of origin can be correlated with other variables such as farming through the process of nominal reconstruction. See Appendix B.

62. Logomier and Fatnahoon, Individual Ledger of Farmers, p.546, Farleigh Mill; MN 12 Oct.1932, letter to Ed. by H. Fatnowna. There were a further four between fathers and sons or daughters, two between husbands and wives and two between in-laws. In Proserpine a husband and wife were farming together. See W. and C. Nuggi, Cane Credits Register 1905-30, pp.25, 65, Proserpine Mill.

63. Johnny Mangway and Sotavi, Individual Ledger of Farmers, pp.581-82, Farleigh Mill. Apart from these three, there were fourteen partnerships in which the people were drawn from the same island of origin, six in which the people came from different islands but within the same island group and three in which the island of origin of one or both of the partners is not known.

seasons.⁶⁴ Where there was more than one son of working age, as was the case with Andrew Bobongie and his oldest sons John and Sam by 1925, such extra labour may not have been necessary at all.⁶⁵ Some farmers employed their sons to work on their farms⁶⁶, but in many cases, sons worked for other Islander farmers or other employers: Harry Tarryango's oldest son John worked for the Palms Mill while Harry employed Frank Fewquandie (whose father was a farmer at Branscombe) on his farm at Palms. Working for another employer may have been economically necessary but it was also a useful means for young men to assert their independence.⁶⁷

From applications under the Sugar Cultivation Act, it is clear that most farmers, married and single, employed other Islanders as seasonal workers. These show that in 1913-14 in the Mackay district, fifty-nine Islanders were employed by twenty-six of the farmers. Most employed only one or two but some employed several, such as Aymboan, a Palms farmer, who employed seven.⁶⁸ Connections by island of origin were not as strong in the selection of such employers: over half were working for an employer from another island, and nearly one-half of these for an employer from a different island group. Outside Mackay, farmers also employed fellow Islanders and sometimes Aborigines.⁶⁹ Some of these labourers lived on

64. See CPP IV, 1913, p.1497, A.J. Gibson, Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.340, E.S. Smith; MM 30 May 1916; Evidence of Jack and Alick, Rex vs Billy Boslam, No.60 of 1910, A/18369, QSA.

65. A.,J. and S. Bobongie, Farm Records 1925-34, p.11, Pleystowe Mill. For another example, see CPP IV, 1913, p.1470, H.L. Smith.

66. See, for example, Applic. No.755E, Harry Lammon, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.913E, Harry Querro, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No.983E, Jack Tarryango, ibid.; Applic. No.1246E, Willie Darr, AGS/N104, QSA; T57Bsa:1; T69Bsa:1.

67. Applic. No.1225E, John Tarryango, AGS/N104, QSA; Applic. No.668E, Frank Fewquandie, AGS/N101, QSA. Migration to another district was another means of demonstrating their independence. See Chapter 4, pp.157-58.

68. For the applications of Aymboan and some of the Islanders he employed, see Applic. No.592E, Aymboan, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.776E, Tom Soboa, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.880E, Sam Nosimo, ibid.; Applic. No.1017E, Sam Tiack, AGS/N103, QSA.

69. See PDMR 16 Dec.1909, Mossman Police Court; NQR 10 Sep.1932, p.22; T64Bsb:2; T69Bsa:1; T74Bsa:1-2; T74Bsb:3; Applic. No.1155E, Sam Alleanotta, AGS/N104, QSA.

their employers' farms.⁷⁰

Most Islanders could not have afforded to buy land. Since only Pacific Islanders from French territories were eligible for Australian naturalization, most were in any case restricted to farming leaseholds.⁷¹ Yet, as in the period before 1908, there were always a few migrants who acquired freehold property - such as John Noie who owned land valued at £268 in Cairns in 1927.⁷² Native-born Islanders were not precluded from owning land, and several did. Some bought land from the migrants: William Thomas purchased a fifty acre farm at The Leap from Henry Netoka for £650 in 1933.⁷³

That the majority were farming leasehold was recognized at the time and since.⁷⁴ At least sixty-one of the eighty-three farmers in Mackay in 1913 were farming leasehold; just under half were leasing from European farmers, such as P.D. Dunworth at Farleigh, J.R. Norris at The Leap and Hornbrook at Dumbleton, and slightly more than half from the mills, principally Farleigh and Palms Estate. In the early years of the twentieth century, these mills had subdivided their estates and leased or sold the land to small farmers such as the Islanders. Since Homebush Mill had subdivided its land earlier, it is not surprising to find that Islander growers in the area were not leasing land from the mill. When Homebush closed in 1921, its suppliers were transferred to the Farleigh and Racecourse Mills; at least seven of the Islander growers were assigned to

70. For examples in Mackay and other districts, see MM 30 May 1916; Evidence of Jack and Alick, Rex vs Billy Boslam, No.60 of 1910, A/18369, QSA; Statements of Tom Dennis and Willie Solomon, Inquest No.170 of 1923, Jimmy Bassabola, JUS/N756, QSA; T64Bsb:2.

71. See Appendix D.

72. Intestacy No.125 of 1927, A/17933, QSA. For other such examples, see Intestacy No.32 of 1926, Johnnie Nahlun, A/17931, QSA; Intestacy No.54 of 1927, John Veelee, A/17933, QSA; T7Bsb:3; T11Bsb:1; T48Bsb:1.

73. Ty3Bp.2; William Thomas, Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill. For other examples, see T29Bsa:2; T48Bsb:1; T54Bsa:2-3; Ty3B pp.2-3; Intestacy No.105 of 1925, John Tallis, A/17930, QSA.

74. See Petition from Polynesians in the Mackay district, forw. by Luke Logomier to Premier, n.d. [Dec.1915], 67G, AGS/N96, QSA; Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun.1921, 20131, RES 01/198, Lands Dept; Newspaper cutting, MM 15 Apr.1920, 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA; Newspaper cutting, MM 7 Sep.1932, EDU/Z2247, QSA; Moore, The Forgotten People, p.70; Ty4Bp.1; Ty5Bp.1; T7Bsa:1; T37Bsa:1; T49Bsa:1.

Farleigh.⁷⁵ In 1925 when the Palms Estate was taken over by the Amalgamated Sugar Mills Pty Ltd, Pleystowe, the Islander lessees were allowed to carry on.⁷⁶ Outside Mackay, it was more common for Islanders to lease land from individual farmers rather than the mills.⁷⁷

Those leasing land from the mills paid a royalty of 1s. a ton on cane supplied, and this was also common practice when leasing from individual farmers.⁷⁸ But in some cases a flat rent was charged - Jacob Penola, for example, paid £30 for twenty-five acres at Coningsby near Farleigh in 1933, and Tom Lammon in the Herbert River district paid £50 per annum for the fifty acres he leased from Lynn.⁷⁹ Most Islanders had assignments with the mills under their own names but some, like Sam Barlup, went under the European lessor's name, in his case the Denmans at Etowri.⁸⁰

75. See CPP IV, 1913, pp.1459, 1464, J. McGown, p.1521, R.J. Thomas, Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.402, R. Clarke, p.419, W.H. McCready, p.433, D.G. McGown, p.439, P.H.M. Goldfinch; Moore, The Forgotten People, p.70; OGC CVXIII, 1922, pp.1045, 1242. See also Chapter 2, p.69.

76. For examples of Islanders who leased land from the Palms Estate and later from Pleystowe Mill, see Aymboan, Farm Records 1925-34, p.7, Pleystowe Mill; J. Sambo and R. Talonga, ibid., p.156; H. Tarryango, ibid., p.159; N. Vice and J. Marrau, ibid., p.164.

77. See CPP IV, 1913, p.1455, F.H.M. Cross; Dutton, Queensland Canefields English, p.115; T19Bsa:2-3; T68Bsa:1.

78. See George Mywo, Individual Ledger of Farmers, pp.621-23, Farleigh Mill; Billy Bomboo, Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill; CPP IV, 1913, p.1521, R.J. Thomas; Statement of Willie Motlop, encl. with Actg Serg. to Sub-Insp. of Police, Mackay, 22 Jun.1919, 158G, AGS/N359, QSA; Actg Serg. to Insp. of Police, Townsville, 28 May 1919, 155G, ibid.

79. J. Penola, Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill; Dutton, Queensland Canefields English, p.115.

80. Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill. For other such examples see Billy Bomboo, ibid.; Dick Manish, ibid.; T29Bsa:1; T49Bsa:1.

Many of the Islanders in the Mackay and Proserpine districts were farming on the hillsides, an important geographical difference between these and the more northerly districts, and one which undoubtedly helps to explain the concentration of Islander farmers here.⁸¹ Once the hills were cleared of the heavy scrub cover and the stones, which were usually piled up in walls and terraces, very heavy crops could be grown on the rich and naturally well-drained soil. But this heavy manual work was done by 'kanaka' labour. With European workers it became uneconomical, even when they were prepared to cultivate the hillsides. In Mackay European residents periodically suggested that the Islanders should be settled on the hillsides since these would otherwise go uncultivated, but there was also some resentment at the extent of hillside farming by non-Europeans.⁸² Around Farleigh, the hilly terrain was undoubtedly responsible for the large numbers of Islanders farming in this area on hills such as The Ridges, Grange Hill and Summer Hill. Similarly, on Palms Estate, the land leased to non-Europeans was mostly in the hilly country along the river bank, and at Sunnyside and Proserpine there were also hilly areas where the Islanders were farming.⁸³ In other districts the Islanders tended to be given land which had not been cleared.⁸⁴

Hillside farming was uneconomical for Europeans because of the amount of manual labour required; tractors, which came into general use from the 1910s, could not be used.⁸⁵ To the Islanders this was not a

81. For these geographical differences, see OPP II, 1906, p.607, J. O'Riordan, II, 1916-17, p.1105, W.S. Addison; CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.384, G.E. Wright. There were some hills around Cairns which the Islanders cleared and planted. T58Bsa:3.

82. See CPP IV, 1913, p.1498, A.J. Gibson, Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.384, G.E. Wright, p.434, W.R. Denman; MM 24 Apr.1906, 10 Apr., 20 Apr.1920; Sec., Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association, to Actg Premier, 20 Mar.1914, 03046, 161G, ACS/N360, QSA.

83. See Ty4Bp.1; Ty6B; T7Bsa:1; T37Bsa:1; T40Bsa:2; T49Bsa:1; MM 25 May 1916, 15 Apr.1920; CPP IV, 1913, p.1524, R.J. Thomas, Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.384, G.E. Wright.

84. See T19Bsa:2; T58Bsa:3; T74Bsa:2; Dutton, Queensland Canefields English, p.56.

85. OPP II, 1916-17, p.1105, W.S. Addison; Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, p.173; A. Birch and J.F. Blaxland, 'The Historical Background', in A.G. Lowndes (ed.), South Pacific Enterprise. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited (Sydney, 1956), p.31.

drawback, since planting and clearing required only a strong back and rudimentary tools such as a mattock and pick.⁸⁶ In 1919 it was estimated that a fairly complete outfit of such necessary implements as a plough and harrow and harness for the horses, would cost at least £80 or £90. Many Islanders farming on the flat as well as the hillsides did not possess ploughs, only horses to pull their drays.⁸⁷

Cane grown on the hillsides had to be brought down to the flat to be loaded onto horse-drawn drays and wagons, and later trucks, and conveyed to the mill or to the nearest siding. For this the inexpensive 'flying fox' system was employed: usually at night, when it was cooler, the cane was cut and carted by hand into heaps, tied with wire ropes and then hooked onto a wire sling and let down to the bottom of the hill.⁸⁸ This was a much slower business than cane-cutting on the flat and costly, since the sugar content of cane deteriorates in direct proportion to the time between cutting and being taken over the weighbridge. Farmers living considerable distances from the mills, as some Islanders did, would have been disadvantaged.⁸⁹

The prevalence of leaseholds and the scarcity of implements reflects the Islanders' lack of capital. The lists of improvements given by many of the Mackay farmers in 1913 provides further corroboration of their low capital reserves. The standard improvements noted were houses and stables,

86. As interviewees point out. See T7Bsb:3; T29Bsa:1; T49Bsa:1; T51Bsb:1.

87. CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.447, P.H.M. Goldfinch. For other, more costly, estimates, see CPP IV, 1913, p.1275, C.V. Hives, p.1525, A.H. Tidemann. For examples of Islanders without ploughs, see T21Bsb:2; T49Bsa:1; T54Bsa:1; Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun. 1921, 20131, RES 01/198, Lands Dept.

88. See T7Bsb:3; T30Bsb:1; T37Bsa:1; T40Bsa:2; CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.418, J. McDonald, p.419, W.H. McCready, p.437, P.H.M. Goldfinch.

89. See Sec., Pleystowe Central Mill Co., to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 30 Sep.1913, 7049, 170G, AGS/N361, QSA; CPP IV, 1913, p.1490, H.M. Adams, p.1529, R.J. Oliver.

barbed wire fences, wells and the planting of fruit trees.⁹⁰ There was little incentive to improve their properties, since such improvements would have to be sold to the lessor or an incoming lessee if the farmer left.

Nor were there many Islander farmers in Mackay, Proserpine or elsewhere whose acreage under cane or yield per acre met or exceeded that of the average small farmer. There was, however, a considerable range amongst the Islander growers themselves. Some forty per cent of the Mackay farmers amongst the 1913 applicants gave the size of their farms, and slightly less the number of acres of cane crushed in that season. The average was thirty-six acres, with eleven acres crushed. A useful comparison can be made with the figures supplied to the royal commission on the sugar industry in the previous year: amongst the suppliers to the Palms and Homebush Mills the average acreage crushed was twenty-six and twenty-three acres, respectively.⁹¹

Additional data is available from other sources on the size of farms, the acreage under cane and the yield. In Proserpine in 1919, four of the Islander farmers had crushed an average of five acres, for the relatively high yield of nineteen tons per acre. Other averages can be constructed from the assignments of Islander farmers at the Farleigh and Pleystowe Mills in the mid-1920s. At Farleigh, the average number of acres harvested amongst twenty-one growers was seventeen acres; but ten of these growers harvested five acres or less. The average for nine Pleystowe growers was considerably higher, at thirty-five acres, but once again many were below this average.⁹²

90. Some examples are contained in Applic. No.340E, Andrew Bobongie, AGS/N100, QSA; Applic. No.392E, Thomas Marlee, *ibid.*; Applic. No.742E, Robert Kia, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.798E, Frank Malicoola, *ibid.*

91. CPP IV, 1913, p.1471, H.L. Smith, p.1522, R.J. Thomas. Thirty-seven Islanders in 1913 gave the size of their farms and thirty-three of these also gave the number of acres crushed.

92. Actg Serg., Proserpine, to Insp. of Police, Townsville, 28 May 1919, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA; Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill; Farm Records 1925-49, Pleystowe Mill.

From the Farleigh records, information is also available for some growers on the tonnage of cane cut and its value, and at Pleystowe for the acreage harvested, the tonnage, and the average tonnage per acre (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Overall, there was an obvious decline in the size of farms and crops over the years, but there were significant variations both between the growers and also over time. It could have been predicted, for instance, that their yield (tons of cane per acre) would have decreased over the years, as the Islanders lacked the capital to leave part of the land fallow or for manure to replenish the soil.⁹³ But in many cases among the small sample of Pleystowe growers, the yield actually increased over the years. Amongst the Farleigh growers, there was a noticeable unevenness in the amount of cane cut: some cut tiny amounts, others reasonable amounts, and in some cases the tonnage increased rather than decreased over the years. Presumably factors such as the particular season and the situation of the individual grower (for instance, distance from the mill, or attacks on the cane by grubs) would have produced significant variations in the amount of cane crushed and the yield over the years.⁹⁴

93. Many European small farmers faced the same problems. In Fiji Indian farmers similarly failed to rotate the land and to use manure, with the exception of CSR's tenants who were assisted to practise rotation and manuring. CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.340, E.S. Smith, p.402, R. Clarke, p.434, W.R. Denman; Watters, 'Sugar Production and Culture Change in Fiji', p.30; M. Moynagh, *Brown or White? A History of the Fiji Sugar Industry, 1873-1973* (Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1978), p.107.

94. See CPP IV, 1913, p.1466, J. Barry, p.1491, J.T. O'Riordan, p.1553, J.R. Alison.

TABLE 7.1: Islanders supplying cane to Farleigh Mill

Name of supplier	S. Barlup	T. Kowmi	J. Chilar	M. Malachi	J. Manjack	D. Manish	J. Penola	T. Penola	J. Raroo	D. Suva	Average
1928: Tonnage of cane cut	156	13	16	43	86	8	123	66	17	16	54
Value £ *	275	28	34	85	121	15	274	132	38	26	103
1930: Tonnage of cane cut	56	12	16	15	5	3	102	20	8	15	25
Value £	109	22	30	31	10	5	221	41	17	25	51
1933: Tonnage of cane cut	59	5	29	34	32	5	34	35	19	5	26
Value £	88	8	38	44	41	6	44	50	27	7	35
Average Tonnage	90	10	20	31	41	5	86	40	15	12	35
Average Value £	157	19	34	53	57	8	180	74	27	19	63

* to the nearest pound

Source: Farmers' Record Cards, Farleigh Mill.

TABLE 7.2: Islanders supplying cane to Pleystowe Mill

Name of supplier	Aymboan	A. J., & S.	Bobongie	T. Marlee	J. Malicoola & P. Mye	J. Sambo & R. Talonga	N. Vice & J. Marrau	H. Mooney	Average
1925: Acres harvested	-	7	8	3	-	-	10	-	-
Tonnage of cane cut	245	97	134	28	193	212	138	-	-
Average tonnage per acre*	-	13.8	16.7	9.3	-	-	13.8	-	-
1928: Acres ...	33	13	13	2	30	9	25	18	18
Tonnage ...	184	125	161	26	112	66	203	125	125
Average ...	5.6	9.6	12.3	13.0	3.7	7.3	8.1	6.9	6.9
1931: Acres ...	9	14	9	1	25	4	7	10	10
Tonnage ...	61	129	29	13	119	50	55	65	65
Average ...	6.7	9.2	3.2	13.0	4.7	12.5	7.8	6.5	6.5
1934: Acres ...	9	11	2	1	6	7	24	8	8
Tonnage ...	124	206	24	13	58	79	129	90	90
Average ...	13.8	18.7	12.0	13.0	9.6	11.2	5.3	11.2	11.2
Average harvested	17	11	8	3	20	7	16	11	11
Average tonnage of cane	153	139	87	20	120	101	131	107	107
Average tonnage per acre	9.0	12.6	10.8	6.7	6.0	14.4	8.2	9.7	9.7

* to the nearest decimal point

Cane credits (that is, the amount paid for cane delivered) for 1913 at the Farleigh and Proserpine Mills indicate the size of the income earned by Islander growers in that year. Of twenty-four growers at Farleigh in 1913 Luke Logomier was paid the largest sum, £272.8s.8d. Logomier leased 65 acres from the mill, and had crushed 419 tons from 30 acres of this. The average amount paid for cane delivered was £84.10s.3d., and seventeen of the growers earned an average of only £53.12s.11d. In Proserpine the average cane credit for six Islander growers was £107.6s.0d., and the largest amount was £302.10s.10d., earned by William Yasserie. In this same year it was estimated that a man could live comfortably on a thirty-five acre farm and a profit (not merely cane credits) of £350 per annum.⁹⁵ None of the Islander growers met or even came close to meeting this standard, and most fell far below it.

That the Islanders were not generally in the bracket of 'comfortable' farmers is also apparent from the inventories included in intestacies and wills. In a few cases, their estates were not inconsiderable. Logomier's property and possessions in 1919 were valued at £292.10s.8d. and in the Burdekin in 1936 Andrew Poollar's estate was valued at £468. Yet amongst twenty Islander farmers (including Logomier) in Mackay, the estates of thirteen were valued at less than £40, and a further four at under £100.⁹⁶

Overall, there was considerable variety amongst Islander farmers in both Mackay and Proserpine, in the size of farms and acres crushed. The yield per acre also varied considerably, both between farms and over time, presumably in proportion to the quality of the soil and the efficiency of the grower. Many were working tiny areas for small yields: T. Kowmi and D. Manish in Table 7.1 and J. Malicoola and P. Mye, and N. Vice and J. Marrau in Table 7.2, exemplify this. Cissie Tarryango remembers that

95. Calculated from Farmers' Cane Accounts for 1913, Farleigh Mill and Cane Credits Register 1905-30, Proserpine Mill; CPP IV, 1913, p.340, E.S. Smith.

96. Intestacy No.291 of 1919, A/17924, QSA; Intestacy No.185 of 1936, A/17947, QSA; Figure 7.1. These calculations are based on Intestacies contained in A/17924 to A/17957, QSA; Ecclesiastical File No.3 of 1914, Charlie Tass, A/16887, QSA; QPP II, 1913, pp.147, 153, II, 1915-16, p.442.

she and her husband Jack grew just enough cane "to keep us going" and fruit and vegetables to supplement this income on a few acres leased from the Palms Estate in the early 1920s.⁹⁷ Not all growers derived their income solely from their farms. Among the farmers in Mackay in 1913, four had been employed during part of the year, and there are similar examples in Mackay and the other districts over the years.⁹⁸ In contrast to the Islanders, Chinese cane farmers continued to be very successful, farming large areas and employing many labourers.⁹⁹

With such small incomes and capital resources, Islander farmers were dependent on the mills or the local storekeepers to carry them through the slack season. Growers at Farleigh Mill were able to obtain stores on credit.¹⁰⁰ Most of the mills made advances to growers, with interest charges; but this became more difficult with the establishment of the Sugar

97. T21Bsb:2. For similar comments by other Islanders and also Europeans, see T7Bsb:3; T31Bsa:3; T54Bsa:1; Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun.1921, 20131, RES 01/198, Lands Dept; Interview with Mr E. Denman, 12 Jul.1979, Mackay; Interview with Mr B. Jackson, 12 Jul. 1979, Mackay.

98. See, for example, Applic. No.802E, James Darr, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.1872E, James Weirow Motlap, AGS/N107, QSA; Under Sec. for Agriculture to E.J. Caine, 21 Apr.1914, 30G, AGS/N96, QSA; Calisee and Gowseeka, Individual Ledger of Farmers 1912-16, pp.123, 146, 353, Farleigh Mill; Peter Backo, 4 Feb.1922, POL 12E/Q8, QSA. This was also common amongst struggling European small farmers. See CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, pp.340-41, E.S. Smith, p.437, H.L. Smith.

99. However, the number of Chinese farmers declined significantly in the early twentieth century. May, *The Chinese in Cairns and District*, pp.88-91.

100. T7Bsa:1; T40Bsa:2; Farmers' Cane Accounts Jul.1913 - Mar.1917, Farleigh Mill.

Cane Prices Boards in 1915.¹⁰¹ In 1915 also, the Labor Government's announced policy of paying less for raw sugar produced by 'coloured' labour had caused CSR to suspend advances to non-European growers in Mackay and elsewhere and the Pleystowe Mill to seek information as to whether there would be a penalty on cane grown by non-Europeans, before providing financial assistance to three Islander suppliers.¹⁰² Local storekeepers also extended credit to cane farmers, supplying them with food, clothing and implements. In Mackay, Proserpine and elsewhere in North Queensland, the Islanders 'booked up' goods at the shops; at least in Farleigh, they were exploited in that the storekeepers took a percentage of their crops rather than cash payment.¹⁰³

UP TILL the 1930s there was a very considerable number of Islanders growing cane in the Mackay district. The largest number of Islanders farming in the district occurred in the 1910s; at Farleigh Mill, for example, only one-third (eleven) of those farming in 1912 were still supplying cane to the mill in the late 1920s.¹⁰⁴ By the mid-1930s, the number of farmers

101. While it became easier for European farmers to obtain money from the banks, it was more difficult for the mills to obtain money from the banks without a joint guarantee. All the mills in Mackay and Proserpine gave advances to growers, at an interest charge of five or six per cent. CPP IV, 1913, pp.1454-55, F.H.M. Cross, p.1522, R.J. Thomas, Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.431, A. Innes, pp.433-34, D.C. McGown, p.438, P.H.M. Goldfinch, p.453, H.R.L. Zillman.

102. General Manager to Manager, Macknade, 19 Aug.1915, No.17, p.468, 142/1522, RSSS-ANUA; General Manager to Manager, Homebush, 19 Aug.1915, No.22, p.473, 142/1246, RSSS-ANUA; Sec., Pleystowe Central Mill to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 9 Dec.1915, 12336, 67G, AGS/N96, QSA.

103. T43Bsb:1-2; T45Bsa:3; MM 28 May 1906; Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, p.304; Norman, Life's Varied Scenes, p.70; Prince, Early Days of the Douglas Shire, p.22.

104. This was calculated by comparing the Individual Ledger of Farmers 1912-16 with the Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35.

was falling sharply: amongst twenty-seven Pleystowe growers, only six were farming later than 1935, and only one of these was still farming in the 1940s; only three of the fifty-six Farleigh growers were still farming in 1935, and possibly only one beyond this date.¹⁰⁵ In Proserpine, the number of Islander growers declined sharply in the late 1910s and early 1920s. By 1925, only four were still supplying cane to the mill. This exodus from cane farming was also accompanied by migration to Bowen, but whether this shift occurred after the Islanders had stopped farming or was the reason they did so, is not known.¹⁰⁶

Any explanation of the decline in numbers of Islander farmers in Mackay and Proserpine requires an understanding of the handicaps imposed upon them, and the difficulties suffered by small cane farmers generally and the Islanders specifically. Between 1907 and 1913, the Islanders were not prohibited from growing cane but were ineligible for the bounty. Yet they were able to make a living - the Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association attributed this to the fact that they were farming the first-class hillside land.¹⁰⁷ In 1912 fifteen non-European farmers supplying Homebush Mill were said to be in the category of those 'holding their own' (as opposed to 'going backwards').¹⁰⁸ With the abolition of the bounty

105. Farm Records 1925-49, Pleystowe Mill; Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35 and Membership Certificates of Shareholders, Farleigh Mill. Many of the Islander growers at Farleigh still held one or two shares in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but do not seem to have been supplying cane to the mill. In the 'census' conducted in 1933, there was one Islander cane grower at Marian and two at Palms. Const. Marian, to Sub-Insp. of Police, Mackay, 24 Jun.1933, 2362, M1336, POL/J40, QSA; Const. Walkerston, to Sub-Insp. of Police, Mackay, 21 Jun.1933, *ibid*.

106. Cane Credits Register 1905-30, Proserpine Mill. At least seven of these growers moved to Bowen. See also Chapter 4.

107. Sec., Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association, to Actg Premier, 20 Mar.1914, 03046, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.

108. CPP IV, 1913, p.1471, H.L. Smith.

in 1913, all non-European growers received the same price as Europeans employing 'white' labour, that is, a further 9s.8d. extra on each ton of cane. This was regarded as compensation for non-European farmers, since their certificates of exemption under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 were to be cancelled after 31 December 1915.¹⁰⁹

Amongst Islander and other non-European growers in the Mackay district in 1915 and 1916 there was considerable anxiety as to their position and whether they should continue to plant cane. In February 1916, their fears were allayed when the Labor Government decided to allow non-Europeans to continue to cultivate cane and not to impose a lower price for their cane.¹¹⁰ Despite these decisions, in the following years there was occasional harassment of Islander farmers by government officials¹¹¹, but in general it was non-European sugar workers rather than the farmers who were the object of attention. The restrictions on 'coloured' labour imposed by the Arbitration Court in 1919 and 1920 did not affect Islander farmers severely, since they could employ their countrymen, but they may have prevented farmers from supplementing their income by cutting cane during the crushing season. Along with European growers, the Islanders benefitted from the increasing governmental regulation of the sugar industry, as for instance by the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act 1922 which stipulated that the mills must crush the cane of the growers assigned to them at the agreed price.¹¹²

109. NQR 9 Mar.1914, p.41. This was resented by some European growers. CPP IV, 1913, p.1566. A. Stevenson; Sec., Pioneer River Farmers' and Graziers' Association, to Actg Premier, 20 Mar.1914, 03046, 161G, AGS/N360, QSA.

110. See Chapter 6.

111. See Actg Serg., Sarina, to Sub-Insp. of Police, Mackay, 22 Jun.1919, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA; Actg Serg., Proserpine, to Insp. of Police, Townsville, 28 May 1919, ibid.; Under Sec. for Agriculture to E.J. Caine, 21 Apr.1914, 30G, AGS/N96, QSA.

112. See A.F. Bell, The Story of the Sugar Industry in Queensland. The John Thomson Lecture for 1955 (Brisbane, 1956), pp.18-19; Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, p.143.

In 1915 some of the Islander growers around Farleigh were described as "very comfortable".¹¹³ Logomier no doubt was one of these, and a few of the farmers in other areas, such as Thomas Marlee at Pleystowe, William Seekis at Homebush and William Yasserie at Proserpine, could have fitted into this category. Yet by 1920, Islander growers in Mackay and Proserpine were in poor circumstances.¹¹⁴ The change in their situation was effected primarily by two natural disasters.

On 21 January 1918, the Mackay district was devastated by a very severe cyclone, which killed twenty people and caused extensive damage to property, livestock and crops.¹¹⁵ At Proserpine the same cyclone caused severe damage but no lives were lost. The river burst its banks and Islanders living on the river bank were forced to shelter in the trees and later swim to nearby Mount Julian.¹¹⁶ In Mackay, the Tarryango and Malachi families at Palms and TeKowai lost their houses and belongings when the Pioneer River flooded, and Islanders in other areas lost at least some of their possessions. According to Tidemann, a Presbyterian elder well known to the Islanders, the Islanders had lived on leasehold land in easy circumstances until the cyclone, which destroyed a large number of their

113. Australian Board of Missions, Report of the Executive Council for financial year ending 31st March 1915 (Sydney, 1915).

114. As a number of European observers commented. See MM 15 Apr.1920; Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun.1921, 20131, RES 01/198, Lands Dept; Actg Serg., Sarina, to Sub-Insp. of Police, Mackay, 22 Jun.1919, 155G, AGS/N359, QSA.

115. See NQR 28 Jan., p.7, 4 Feb., pp.26-29, 65-70, 11 Feb.1918, p.23; Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, pp.56, 58.

116. NQR 4 Feb.1918, p.3. In March, another cyclone did severe damage at Innisfail and Babinda, and the cane from Mackay to Cairns was badly affected by rain and floods. NQR 4 Feb., pp.13, 26, 18 Mar.1918, p.17; CMP 12 Mar., 13 Mar.1918; C.T. Wood, Sugar Country. A Short History of the Raw Sugar Industry of Australia 1864-1964 (Brisbane, 1965), p.23.

houses.¹¹⁷ None of them seem to have received assistance from the flood relief fund set up for Mackay victims. The cyclone affected the cane crop in 1918 and those for some years afterwards; the royal commission appointed to enquire into the sugar industry in 1919 was told that many farms had been put on the market as a result of the cyclone.¹¹⁸

The cyclone was followed by the influenza epidemic of 1919, described in Chapter 4. In Mackay, especially in the Farleigh area, many Islanders died and the epidemic severely demoralized the Islander community. Amongst the farmers at Farleigh who succumbed were Logomier, Tom Fewquandie, Henry Quaytucker, Billy Kissier, Tom Anisola, Joe Chuik, George Bio and Harry Loggie. Logomier, Anisola and Bio had been amongst the largest of the Islander suppliers to Farleigh Mill in 1913.¹¹⁹

Tidemann claimed that the Islanders had not re-built after the cyclone and had reverted to labouring. With the 1919 epidemic following so closely on the cyclone, the loss of many farmers through death, illness or lack of energy is understandable. The position of those who continued to farm was made more difficult by the drop in the price for raw sugar after 1925, which reached a low during the depression and did not revive fully until World War II.¹²⁰

117. Applic. No.994E, Harry Tarryango, AGS/N103, OSA; Applic. No.822E, Matthew Malachi, AGS/N102, QSA; Applic. No.390E, Luke Logomier, AGS/N100, QSA; Ty2Bp.1; MM 15 Apr.1920.

118. NOR 18 Feb., 1 Apr.1918, Illustrations: CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.86, F. McGuren, p.394, H.E. Turner, p.403, A.R. Henry, p.431, A. Innes; Easterby, The Queensland Sugar Industry, p.58; A deputation representing the sugar interests of Australia to Prime Minister, 27 Feb.1920, A2 20/2695, AA.

119. See Farmers' Cane Accounts Jul.1913-Mar.1917, Farleigh Mill.

120. H.W. Herbert, 'The Australian Sugar Industry', in Lowndes, South Pacific Enterprise, p.93.

Pacific Islander farmers were handicapped in certain respects. In Chapter 5, the legislative restrictions imposed on them were outlined: the migrants could not be naturalized, obtain advances from the Agricultural Bank, own land or even (in theory) lease more than five acres of land (see Appendices D and E). They were excluded from most of the growers' associations and, despite the odd exception such as William Seekis, were treated as inferiors by Europeans.¹²¹ Present day descendants recall with bitterness that Maltese migrants who arrived in Mackay after World War I received bank loans easily and are today wealthy farmers, while their own parents were forced out of farming because of lack of capital and freehold land.¹²² The private banks would have been reluctant to finance Islander growers, in view of their legal disabilities and the small scope of their farms. Although scrupulous in repaying debts, the Islanders had not acquired the reputation of the Chinese to whom, at least in the Cairns district, loans flowed freely.¹²³

The disadvantages suffered by Islander growers ensured that their farming remained small-scale but did not necessarily force them to discontinue growing cane. Death, as in the 1919 epidemic, thinned the ranks naturally.¹²⁴

121. See Chapter 5.

122. Moore, The Forgotten People, pp.70-71; T30Bsb:1; T37Bsa:1; T49Bsa:1.

123. T47Bsb:3; T48Bsb:1; T55Bsb:3; MM 12 Oct.1932, letter to Ed. by H. Fatnowna; May, The Chinese in Cairns and District, pp.241-43.

124. For example, Thomas Marlee, Joseph Sambo, Robert Kia and Henry Quakawoot at Pleystowe and Bob Allin, Matthew Malachi, Rarroo and Tom Serika at Farleigh were all farming up till the time of their deaths, which was between 1925 and 1936. Thomas Toloa was forced to stop farming at Farleigh in late 1913 or early 1914, when he was discovered to be a leper and was sent to Peel Island. Farm Records 1925-34, Pleystowe Mill, p.156; Farm Records 1925-49, ibid., pp.60, 196, 250; Farmers' Records Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill; Individual Ledger of Farmers 1912-16, p.881, ibid.; Form of Report to Home Sec. of investigation by Medical Practitioner of a case of suspected leprosy, 3 Jan.1922, No.370 of 1922, Albert Toloa, COL/283, QSA.

Others retired from farming when they reached advanced years; Joe Kandy, for example, retired in 1931 and transferred his leasehold and liabilities to another Solomon Islander at Farleigh.¹²⁵

In 1913 Tunes, the chairman of directors of the Plane Creek Mill, distinguished three classes of growers: "some who make money, some who make a living, and some who make no headway at all".¹²⁶ It is clear that Islander growers were in the second and third categories, and increasingly in the latter after 1918. Growers on the north side, where most of the Islanders farmed, were very short of capital and labour-saving equipment and were therefore inefficient.¹²⁷ Dry seasons, poor land, low prices for cane, destruction of crops by grubs and other pests, inaccessibility to the mill, lack of capital for equipment and improvements such as manuring and the inability to pay off debts, were explanatory factors given by small farmers who had not prospered. All applied to Islander growers who, moreover, did not have security of tenure.¹²⁸

In summary, the Islanders' too small farms, lack of capital and insecurity of tenure were fundamental in ensuring their disappearance from cane growing. That the possession and retention of land was important to many of the Islanders is clear.¹²⁹ Pearce's efforts in 1920 and 1921 to

125. Farmers' Records Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill. For other examples see Tom Penola, *ibid.*; Dick Manish, Membership Certificates of Shareholders, No.91, *ibid.*; Intestacy No.179 of 1941, Jimmy Zimmer, A/17957, QSA; General Manager to Seekis, 12 Oct.1927, p.211, 142/1082, RSSS-ANUA; *Advocate* (Ayr) 1 Apr.1966, p.15.

126. *CPP Misc. Vol.*, 1920-21, p.431.

127. *Ibid.*, p.434, W.R. Denman.

128. See *ibid.*, p.421, T. Hodgett, IV, 1913, p.1466, J. Barry, p.1491, J.T. O'Riordan, p.1526, J.A. Ware, p.1553, J.R. Alison.

129. See T2Bsa:2; T48Bsb:1; Evidence of James Bookie, Rex vs Harry Tonga, No.19 of 1907, A/18353, QSA.

secure a reserve were supported by at least some of the Islanders. In 1932 (as discussed in Chapter 9), a group of Islanders in Mackay made another attempt to establish a farming settlement.

This move to acquire land in 1932 was spearheaded by Harry Fatnowna. Together with other native-born Islanders, he had purchased farming land.¹³⁰ But most of the native-born did not own land, and earned their livelihood through wage employment. In common with the other most numerous non-European native-born group, the Chinese, they preferred wage-earning to the arduous lifestyle of small-scale cultivation practised by their parents. Migration to other districts provided a means of escaping pressure from the older generation to assist on the farms.¹³¹ The Second World War greatly accelerated this trend, in that the young men when they returned from the war generally refused to work on the farms of their relatives and friends and moved into the towns.¹³²

WHILE THE majority of Islander men had continued to earn their livelihood in the sugar industry, either as workers or farmers, there were some in other pursuits. In districts where there was no cane farming, such as Bowen, Townsville and the Atherton Tableland, the Islanders were necessarily engaged in other agricultural industries. These were principally market gardening, small crop farming, farm labouring, timber-getting and wood-cutting. The pastoral industry provided employment for a small number of Islanders, while a tiny number earned their livelihood in the towns. Women's work is discussed separately.

130. T48Bsb:1.

131. May, 'The Chinese in Cairns and District', p.230; T29Bsa:1. For examples of farmers' sons who moved to other districts, see T25Bsa:3; T74Bsa:2; William Darr, AMR, Ayr, 15 May 1918; Applic. No.1253E, Henry Sippie, AGS/N104, QSA.

132. Moore, The Forgotten People, p.59. See also Epilogue. This pattern was not peculiar to the Islanders. See J. Cole, 'Social Mobility and Local History: The Boonah Project', Australia 1888 A journal for the study of Australian history centred on the year 1888 Bulletin No.2, Aug.1979, p.103.

Market gardening and mixed farming were chief amongst these other occupations, since this type of farming did not require a large area or outside labour. Some Islanders squatted on land along the banks of the creeks and rivers, growing fruit or vegetables for their own needs and selling or bartering the surplus. In Mackay, they squatted along the banks of the Pioneer River at Palms and Pleystowe, and later also on the other side at Balnagowan and Dumbleton. This rich but flood-prone land was excellent for growing fruit and vegetables, and the river provided a constant supply of fish.¹³³ In the other coastal districts, there were Islanders living a similar subsistence existence. In 1938 at Mount Sophia in the Cairns district, for example, Nesseo was growing vegetables on a small plot on the banks of the Mulgrave River, and selling some to local Chinese.¹³⁴

Other Islanders who grew fruit and vegetables leased a few acres from Europeans or worked small plots on European farms in return for casual help and clearing the land. In the Burdekin, Charlie Cawoot and his family lived on R.S. Cameron and H.M. Irving's farm at McDesme; in return for clearing ground for a pump, he was given five acres on which to grow vegetables. His eldest son Billy Yow and his wife Annie hawked vegetables in a spring cart among the farmers and in the town and were more popular than the Chinese fruiterers. At 'The Gardens', near Halifax, a settlement of Islanders living on part of J.A. Anderssen's farm also cultivated a great variety of fruit and vegetables, which the old men packed in carts

133. T27Bsb:1; Moore, The Forgotten People, p.66; Palfery to Director of Education, 28 Sep.1932, 40997, Appendix III, EDU/Z2247, QSA; Newspaper cutting, MM 7 Sep.1932, ibid. For similar examples elsewhere in the district, see T2Bsa:1; Moore, The Forgotten People, p.68; Interview with Mr E. Denman, 12 Jul.1979, Mackay; Pix 13 Sep.1941, p.23.

134. Statements of Tom Samuels and Ah You, Inquest No.710 of 1938, Nesseo, JUS/N1053, QSA. For other examples, see T66Bsb:1; Statement of Matthew Tambo, Inquest No.328 of 1931, Johnny Lammon, JUS/N927, QSA; NQR 26 Oct.1929, p.67; CNP 4 Jun.1925; Statement of C.A. Bennett, Inquest No.458 of 1933, Willie Abraham, JUS/N968, QSA.

and pushed down to Lucinda or over to Halifax to sell.¹³⁵

In the Bowen district, a number of Islanders leased small farms and grew fruit and vegetables such as tomatoes and potatoes. In 1914, for example, John Veelee leased five acres near the town to grow vegetables, next to the farm of another Islander, Harry Heepie.¹³⁶ As discussed in Chapter 5, the Bowen Farmers' Association was strongly opposed to non-European farmers, and repeatedly accused the Chinese and Islander farmers of packing and grading fruit and vegetables carelessly and sending away inferior quality or diseased produce. As in other districts, some Islanders grew produce on the farms of Europeans under verbal agreements: "he'd give them a piece of land to work and they'd grub out all the trees and plant their own tomatoes ... [and] stay there as long as he'd let them ... [or] till he sold the place."¹³⁷ This left the Islanders open to exploitation, since some farmers kept moving them around so that more land was cleared: "Boy, I think you better go over there, I give you another piece of land."¹³⁸

135. T56Bsa:1; T68Bsa:1; T70Bsa:1; T72Bsa:1. For similar examples in these and other districts, see Evidence of Alick Santo, Rex vs Angelo Costa *et al.*, No.25 of 1921, A/18407, QSA; Intestacy No.39 of 1922, Jimmy Ganni, A/17927, QSA; *PDMR* 10 Sep.1908, 2 Dec.1918; T66Bsb:2; Munro to Under Sec. for Agriculture, 2 Jun.1933, 4250 of 1933, AGS/J872, QSA.

136. Applic. No.1608E, John Veelee, AGS/N106, QSA. For similar examples, see *BI* 15 Nov.1913, 14 Jul.1914; Const. to Insp. of Police, Townsville, 13 Sep.1913, No.1272 of 1914, Sam, COL/282, QSA; Intestacy No.72 of 1919, Jimmy Gato, A/17923, QSA; Charles Taiters, ABR, Bowen, 30 Jan.1908; Norman Womal, *ibid.*, 20 Jul.1926.

137. T62Bsa:3. This type of informal arrangement also operated in the Cairns district. See T58Bsa:2-3; T66Bsa:3.

138. T62Bsb:1. For examples of Islanders who took up these clearing leases, see T60Bsa:2; T71Bsb:2; Intestacy No.143 of 1919, Harry Dar, A/17923, QSA; Intestacy No.274 of 1941, Sam Cowell, A/17957, QSA; Claude Henry Fraser, Bowen DHAR, 5 Aug.1933.

In the Atherton district, many Islanders engaged in mixed farming. In 1913 there were at least eleven Islander farmers in the district.¹³⁹ They do not appear to have been among those lessees, principally non-European, whose land was resumed after World War I for the settlements of returned soldiers around Atherton and Tolga.¹⁴⁰ In Port Douglas, the most northerly district, a number of Islanders had taken up their own selections. The most successful of these was Johnnie Nahlun, who had held his selection on the Daintree River since the early 1880s and was still growing fruit there in 1913.¹⁴¹

Some Islanders grew bananas as well as other produce and in the Tully area there were said to be a few Islanders with banana farms.¹⁴² However, banana growing was principally in the hands of the Chinese (and later the Europeans), and there were no Islanders in North Queensland who applied for exemption from the Banana Industry Preservation Act of 1921.¹⁴³

139. Untitled and undated list of non-European farmers in some Queensland districts, 7131 of 1913, PRE/A436, QSA. For examples of farmers in this district, see QPP III, 1911-12, p.1300; Evidence of Harry Lifu, James Tanna, Willie Tanna, Mick Tanna, Rex vs Mick Tanna, A/18475, QSA; Esther Sandow, East Barron SSAR, 8 May 1918, EDU/AA378, QSA; Clement Mortar, ibid., 12 Mar.1917.

140. QPP II, 1919-20, pp.953-57; May, The Chinese in Cairns and District, pp.73, 214.

141. QPP II, 1911-12, p.1054; PDMR 2 Dec. 1913. For other examples, see PDMR 17 Sep.1908, 2 Dec.1913.

142. See T66Bsb:2; Applic. No.345E, Calisee, AGS/N109, QSA; Govt Medical Officer to Under Home Sec., 17 Nov.1911, 10885, 1911, Jimmy Madden, COL/276, QSA; Statement of Matthew Tambo, Inquest No.328 of 1931, Johnny Lammon, JUS/N927, QSA; D. Jones, Cardwell Shire Story (Brisbane, 1961), p.290.

143. There were some in southern Queensland, as shown in Chapter 6. See also Appendix E.

Like their countrymen who were growing cane, many of these small farmers supported themselves by occasionally working for wages. For instance, Jack Abraham and Light Tanna, who had a garden at Edgehill near Cairns in 1911, also worked at wood-cutting and did odd jobs for suburban householders.¹⁴⁴ To an even greater extent than those Islanders growing cane, these farmers won only a bare living. This is revealed by their intestacies: amongst nine such farmers in Bowen and Cairns, three had estates valued at less than £30 and two at under £60. Only two farmers had any substantial assets - Johnnie Nahlun when he died in Cairns in 1924 held freehold land valued at £185, and the estate of Sam Cowell, a Bowen tomato farmer, was valued at £585 in 1941, £532 of this being savings in the bank.¹⁴⁵

Those who were not farming or gardening generally worked as farm labourers. This was common amongst the native-born in Bowen in 1926, for example, Norman and Leslie Womal, James Power and Wylie Waller were all farm labourers. European and Chinese tomato farmers in Bowen employed many Islanders, and others worked in the meatworks and saltworks.¹⁴⁶ Further north, in the Johnstone River district, some were employed by banana growers. A few were employed as gardeners, either by the mills or private employers.¹⁴⁷

144. Govt Medical Officer to Under Home Sec., 17 Nov.1911, 10885, 1911, Jimmy Madden, COL/276, QSA. For other examples see Const. to Serg., Bowen, 4 Apr.1914, No.1272 of 1914, Sam COL/282, QSA; Evidence of Alick Santo, Rex vs Angelo Costa et al, No.25 of 1921, A/18407, QSA; PDMR 10 Sep.1908.

145. Intestacy No.32 of 1926, A/17931, QSA; Intestacy No.274 of 1941, A/17957, QSA. The other intestacies are contained in A/17923-A/17951, QSA.

146. Evidence of Norman and Leslie Womal, Wylie Waller and James Power, Rex vs P.A. Coote, No.64 of 1926, A/18414, QSA; Insp. of Police, Townsville, to Crown Prosecutor, 10 Feb.1941, 478, Rex vs Jack Bobbert, No.7 of 1941, A/18434, QSA; BI 11 Oct.1913; T18Bsa:1; T60Bsb:1-2; T62Bsb:3.

147. District Insp. to Police Commissioner, 6 Oct.1910, 18644, M405, POL/J17, QSA; T58Bsb:1; Applic. No.755E, Harry Lammon, AGS/N102, QSA; Rody Cassady, Ingham DHAR, 21 Sep.1930; Aliens at Queensland Mills 1916, 142/3479, RSSS-ANUA.

Timber-getting and wood-cutting were other unskilled, manual occupations in which some Islanders found employment, particularly in the Johnstone River district where there were wood-cutting camps at Daradgee and Coondi. At Ravenswood in 1908, William Tangawa was a timber-getter at Mount Wright, employing an Aboriginal to assist him.¹⁴⁸ Road work was another source of manual labour for Pacific Islanders, especially during the depression years.¹⁴⁹ Fishing and hunting were usually part-time occupations to extend the diet and provide a commodity to sell or barter, but for a few these provided full-time jobs. An Innisfail in 1922 John Loch Loch Santo was earning his living as a fisherman, and in the Burdekin in 1920 Jack Boslam was working as a kangaroo shooter.¹⁵⁰

The other field of manual work for the Islanders was in the pastoral industry. From the late 1870s, the number of Islanders in the pastoral industry was very small. In the census in 1911 there were said to be seventy-four Pacific Islander men (only about seven per cent of the male breadwinners) engaged in pastoral pursuits in Queensland.¹⁵¹

148. NC 1 Dec.1929; Statement of Minnie Ante, Inquest No.385 of 1931, George Ante, JUS/N928, QSA; Daniel Blooranta, PBR, Innisfail, 11 Mar.1928; Intestacy No.166 of 1908, Willie Langbi, A/17912, QSA; Evidence of William Tangawa, 8 Jun.1908, Rex vs Jimmy Chisholm, A/18476, QSA.

149. See PDMR 10 Dec.1908; Commonwealth Census, Vol.II, 1911, p.1050.

150. Molly Santo, AMR, Innisfail, 4 Dec.1922; T80Bsa:2; Sydney Boslam, Ayr SSAR, 6 May 1920. For other examples, see T31Bsb:2; T62Bsb:1; PDMR 28 Feb.1908, 19 Apr.1910; Statement of Harry Bradford, Inquest No.410 of 1918, Harry Pentecost, JUS/N669, QSA; Statement of Tom Samuels, Inquest No.710 of 1938, Nesseo, JUS/N1053, QSA; QCC CXXIV, 1925, pp.1228, 1925.

151. Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, 1911, p.235, Vol.II, 1911, pp.1050-53.

Virtually all of these Islanders would have been employed as station hands and stockmen. Some had long-standing associations with particular pastoral families: Igba and Anamboon in the Herbert River district had always worked for the Allingham and Cassady families, respectively.¹⁵² In this district and also in Townsville, Islanders earned money through breaking horses.¹⁵³ The one case in which an Islander became a grazier was that of William Wombie, whose life was discussed in Chapter 2. In 1927, when Wombie died, he and his son David, also a grazier, were renting Gum Hole and Galbraith stations near Normanton and running horses and cattle with the assistance of three Aboriginal stockmen; Wombie's pastoral holdings were valued at £1800.¹⁵⁴

All of these occupations were rural or semi-rural pursuits. As shown in Chapter 4, few Islanders were living in the towns in this period.¹⁵⁵ The exception to this was the small number of Islander boarding house keepers, who catered for the periodic visits to town by other Islanders. In the 1910s Arro and Henry Tongoa were running boarding houses in Mackay. Arro's boarding house was popular amongst the Islanders but by 1913 Tongoa had returned to cane farming.¹⁵⁶ There were other Islander

152. Photographic Album, I, Nos.50, 51; Statement of Rosie, Inquest No. 681 of 1939, Anamboon, JUS/N1071, QSA. For other examples, see Statement of A.H. Cunningham, Inquest No.412 of 1907, William Sula, JUS/N380, QSA; Statement of A.E. Parker, Inquest No.96 of 1909, Billy Mole, JUS/N414, QSA; Massa, No.665, Charters Towers, Return of Coloured Residents of the Townsville District, 7131 of 1913, PRE/A436, QSA; T64Bsb:1; T72Bsb:2.

153. See T15Bsa:2; T57Bsa:1-2; T73Bsb:2; Statement of William Bargo, 6 May 1928, Rex vs William Bargo, No.60 of 1928, A/18417, QSA.

154. Statement of David Wombie, Inquest No.378 of 1927, William Wombie, JUS/N843, QSA; Intestacy No.46 of 1927, William Wombie, A/17933, QSA; QCG CXXI, 1923, p.356, CXXV, 1925, pp.414, 484; The Australian Pastoral Directory Lists of Stockowners in the States of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania, 1915 (Sydney, 1915), p.188, 1921, p.208, 1927, p.245. It does not appear that David Wombie continued as a grazier after his father's death.

155. According to the census of 1911, a very small number were engaged in commercial and industrial pursuits or as religious ministers or teachers. Commonwealth Census, Vol.II, 1911, pp.1050-53.

156. See Applic. No.577E, Charles Api, AGS/N101, QSA; Applic. No.588E, Arro, ibid.; Applic. No.617E, Cassel, ibid.; MM 5 Jan.1916; NOR 28 Jun.1930, p.15; Form of Report to Home Sec. by Medical Practitioner of a Case of Suspected Leprosy, No.6502 of 1911, Jimmy Thoran, COL/283, QSA; Applic. No.1036E, Henry Tonga, AGS/N103, QSA.

boarding house keepers in Mackay but outside this district evidence has been found of only one other boarding house keeper, who was in Cairns.¹⁵⁷

The above discussion of occupational activities has been concerned almost exclusively with men. This is because Islander women, who had worked alongside the men as plantation labourers in the nineteenth century, were now primarily occupied with working in their own homes. In assessing this change to a dependent status, government records such as intestacies are suspect in that all women, black or white, tended to be classed as dependants. But the evidence from such records as marriage registers, where Islander women named their occupations, reveal that most were not working, at least full-time, outside their own homes. Even those born in Queensland who did not marry until their mid- or late twenties usually gave their occupation as home duties.¹⁵⁸ Widows who re-married tended also to give the same occupation.¹⁵⁹ According to the census in 1911, over three-quarters of Islander females aged over fourteen were dependent on what were termed natural guardians.¹⁶⁰

157. Applic. No.1002E, Tarvy, ibid.; Intestacy No.74 of 1920, Fred Mallack, A/17924, QSA; Applic. No.198 of 1926, David Mie, A/17932, QSA; T58Bsa:3; W.F. Tierney, 'Cairns at the turn of the century', Historical Society, Cairns, North Queensland, Bulletin No.52, Jun.1963. For visits to town by the Islanders, see Chapter 8.

158. In intestacies the occupation of women was usually given as 'wife'. In the church marriage registers, the overwhelming majority of Islander women gave their occupation as home duties, and this was also so for those whose names appeared on the electoral rolls. In the petition from Pacific Islanders in Mackay in 1920, no occupations were given for the women, and present day Islanders recall that few of the women worked outside their own homes. Petition from Polynesians in the Mackay district, 3 Mar.1920, 5241 of 1920, PRE/A662, QSA.

159. See Elizabeth Kia, AMR, Mackay, 20 Oct.1930; Ivy Coakley, ibid., 15 Aug.1934; Alice Henaway, PMR, Ayr, 28 Mar.1928; Agnes Bobbert, AMR, Proserpine, 22 Nov.1921.

160. Commonwealth Census, Vol.II, 1911, pp.918-19, 1052-53. This was calculated by deducting the number aged under fifteen from the total number of dependants and calculating the proportion which the remainder represented of the total number of females aged fifteen and over.

While most Islander women regarded themselves as housewives and helpers, this did not prevent them from working in part-time employment and performing heavy manual work around the home and farm. Girls usually started work at about fourteen and worked until they married.¹⁶¹

Native-born women characteristically had large families and tended to stay at home while the children were small and then return to work, usually part-time, to supplement the family income. Domestic service outside their own homes was the biggest field of paid employment for Islander women.¹⁶² In the census in 1911, paid domestic work was the chief field of employment both for European and non-European women, and occupied over eighty per cent of Islander women who were employed.¹⁶³

Some Islander women were live-in housekeepers, but for most it was day work for local farmers or townspeople. Since domestic servants were always in short supply, there was no need to travel long distances or to take on live-in service.¹⁶⁴ Some of the limited alternatives to domestic work for Islander women were waitressing, laundry work and employment as nursemaids.¹⁶⁵

There were a few women in Mackay who were recognized as farmers in their own right. Lizzie Malachi was the only woman farmer in North Queensland amongst the Islanders who applied under the Sugar Cultivation Act: she was then farming at TeKowai in partnership with her husband Matthew and two other Solomon Islanders. As an old woman, she continued to farm at Farleigh after Matthew's death in 1932. There were two other

161. See T45Bsa:2+3; Ty2Bp.2; D. Coote, Ingham DHAR, 1 Feb.1932; Gladys Addo, *ibid.*, 22 Sep.1933.

162. For examples, see T3Bsa:1; T19Bsb:3; T25Bsa:3; T45Bsa:3; Amy Sippie, AMR, Mackay, 22 Feb.1919; Ellen Mow, MMR, Cairns, 8 Nov.1922; Nora, ABR, Proserpine, 21 Aug.1920.

163. *Commonwealth Census*, Vol.I, pp.237, 239, Vol.II, pp.1052-53.

164. Ty2Bpp.1-2; T20Bsa:1; T45Bsb:1; Photographic Album, I, No.21; CPP Misc. Vol., 1920-21, p.361, Dr E. Humphry.

165. See Nellie Coakley, No.871, Mackay Division, Herbert, State of Queensland Electoral Roll, 1925; T25Bsa:1; T45Bsa:2; T71Bsa:2.

women farmers in the district, one of whom was born in Queensland.¹⁶⁶ These women were exceptional, but most of the wives of farmers worked in the fields, at least during the busy planting and crushing seasons. In the Herbert River, Sarah Backo left her children in the care of an older Islander woman, and helped her husband Peter to clear the land. The women were also often responsible for the poultry and the large vegetable gardens grown by the Islanders.¹⁶⁷

PACIFIC Islanders were not always able to obtain paid employment. Throughout Australia unemployment rose sharply after World War I and remained high during the 1920s. At the census in 1921, the unemployment rate for males in primary production was 13.2 per cent. Yet the unemployment rate for Islander breadwinners (who almost without exception fell into this category) was only 7 per cent.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, the census had been taken during the slack season in April, when unemployment was highest in the sugar districts and when the Islanders often took a holiday or moved to other centres in search of work.¹⁶⁹ The fact that so many Islanders farmed on their own account and also that the Islanders worked for less wages and under poorer conditions than would Europeans, helps to explain their lower unemployment rate.

During the depression, however, the Islanders together with the rest of the community suffered the effects of severe unemployment. The unemployment rate in Queensland was the lowest in Australia, due to the State's lower degree of industrialization and the highly protected nature

166. Applic. No.665E, AGS/N101, QSA; Farmers' Record Cards 1926-35, Farleigh Mill; T33Bsb:1; Photographic Collection, I, No.27; Nellie Vice, Farm Records 1925-49, p.135, Pleystowe Mill; QGG CXVIII, p.1242, Lucy Querro. As noted earlier, there were some cases of wives farming in partnership with their husbands.

167. For this and other examples, see T22Bsa:1; T33Bsb:1; T40Bsa:2; Photographic Album, I, No.89.

168. R. Broomhill, Unemployed Workers A Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide (St Lucia, 1978), pp.1-2; Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, 1921, pp.330-33, Vol.II, Statistician's Report, p.234. In the 1911 census, the number of Islanders who were unemployed was not given.

169. In later years they went on the dole. See Applic. No.969E, Jack Sorindooce, AGS/N103, QSA; Applic. No.2249E, Jimmy Thomas, AGS/N357, QSA; Form of Report to Home Sec. of Investigation by Medical Practitioner of a Suspected Leper, No.6502 of 1911, Jimmy Thoran, COL/283, QSA; T19Bsb:3; T32Bsa:1; T62Bsb:3.

of the sugar industry.¹⁷⁰ The only figure on unemployment among Islanders during the depression was an Australia-wide figure in the census of 1933, conducted at the start of the crushing season, when 17 per cent were said to be unemployed. Among Islanders in North Queensland the unemployment rate may have been lower. The official figure for unemployment in primary production in Queensland was 17.69 per cent.¹⁷¹ But unemployment was much greater amongst farm labourers than cane-cutters, for whom wages remained relatively high due to the protective tariffs which kept up the price of sugar. During the crushing season, thousands of men invaded the sugar districts in search of work.¹⁷² Unemployment would have been highest among the Islander migrants, who were primarily employed in labouring rather than cane-cutting, and even the native-born may have found it more difficult in these years to secure AWU tickets to cut cane.¹⁷³

Islander women probably also experienced high unemployment. As a non-essential service, paid domestic work was difficult to obtain during the depression. In Queensland, the official unemployment rate in 1933 for women engaged in personal and domestic service was 15.19 per cent; unemployment was higher only amongst those in secondary industries.¹⁷⁴

170. At the peak, in 1932, Queensland's unemployment rate was 18.8 per cent compared with 34 per cent in the worst affected State, South Australia. Trade union figures on unemployment are more reliable than the official figures. Broomhill, Unemployed Workers, p.2; B.J. Costar, 'The Great Depression: Was Queensland Different?', Labour History No.26, May 1974, pp.33-35; W. Lowenstein, Weevils in the Flour An oral record of the 1930s depression in Australia (Melbourne, 1978), pp.12, 13.

171. Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, 1933, pp.310, 948-49.

172. See NOR 7 Jun.1930, p.16, 24 Jan.1931, pp.28, 80, 89; Clerk of Petty Sessions, Halifax, to Director of Labour, 5 Sep.1933, pp.33-34, CPS 12H/G2, QSA; QPD CLIV, 1929, pp.1684, 1916; Jones, Hurricane Lamps, p.363; Lowenstein, Weevils in the Flour, p.382.

173. Experienced men could usually obtain work of some kind in the cane-fields. See Jones, Hurricane Lamps, p.363; Lowenstein, Weevils in the Flour, pp.382, 384.

174. Commonwealth Census, Vol.I, Statistician's Report, pp.309, 310.

That unemployment was a serious problem for the Islanders from the late 1920s to mid-1930s is clear from evidence concerning the Herbert River district. Although this district had a small Islander population (see Table 4.5), there were at least twenty-two Islanders unemployed (and often on more than one occasion) between 1929 and 1935: these were principally men, both single and married, but there were also some young women and elderly, single men. A native-born Islander, Jack Tanna, for example, had been unemployed for ten months in May 1930, found work by November, but was unemployed again on several occasions over the following five years.¹⁷⁵

While there was no 'dole' in Queensland, there was a systematic program of relief provided through the Unemployed Workers Insurance Acts of 1922-30 and various systems of relief work.¹⁷⁶ Jack Tanna was receiving rations valued at 25s. a week in 1934; by his own record, he had also received rations in 1929 for himself and his wife and six children. He was one of three Islanders employed in 1931 on relief work to improve the road between Halifax and Lucinda. All three had families and were in urgent need of relief, and the secretary for labour and industry, T.E. Sizer, refused a request by the local MLA to have them replaced by Queenslanders of European descent.¹⁷⁷

175. Mary Tanna, Ingham DHAR, 21 May 1930, 25 Nov.1930, 11 Jan.1931, 1 Jul.1934. The sources for the calculation of the number unemployed were the Ingham District Hospital records and the applications under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Acts of 1922-30 contained in CPS 12H/G2, QSA.

176. Queensland was the only State with a system of unemployment insurance. 13 Geo. V, No.28; 21 Geo. V, No.38; Costar, 'The Great Depression', pp.37-38; B. Carroll, 'William Forgan Smith: Dictator or Democrat', in Murphy and Joyce, Queensland Political Portraits, pp.410-11.

177. Under Home Sec. to Officer in Charge of Police, 24 Aug.1934, COL/71, QSA; Excerpts from Notebook of Jack Tanna (provided by Mrs Betty Barrett of Halifax); T70Bsb:1; T72Bsa:1; OPD CLIX, 1931, p.1130. For similar calls for such restrictions, see NOR 15 Mar.1930, p.44, 7 Mar.1931, p.38.

In other districts also, some Islanders found employment on government-financed relief work.¹⁷⁸ Abuses were prevalent and there were Islanders found guilty of lodging false applications for relief.¹⁷⁹ Many Islanders, like Europeans, 'jumped the rattler' (rode illegally on the trains) to move to other centres, notably Bowen and the Burdekin, in search of work during the depression years.¹⁸⁰

Yet while many men and women were thrown out of employment by the depression, the recollections of present day Islanders are not of a period of great hardship and deprivation. Admittedly most were then young children and thus more likely to have favourable memories of these years. But the advantage of a semi-rural existence is that basic subsistence is possible: during these years, the Islanders had their gardens to supply most of their food, and a surplus to barter for other food and essential items. Even if there was little money for clothes and other goods, they did not go hungry.¹⁸¹ Some remember European families whose situation was far worse.¹⁸²

178. See MM 30 Mar.1935; Palfery to Director of Education, 28 Sep.1932, 40997, p.8, EDU/Z2247, QSA; Edna Thomas, Bowen DHAR, 30 Oct.1933; T18Bsa:1; T27Bsb:1.

179. See Const. Kenny vs Harry Mooney, 15 Jan.1936, CPS 10B/S23, QSA; Serg. Mullins vs Matthew Tambo, 5 Jun.1939, CPS 12H/S6, QSA; Const. Paradine vs Harry Paul, 25 Mar.1935, CPS 11B/N4, QSA.

180. MM 28 Apr.1937; Jones, Hurricane Lamps, p.363; Jones, Trinity Phoenix, p.466; T10Bsa:2; T60Bsb:1; T61Bsa:2; T68Bsa:1; Alfred James Corowa, No.911, Ayr Division, Mundingburra, State of Queensland Electoral Roll, 1935; Fred John Thomas, No.4331, ibid.

181. This was also true for villagers in the Solomon Islands, and even for urban residents in Australia. T25Bsa:3; T57Bsa:2; T70Bsa:1; Bennett, Wealth of the Solomons, pp.301, 339; Broomhill, Unemployed Workers, p.105.

182. For the impact of the depression in Queensland generally and North Queensland specifically, see Carroll, 'William Forgan Smith', pp.410-11; Jones, Cardwell Shire Story, p.364; Jones, Trinity Phoenix, p.466; B.J. Costar, Political and Social Aspects of the Great Depression in Queensland, 1929-32 (M.A. thesis, University of Queensland, 1973).

For many of the Islanders, unemployment during the depression was only temporary, but during this decade an increasing number of the migrants became too old and feeble to earn a living.¹⁸³ Those without children to support them, and even some of those with children, were in very straitened circumstances. Like other non-Europeans (with the exception of British Indians), Pacific Islanders including those who were naturalized were ineligible for old-age and invalid pensions (see Appendix D).

Under the agreement between the Commonwealth and the States, the former was responsible for the payment of pensions and the latter for the relief of cases of destitution. From the late 1920s or earlier, some aged and destitute Pacific Islanders in Queensland were receiving the State indigence allowance of 5s. per week, paid monthly by the police. By 1941 this allowance had not increased; it represented a pittance by comparison with the old-age pension, itself by no means generous, of £1 per week.¹⁸⁴ In June 1932, 159 Pacific Islanders in Queensland were receiving the indigence allowance, by February 1937 the number had grown to 164, but had dropped to 151 by June 1938.¹⁸⁵ There are numerous examples in North Queensland, from both the oral and written evidence, of elderly Islanders who were dependent on this allowance, which they called the pension. One of these in 1941 was Jimmy, a Solomon Islander living a solitary and meagre existence in a grass house in the bush near Mackay (see Plates 7.3 to 7.6).¹⁸⁶ William Seekis

183. For examples, see Registrar of Pensions, Halifax, to Police Magistrate, Ingham, 5 Mar.1934, p.119, CPS 12H/G2, QSA; Tom Solomon, Ingham DHAR, 4 Aug.1930; Statement of C.A. Bennett, Inquest No.458 of 1933, Willie Abraham, JUS/N968, QSA; Statement of Const. Faulkner, Inquest No.4 of 1935, Boate Santo, JUS/N989, QSA.

184. QPD CLXXVII, 1941, p.329; Actg Treasurer to J. Francis, 13 Aug.1935, A461 J393/1/1, AA; Indigent Allowances Paid to South Sea Islanders, 19 Sep.1938, COL/71, QSA.

185. Pacific Islanders represented over a third of the total number who received this allowance. In 1937, there were 89 Islanders and one Aboriginal widow living in North Queensland of the 164 Islanders in Queensland who were receiving the allowance. Indigence, n.d., *ibid.*; Memo., 5 Feb.1936, *ibid.*; Indigent Allowances Paid to South Sea Islanders, 19 Sep.1938, memo., *ibid.*; List of Natives of Pacific Islands in Receipt of Indigence Allowance, 28 Feb. 1937, *ibid.*; QPD CLXXII, 1938, p.742.

186. *Pix* 13 Sep.1941, pp.22-23. For other examples, see Ty4Bp.1; T7Bsa:2; T19Bsa:3; T61Bsa:1; Statement of Const. McGrath, Inquest No.799 of 1938, Tom Obah, JUS/N1054, QSA; Statement of Jack Tanna, Inquest No.425 of 1934, Monday Tanna, JUS/N982, QSA; Intestacy No.109 of Dick Manish, A/17954, QSA; Intestacy No.147 of 1941, Jimmy Gow Andi, A/17956, QSA.



PLATE 7.3: Jimmy (possibly Jimmy Tarragwanna) from Nggela in the Solomons, aged in his late seventies, outside his grass hut in the scrub seven miles from Mackay, 1941. This and the following three photographs were taken to accompany an article in the popular magazine Pix.

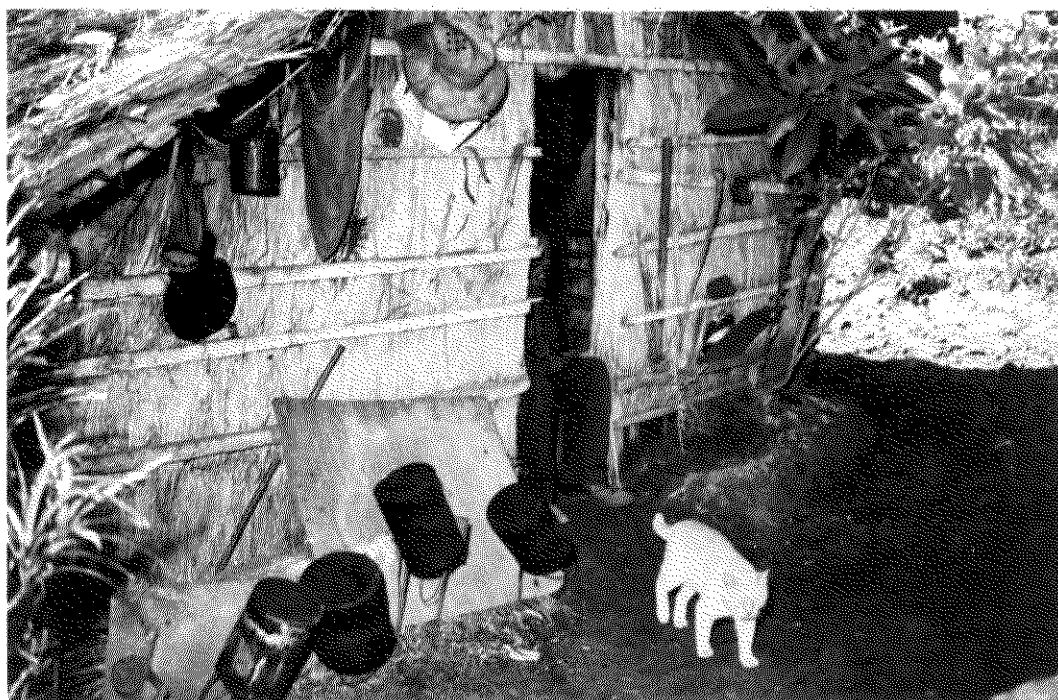


PLATE 7.4: Jimmy sitting at the door of his hut. Note the cat (kept to kill vermin) and the billy cans for cooking over an open fire.



PLATE 7.5: Jimmy inspecting the tobacco plants growing at the side of his hut.



PLATE 7.6: Jimmy drying his home-grown tobacco inside his hut. Note the makeshift furniture and thatched roof.

was more fortunate than most: when Homebush Mill closed down in 1921, CSR allowed him to continue to live on land at Baker's Creek and in 1927 granted him a small annuity of 10s. per week; he also received the indigence allowance.¹⁸⁷

In 1942 both Aborigines (with certain qualifications) and Pacific Islanders finally became eligible for invalid and old-age pensions under the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Amendment Act of 1942.¹⁸⁸ Throughout the previous decade, the Islanders' case had been put forward by a number of sympathetic Europeans. According to oral evidence, the mayor of Cairns, W.A. Collins, and the mayor of Halifax, F. Heard, both pressed the Government in about 1931 for a pension for Islanders, and Salvation Army officers in Bowen and Edward Denman, a well-known farmer in Mackay, similarly fought for their pensions.¹⁸⁹ It may be, however, that this 'pension' was actually the indigence allowance. Further attempts to obtain financial independence for elderly Islanders came from outside North Queensland. Between 1935 and 1941, the removal of the pensions disability was advocated in petitions and in representations from Queensland MLAs, the premier, Forgan Smith, and the governor, L.O. Wilson.¹⁹⁰ It was not until 1942

187. General Manager to R. Croker, Mackay, 12 Oct.1927, p.212, 142/1082, RSSS-ANUA; List: Recipients of Indigence Allowance at 23 Feb.1934, COL/71, QSA; MM 5 May 1957; Intestacy No.325 of 1935, William Francis Seekis, A/17946, QSA.

188. No.3 of 1942, ss. 4, 13; CPD CLXX, 1942, pp.708-9, 1002, 1044, 1052. Non-Europeans who were naturalized had become eligible under the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act Amendment Act of 1941 (No.48 of 1941, ss. 4, 5.)

189. See T33Bsb:1; T61Bsa:1; T66Bsb:2; MM 30 Jul.1975; Interview with Mr E. Denman, 12 Jul.1979, Mackay. In Halifax Davy Samoa obtained the indigence allowance after the local clerk of petty sessions had pressed for a pension for him. Registrar of Pensions, Halifax, to Police Magistrate, Ingham, 5 Mar.1934, p.119, CPS 12H/G2, QSA; List of Natives of Pacific Islands in Receipt of Indigence Allowance, 28 Feb.1937, COL/71, QSA.

190. For some examples of this agitation, see Sec., South Sea Islanders' Petition Committee, Bundaberg, to Deputy Leader of the Opposition, 13 Jul. 1936, and encl. petitions, A461 J393/1/1, AA; Forgan Smith to Prime Min., 25 Jul.1936, ibid.; Forde to Lyons, 20 Jul.1936, ibid.; Gov. Wilson to J.A. Hunter, 14 Jan.1937, ibid.; H.S. Foll to Lyons, 12 Aug.1938, ibid.; CPD CLXIX, 1941, p.658.

that elderly Islanders gained the financial security of the Commonwealth old-age and invalid pensions.¹⁹¹

Amongst Pacific Islanders in the years up to 1940 there was a range in income and living standards. Some lived in reasonable comfort, at least in the first two decades of this century. In 1908 Harry Lefu, who had a selection at Bailey's Creek, was described as having a clean and comfortable home which "many a man in happier circumstances might envy". The homes of Islander men married to Aboriginal women in Atherton in 1911, were also compared favourably with those of Europeans.¹⁹² Up to 1918, some of the Islander farmers at Farleigh were earning a comfortable living, and one of these, Luke Logomier, was sufficiently well off to buy a harmonium for his step-daughter Eva and pay for music lessons for her.¹⁹³

The substantial donations made to various churches was another indication that some were relatively comfortable.¹⁹⁴ Those migrants who had not married had a reputation for saving large sums of money, and the amount of their savings was often quite considerable.¹⁹⁵ Others, like William Wombie the grazier, possessed little cash but had valuable assets.¹⁹⁶

191. Some later joined the pensioners' associations. T71Bsb:1; Photographic Album, I, Nos. 67, 68.

192. PDMR 10 Sep.1908; QPP II, 1911-12, pp.1300, 1313. Living conditions are discussed in Chapter 9.

193. Norman, Life's Varied Scenes, p.77; T54Bsa:1.

194. See Chapter 8.

195. For some examples, see T1Bsb:1; T58Bsa:3; T80Bsb:1; Intestacy No.50 of 1919, Waio, A/17923, QSA; Intestacy No.74 of 1920, Fred Mallack, A/17924, QSA; Intestacy No.121 of 1926, Jacob Nabong, A/17932, QSA.

196. For other examples, see Intestacy No.32 of 1926, Johnnie Nahlun, A/17931, QSA; Intestacy No.125 of 1927, John Noie, A/17933, QSA; Intestacy No.185 of 1936, Andrew Poolar, A/17947, QSA.

These single men and families tended to be the exception rather than the rule, and especially in later years. As Figure 7.1 demonstrates, three-quarters of sixty-eight Islanders who died intestate between 1916 and 1940 had possessions and property valued at less than £75.¹⁹⁷ In Mackay and Proserpine, as shown, the combination of discriminatory legislation and Industrial Court awards and the setbacks inflicted by such natural disasters as the 1918 cyclone and the 1919 epidemic, helped to displace those few Islander farmers who had been making a decent living. By the 1930s, many of the migrants were too old to perform manual work, and until 1942 were reduced to attempting to live on the pittance of the indigence allowance paid by the Queensland Government.¹⁹⁸ In the 1920s and 1930s, there are many examples of Islander men, elderly and unmarried or childless and often widowed, living out their lives in extreme poverty.¹⁹⁹ The frequency of pauper burials in Mackay was a further indication of this poverty.²⁰⁰

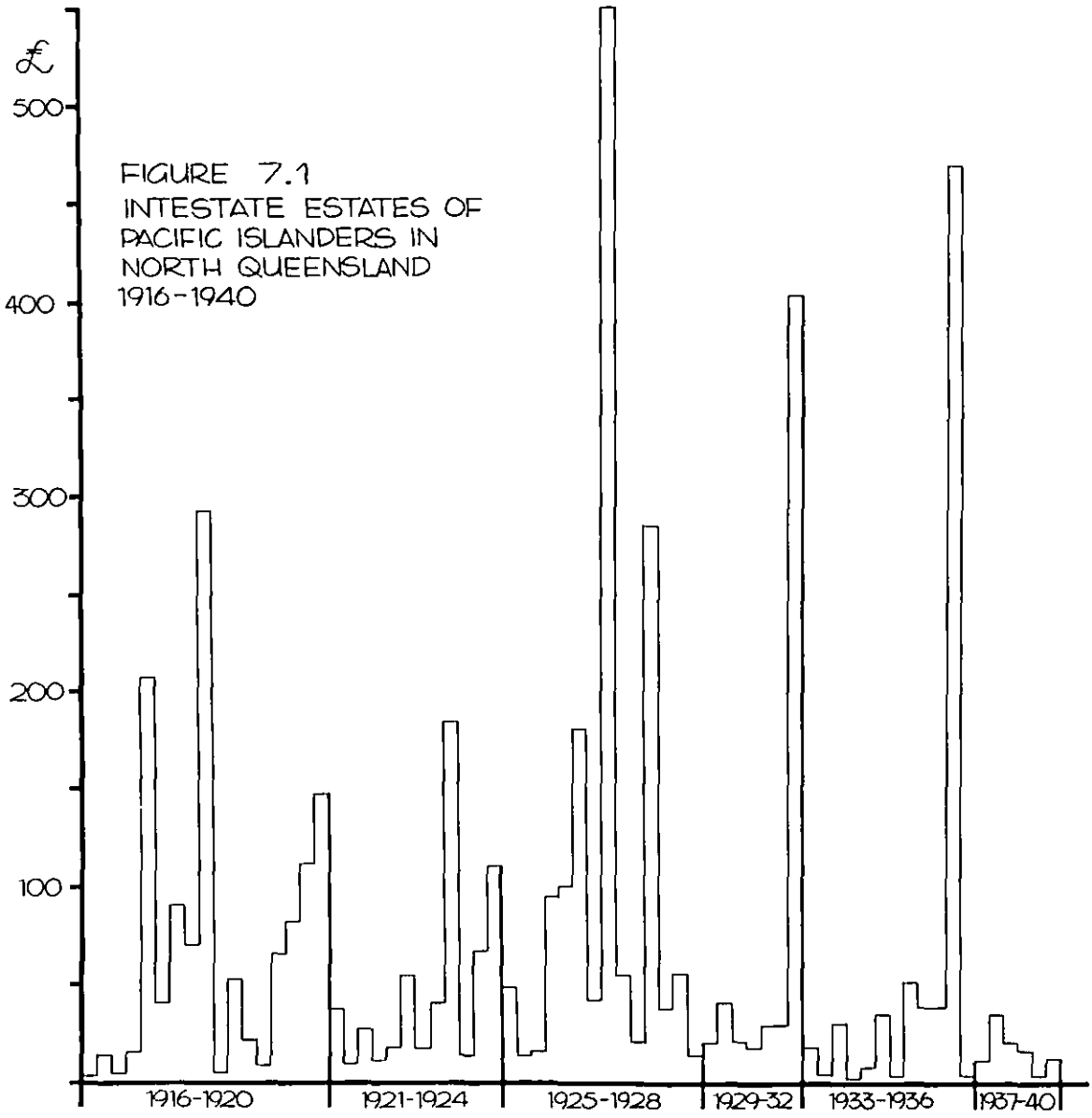
While most of the Islander families were not in such distressed circumstances, many lived a very basic existence, growing most of their food but having little money for other commodities. The free public hospital

197. 1916 was the first year in which schedules of property and possessions were included in the files of intestacies.

198. At least some received a yearly issue of blankets. See T19Bsa:3; T65Bsa:2; President of Distressed Kanakas' Relief Committee to Page, 28 Feb.1938, A461 J393/1/1, AA.

199. For examples, see Registrar of Pensions, Halifax, to Police Magistrate, Ingham, 5 Mar.1934, p.119, CPS 12H/G2, QSA; NOR 8 Dec.1919, p.11; Statement of Boate Santo, Inquest No.175 of 1934, Peter Motlop, JUS/N977, QSA; Statement of Const. Smith, Inquest No.238 of 1936, John Mackeleo, JUS/N1009, QSA; Const., Mossman, to Insp. of Police, Cairns, 16 Mar.1925, 431M, POL/J23, QSA.

200. See, for example, Dick Makeleo, Notebook 1923-28, Mackay Funerals, 3 Dec.1923; James Boro, ibid., 18 Apr.1928; Thomas Goffsia, Notebook 1928-33, Mackay Funerals, 4 Jun.1931; Jimmy Neclo, Notebook 1933-42, Mackay Funerals, 6 Nov.1934.



system was introduced in Queensland only in 1946 and before then many of those Islanders admitted to local hospitals were unable to pay for their treatment.²⁰¹ In Mackay, Bowen and the Herbert River, it was observed by Europeans at various times that some of the Islander families were in poor circumstances.²⁰²

THIS CHAPTER has demonstrated the lack of occupational diversity amongst Pacific Islanders in North Queensland between 1908 and 1940. The majority were still engaged in the sugar industry, and the remainder were involved chiefly in other agricultural pursuits or in the pastoral industry. There were no skilled manual workers, let alone white-collar workers. Women were occupied primarily with home duties but those who took paid employment usually worked in domestic service. Unemployment appears to have been a serious problem only during the depression. The Islanders had the capacity to subsist by growing most of their own food but were usually dependent for their land upon the charity of local farmers.

As in the period before 1908, the Islanders were at the base of the occupational pyramid. Even those farming for themselves did not achieve financial security: at best, they were in the class of small farmers who were 'holding their own'; at worst, they were living a hand-to-mouth existence, growing vegetables and tiny plots of cane. Their lack of training for other occupations and the discriminatory policies and practices of European society ensured that Pacific Islanders were fringe-dwellers not only economically but also socially, as the following two chapters will demonstrate.

201. See MM 21 Mar.1912; BI 28 Aug.1919; NQR 19 Jan.1926, p.51; Ray Cassidy, Ingham DHAR, 11 Sep.1929; Mary Tanna, ibid., 10 Nov.1930; K.W. Knight, 'Edward Michael Hanlon: A City Bushman', in Murphy and Joyce, Queensland Political Portraits, p.442.

202. See Gatfield to Deputy Land Commissioner, 15 Jun.1921, 20131, RES 01/198, Lands Dept: MM 7 Sep.1932; Mullaly to Crown Prosecutor, 10 Feb.1941, Rex vs Jack Bobbert, No.7 of 1941, A/18434, QSA; QPD CLIX, 1931, p.1120.